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VOLUME 3

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TRACKING THE RITUAL YEAR ON THE MOVE
IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL SETTINGS
AND SYSTEMS OF VALUES

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INTRODUCTION

This issue is aimed at introducing several studies dwelling on the major theme *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* of the 14th SIEF Congress which took place in Santiago di Compostela (April 14–17, 2019).

We found it logical to open the volume with a review article by **Alexander Novik** (Sankt-Peterburg) and **Irina Sedakova** (Moscow) of the 14th SIEF Congress which sheds light on the major trends in the development of ethnology and folklore, as well as in the humanities and social sciences all over the world, including Balkan and Baltic states.

Most of the articles published in this issue were delivered at the panel of the SIEF Working Group The Ritual Year “Tracking the ritual year on the move in different cultural settings and systems of values”.¹ This panel aimed to question the ritual year logic through its archaic long-term structures and through its short-term dynamics and adaptations. Indeed, studying the ritual year often draws the attention to long-lasting patterns which had already been documented by the folklorists in the 20th century, but it also opens a more contemporary approach focusing on recent social changes.

There is a vast bibliography on various aspects of the calendric rites and customs, including the Yearbook of the SIEF WG *The Ritual Year* (11 volumes have already been published, two more are in progress), publications of the members of the groups in journals, and collections of essays. Balkan, Baltic and Slavic countries’ ritual years are thoroughly studied which gives an opportunity for comparative research, in search of similar and yet different cultural settings and systems of values.²

In the field of ritual year studies, changes connected with new technologies and new political regimes have brought dramatic evolutions in the systems of

values and in the ways the rituals are celebrated. In the new post-Soviet context for instance, a lot of religious re-inventions have taken place. In the Balkan and the Baltic countries, these changes have also to deal with the new political alliances connected with the European Commission. Furthermore, moves in the ritual year cycle can occur even more suddenly, due to different sorts of hazards. At the time when we were in Santiago di Compostela, on April 15, 2019, a huge fire destroyed the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris, bringing a lot of emotion and sudden changes in the ways of locally organizing the Christian cult.

Looking at changes in the ritual year proved to be extremely topical from the beginning of 2020 after the Corona virus took over the world. During the process of preparation of this issue, extreme changes have flown over the whole planet and the manhood found itself in a sort of a fantastic novel. The pandemic brought in its own vocabulary, changed the old customary practices and founded new ones. It modified our everyday life, communications, mass media, politics and the ethics, economies and businesses. Our major scholarly field – the Ritual Year in all of its hypostases and fields – has been influenced a lot, too. The studies of the changes in the religious festive life and calendars, ways of celebrations all the holidays (personal, family, religious, state) are still in progress. Data is being collected and reflected upon, but it is evident that contextual hazards have a huge impact on the changes of the rituals. The articles we present in this issue can serve as a foundation for this research.

There are five papers in this issues which were all delivered at the Ritual Year panel in Santiago de Compostela and then elaborated into a study, they constitute the first part of this issue “**The Ritual Year on the Move: Cultural Settings and Systems of Values**”.

Concentrating on a precise example of a religious holiday – the Day of Assumption – enables **Žilvytis Šaknys** (Vilnius, Lithuania) to track the ways one specific ritual date embodies different values in different sociocultural, confessional and ethnic contexts. A Christian holiday (in the late 19th– first half of the 20th century in Lithuanian villages) was later transformed into a Lithuanian national holiday (in 1929 in Kaunas) then into a Lithuanian holiday (in Pusk, Poland, from 1967 onwards), and eventually into a non-working day (in Vilnius and its surrounds from 2000 onwards).

Another way of working out the changes in the cultural settings and systems of values of the ritual year is to focus on a given community (or several ones), as does **Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė** (Vilnius, Lithuania). Her article questions

the links with the neighborhood in Lithuanian rituals; distinguishing two types of neighbourhoods: distant (official) and close (informal) ones. The first is determined by territorial proximity, while the second concerns a group formed around common interests, who are free to choose to spend their leisure time or celebrate special occasions together. The different types of neighbourly relations determine the ways the different rituals are performed around the year.

The issue also contains an article by **Tanya Matanova** (Sofia, Bulgaria) on pilgrimage, which is now closely connected with cultural tourism. This essay is partly a tribute to Santiago de Compostela, the center for St. Jacob pilgrims, but it also deals with the calendric ritual year place in the Balkans, especially seasonal male pilgrimages of Bulgarians to Mount Athos. Often the objection of the visit is philanthropical, medical aid, assistance in construction, etc. This type of activity the men combine with celebrating greater Christian church calendric festivals.

The majority of the articles are based on Balkan and Baltic data, but there are many typological similarities with other ritual years beyond this area. This is the reason why we also publish the article by **Tatyana Mikhailova** (Moscow, Russia) on the Celtic ritual year and its connection with St. Brigitta. Celtic traces are still being discovered in the Balkans, that's why we decided to include this paper in the volume. Another reason is a typological process observed in many countries – the outburst of modified cults of Catholic or Christian Orthodox Saints, new vernacular religious activities, described by the author who studied the development of the image of St Brigitte and observed the new ceremonies in Ireland.

Another significant field of research which is reflected in the title of this volume and was present in the title of the SIEF Congress panel, that is axiology. The system and hierarchy of values connected with the ritual year is really ambivalent: being stable and conservative, it can be modified rather quickly. That is what we are witnessing now in the situation of self-isolation and social distances. Basic values such as health, life, family, togetherness, etc. are on the top of evaluation, while other values connected to business and modern urban life like success, leadership, self-realization, etc. are not topical anymore. These points are discussed in the article by **Irina Sedakova** (Moscow Russia), **Maria Kitanova** (Sofia, Bulgaria), **Peter Žeňuch** (Bratislava, Slovakia) and **Nikita Gusev** (Moscow, Russia), which is scrutinizing the shift(s) of the old and new values in various cultural, ethnic and religious settings.

The second part of this issue, “**Academic Studies and Practical Issues**” includes a detailed review of the development of the Baltic studies in Moscow by **Maria Zavyalova** (Moscow, Russia), in particular the semiotic and structural investigations of folklore and rituals, Baltic-Slavic language contacts, and the research of the history of Lithuanian and Latvian languages. The author provides information of the most valuable publications by the prominent scholars working in the area of Baltic studies.

Alexander Novik in his paper describes the history of the Albanian folk festival through different ideological systems. Through this history one can see the attitudes to authentic Albanian folklore, rites and national clothes which are rich and are geographically different. The author gives additional information on the history of the city of Gjirokastra and its meaning for Albanians, which adds value to the status of this cultural national event.

Mare Kõiva and Kristina Muhu (Tartu, Estonia) in their article explore the changes in Estonian school calendar holidays in 1992–2018. The investigators basing on statistical data and interviews shed light on the role of teachers, families and pupils in the evaluation of the most important points in the run of the ritual year.

The issue contains reviews of books and conferences, highlighting the topical academic problems in Balkan and Baltic studies.

Irina Sedakova & Laurent Sébastien Fournier

Notes

1 There is a certain tradition to publish some of the papers presented at the SIEF Congresses in academic journals, see Fournier & Sedakova 2015, Sedakova & Vlaskina 2016.

2 The 15-years activity of the group, founded in 2004 by Dr Emily Lyle, now the honorary Chair, was presented as a poster *Tracking the Ritual Year (2004–2019): fifteen years of working group activity* by Irina Stahl (Romania) and Tatiana Minniyakhmetova (Austria) and it draw attention of the audience. During the Congress there was also a short documentary on the Ritual Year WG activity shot which will appear on the SIEF site (<https://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/index.shtml>).

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FOLKLORE, ETHNOLOGY AND BEYOND, FROM THE 14TH SIEF CONGRESS IN SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

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Abstract: The article focuses on the main trends in development of ethnology, folklore and cultural anthropology as represented at the 14th congress of International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). The Congress' main theme *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* attracted scholars of many adjacent disciplines like sociology, history, economics and politics. The modern turn from rural studies and folklore genres towards gender, body, migration, identity investigations is typical to most scholars all over the world. Still, the traditional culture, its structure and language serve as the grounding for the newly appearing rituals and texts, they are in the core of the fundamental research. The Congress exhibited various forms of academic activity, such as key lectures, presentations in thematic panels or round tables, video-club, meetings of the working groups and prize awards. Young scholars are very welcome at this event where they can

learn methodology and history of the fields, take part in the competitions, present their own research.

Keywords: ethnology, folklore, pilgrimage, post-socialist studies, ritual year, SIEF

On April 14–17, 2019, in Santiago de Compostela (Spain), the 14th Congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) under the general title *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* took place.¹

The prestigious academic name of SIEF and the topical main theme of the 14th Congress attracted hundreds of scholars from all over the world. The location of the event, Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia in northwestern Spain and the destination of the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James), one of the most important pilgrimage routes from medieval times till now, added to the scholars' willingness to participate. As the organizers noted, "there could be no better place than Santiago de Compostela to host a conference for those well versed in the science and art of observing and analyzing human tracks – ethnologists, folklorists, anthropologists, and other trackers of culture. The congress' theme *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* drew upon both the ethnological explorations of human life and its continual change as well as the transforming, yet constant, Camino."

Though the SIEF is designed as an organization which unites folklorists and ethnologists, for many years it has gone far beyond these two disciplines. The complex investigation of the development of the disciplines promotes interdisciplinary studies, and supports the newly appearing fields of research, methodologies, theories, data (all these are growing in numbers and volume), networks, technologies and platforms, all of which are integrated in the core of the SIEF congress biannual programs. The Congress topic embraced all the sides of a human being and his or her premises, aligning with the major topic, and tracking the changes in the field.

Another typical feature of the SIEF activities, and correspondingly of the Congresses, is its growing attention towards the young generations. Among the participants there are many postgraduates, postdocs and early career scholars, who are mentored and given advice, present posters, and compete for the Young Scholar SIEF prize. They participate in the SIEF Working group (SIEF WG) created recently specifically for early career scholars. SIEF congresses now

exemplify the various ways in which the developing human and social sciences can provide opportunities to researchers at all stages of their careers, to support exchanging their knowledge and experience without any borders or restrictions.

The Congress's program was huge and consisted of over one hundred panels, each panel including from 6 to 8 papers (<https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2019/index.shtml>). Apart from panels there were poster sessions, a documentary festival, book exhibitions, and meetings of the Working groups. There are 14 WGs nowadays, and they cover many fields of research, such as Ethnology of Religion, The Ritual Year, Food Research, Migration and Mobility; some of them specialize on methods and data – Digital Ethnology and Folklore, Historical Approach in Cultural Analysis, or institutions – Archives, Museums and Material Culture. There are also WGs organized around national traditions studies – for example, Francophones and others (<https://www.siefhome.org/wg.shtml>).



Figure 1. Opening of the 14th SIEF Congress. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

The program included a key lecture every day. The opening ceremony started with the talk “The politics of evidence in an uncertain world: experience, knowledge, social facts and factual truth” delivered by the social anthropologist Suzanna Narotzky (Barcelona, Spain). Her primary focus was to analyze the category of evidence and the main types of knowledge, so as to unravel the process of valuation and the true concepts.

On the second day, the participants were invited by Tim Ingold to reflex on “Strike-through and wipe-out: tactics for overwriting the past” (Aberdeen, Scotland). The speaker’s current research is situated at the interface between anthropology, archaeology, art, and architecture. He dwelled on the practices of remembering and wiping out the past, which results in a present picture of the past looking like a palimpsest. The category of memory, commemoration in the context of history, and its newest re-writing in some (we would say many) countries is more than topical now. History and politics are often linked.

Finally, the third keynote was dedicated to “Digital footprints and narrative traceability” presented by Coppélie Cocq (Helsinki, Finland) who questioned and deconstructed the novelty of narratives and the methodology of studying them in the digital era. The purpose of her lecture was to reflect on how much we use online practices and data in our research, and whether we can get on without traditional methodological approaches. The scholar comes to the conclusion, that the traditional methods are still valuable and cannot be totally replaced by the new ones. This provided another example that old models are always rooted in the very depth of the most innovative, and current, practices. These ideas were developed and supported in many papers and discussions throughout the Congress.

A special session, “Track Changes in Galician Ethnology / Anthropology”, shed light on Galician ethnology and the history of the science locally. This was an inspiring meeting which showed the stages in the studies of the mostly fishing folk culture of Galicia and correspondingly of the initial predominance of this ‘fishing’ theme in the field of Galician ethnology. During the last decades, there have been many changes in the local investigations; now, new topics are under consideration, and there are young promising scholars, among whom – in contrast to the predominance of male academic presence – there are many women. These studies are connected with practical usage of the ideas of applied anthropology – commercial tourism, souvenirs, restaurants are growing in scale and provide opportunities for new data, while still using

the traditional knowledge. Thus, in Galicia, as in many other loci, the role of applied anthropology is growing.

On the whole, all the panels, roundtables, and workshops, were divided into thematic streams, including such fields as Age (4 panels), Archives and museums (5), Audio-visual (1), Body (6), Digital (4), Disciplinary and methodology discussions (14), Economy and work (5), Environment (6), Gender (3), Heritage (6), Life (8), Health and Medicine (4), Migration and borders (6), Narratives (5), Politics and Social (4), Posters (12), Religion and rituals (6), Rural (3), Sui Generis (3). The array of topics embraced all the spheres of human activities, environmental, economic, and ideological issues, as well as methodology and history of the disciplines.

With such a full program, so many parallel sessions, as well as other academic and cultural events, it was impossible to follow the whole program. We will characterize the panels we participated in and will give a general overview of the Congress with analysis of random papers.

From the Program one can see that folklore and ethnology as such were not presented as separate streams. At SIEF Congresses, these fields are touched upon in discussions on smaller or marginal themes which are relevant for these big traditional fields. We can confidently argue that the interest in archaic practices, rituals, and texts is not predominant for SIEF members from many countries. Folklore remains the major topic in the program of conferences of other academic organizations such as the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR, <http://www.isfnr.org/>). Of course, some papers in Santiago did mention folklore genres and oral texts, but they were used as a basis for other thematical or methodological analyses. For example, at the panel “Body, affect, senses and emotion: fields and perspectives” [SIEF Working Group on Body, Affects, Senses, and Emotions (BASE)] Tuukka Karlsson (Helsinki, Finland) delivered the paper “The semiotic register in Kalevala-meter incantations: the ontological question of emotions” which at first glance appears to allude to folklore. The author studied the presence of emotions in Kalevala-meter incantation performances with the help of a new theoretical framework through a new methodology that combines linguistic anthropological theories of semiotic registers (Agha 2007), stance taking (Du Bois 2007), and voice (Keane 1999). This methodology allows the scholar to reconstruct the extralinguistic data which is not present in the text of the epos.



Figure 2. Meeting of the Chairs of the SIEF Working Groups. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

As far as ethnology and traditional rural studies are concerned, the situation is similar to that of folklore studies. There are countries where field research and investigations into traditional rural culture are still well preserved (mostly Eastern and Central European countries), but they are not many. At the 12th SIEF Congress in 2015 in Zagreb (in Croatia and neighbouring countries traditional ethnography is still well developed), there were many ethnographic papers.² In Santiago de Compostela the block “Rural” included three panels: “Entangled countryside – tracking political negotiations and transformations of the rural”, “Tracking changes in the mountains: imaginaries, mobilities, narratives”, and “Transforming transhumance pastoralism, ‘heritagization’ and new rural economies”. It is obvious that the interest towards mostly political and economic problems, such as migration, identity, gender, body, and values prevails. Even if the investigation is based on rural context, the focus is different. For example, Elisabeth Wollin Elhouar (Stockholm, Sweden), in her paper “Politics of space and belonging in rural Sweden,” spoke on the significant transformation of the rural space, and of the urge for a new politics towards refugees coming to the



Figure 3. The SIEF WG “The Ritual Year” panel. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

country. The speaker has collected materials from two small municipalities, in Södermanland county and Uppland county. According to the interviews, the policy against taking refugees is often opposite if compared with the capability and mood of the provincial people toward the “new citizens”.

Considerably more attention was paid to the history and methodology of the fields of folklore and ethnology. A round table “Tracing/tracking/transforming histories of the ethnology/folklore: toward critical methodology”, with convenors Hande Birkalan-Gedik (Münster, Germany) and Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik (Ljubljana, Slovenia), and three discussants Laurent S. Fournier (Marseille, France), Peter Jan Margry (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Patrick Laviolette (Leicester, UK) and Klaus Schönberg (Klagenfurt, Austria) attracted a large audience. The round table was aimed at challenging uncritical, evolutionary disciplinary histories vis à vis the histories with novel approaches, which go beyond the conventional ones. The seven papers read at this panel took us to various countries and research objects: the history of the discipline in Spain and in Czech republic, “anthropology of home” as founded by Raymond Firth



Figure 4. Round Table “Tracing/tracking/transforming histories of the ethnology/folklore: toward critical methodology”. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

who had done research among the Maori, ethnographic value of Portuguese paintings, autobiography as a genre, Slovenian-German bilingualism and its influence on the development on musical folklore, apprehension of folk-music collection in Iceland, and, finally, a detailed presentation of B. Malinowski’s contribution to the disciplines. All these provoked a fruitful discussion, the main ideas of which confirmed the thesis by Copp lie Cocq: the traditional field research cannot be replaced by digital investigations; archives and collections are still a must and a base for any ethnologic or folklore study; all the innovative means for collecting and analyzing data have to serve as an addition to the traditional methods.

The panel “Tracking the ritual year on the move in different cultural settings and systems of values” was organized by SIEF Working group (WG) on the Ritual Year with two convenors, co-chairs of the SIEF WG “The Ritual Year” Laurent S. Fournier (Marseille, France) and Irina Sedakova (Moscow, Russia) Some of the papers delivered at this panel are presented in this issue (Žilvytis

Šaknys, Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė, Tatyana Mikhailova, Alexander Novik, Mare Kõiva), so we will review just those which are not included here.

Irina Sedakova in her paper “Bulgarian (Balkan) winter calendric ritual meals: dynamics of symbolism and values” drew attention to the archaic winter customs (Christmas, New Year, Epiphany) as they are depicted in the published data and archives of 19th–20th cc. Special ceremonial bread symbolically combines veneration of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, Nativity, God, but, also, depending on the region (in the North-West of Bulgaria, parts of Serbia), it is dedicated to pre-Christian gods and aim at good crops, fertility of cattle, and people’s well-being. These ritual complexes are still popular, but in a modified form, in the cities. Now the ritual loaves and the festive meal are seen as family or community entertainment, as cultural heritage and memorial practice, as an issue of national identification, touristic attraction and local branding. The discussion brought in some parallels of the transformation in the traditional holiday meals in other European countries, partly because of the trend towards vegetarianism, healthy food, and restrictions on eating bread. It is seen as a conflict between generations, when grandmothers want to make their grandchildren eat traditional “unhealthy” calories – rich food such as pork and bread, and the youngsters protest against it.

Mare Kõiva (Tartu, Estonia) spoke on the “Changes in calendar holidays in 1992–2018 (Estonia)”. This paper was slightly different from the one she published in this issue (with Kristina Muhi as a co-author). The scholar has tracked the modifications in the systems of holidays from 1918 up to the present day. The speaker was asked about the role of, and attitudes towards, the official holidays during the Soviet times in Estonia. There was no affection towards the socialist holidays in general, but some dates in the ritual calendar, such as March the 8th the International Women’s Day was, and still is, popular, specified the speaker. This statement was supported by scholars from Lithuania and Latvia, where this date was popular, too, and even now retains some form of celebrations.

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova (Riga, Latvia) in her paper “Replacing traditions: a case of Latvian SSR” reflected on the festivals, introduced to Latvia in the period of 1940–1991 years, as a means of legitimizing the Soviet ideology. Similar to the processes described by the previous speaker, the establishment and introduction of the new traditions took more than a decade of experimenting with the form and content of them, as well as trying to eradicate religious

rituals from the daily life of inhabitants living in this country. The scholar made a detailed analysis, using documents and correspondence, revealing the decree of the Council of Ministers on the implementation of the improvement measures in the invention of Soviet traditions. The presentation was supported by visual materials, such as photographs, mass-media descriptions of events, calendars, etc. In the discussion following, one question dominated: whether the Russians in Latvia accepted the new ritual year quicker than the Latvians. This question is also valid for other former Soviet republics where Russians live. This is a typological problem and it should be investigated as a special issue – this was the general conclusion.

Aado Lintrop (Tartu, Estonia) named his paper “About two Seto holidays held in August each year”. A prominent expert on traditions of Setos, who are an ethnic and linguistic minority in south-eastern Estonia and north-western Russia, mostly Orthodox Christians, Lintrop started with the analysis of a new Seto festival. It is the First Seto Kingdom Day, which has been celebrated since 1994. The idea was borrowed from Norway, where descendants of 17th Century Finnish immigrants each year proclaim their Republic. The old history of the Seto Kingdom is based on the Seto epic “Peko”, created by traditional singer Anne Vabarna in 1927. On the request of a scholar she then made the old Seto god of fertility, Peko, a human being and king of Setos. Peko’s remains are buried in a cave near the Russian Orthodox Pskovo-Pechersky Monastery. Thus the connection with the Church festival of Dormition of the Mother of God (August 28th, old style) arises. Before the introduction of Seto Kingdom Day, the Dormition was for Setos just a Church holiday. Now it is mentally connected with the Kingdom Day due to the legend of king Peko, including veneration of the objects devoted to him. A day before Dormition, the abbot of the monastery has an official meeting with the Seto delegation (the regent included). From 2008, in the village Sigovo of Pechery region, on the evening of Dormition a festival is held that is named Family Meetings, visited by large numbers of Estonian Setos. Kingdom Day is now the central event of the Seto ritual year; the regent has become the leader of the Setos. The discussion was around the huge content and activity development of a modern festival, which is linked to the “roots” of the Setos and meanwhile is also associated with a big Christian Orthodox holiday. The role of the family is significant for the expansion of this minority’s fest, which was underlined by many scholars.

Irina Stahl (Bucharest, Romania) presented part of her project “A saints’ trek from Greece to Romania: The rise and spread of Saint Nektarios’ cult”, in which she traced the fast spread of Saint Nektarios’ cult in Romania after 2002. This was the year when a fragment of the relics of the healing saint from the Greek island of Aegina were brought to the prior of Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest. The researcher based her study on the data of the field work, interviews, and investigation of unpublished testimonies. She compared the pilgrimages to St. Nectarius’ sanctum in Aegina and Bucharest with special attention to healing rituals and their presumed efficacy. In 2018, in Bucharest the members of the 13th Ritual Year conference held and organized by Irina Stahl, participated in a pilgrimage and veneration of the saint and had the opportunity to interview one of the monks (Sedakova & Novik & Dugushina 2019).

Moving to other topics discussed at the Congress we should note that during the last decades, special interest has developed on the digital technologies in the investigation of new folklore texts, innovative forms of communication, etc. The paper delivered by Petra Schmidt (Munich, Germany) “(Self-)Representation in mom-lifestyle blogs” read at the panel “Changing features? Performing the self in digital culture” [SIEF WG Digital Ethnology and Folklore] was devoted to the analysis of *Berlin mom lifestyle blog*. It is a media and image analytical group correspondence, which investigates manners of representation of motherhood in context of an increasing social demand for creativity and lifestyle as work. The authors’ views on representation of motherhood in Berlin are similar to the conclusions of other scholars who study maternity blogs (Dugushina 2016: 276–278). Needless to say that maternity and children should always be in the center of academic ethnological and folklore research, whatever material and methodologies are used.³

One of the most discussed papers was that of Anna Fedele (Lisbon, Portugal) “Embodying migrating identities through pilgrimage: anthropological explorations of Portuguese migrants’ experiences in Fatima” read at the panel “Embodying social and political transformations in borderlands: anthropological analyses”. The author presented her long-term study of the phenomenon of the religious trips to Fatima, the famous religious location for pilgrimage. For every religious Portuguese a visit to Fatima at least once in his/her life is obligatorily.⁴ Due to the political, economic, and other reasons, millions of Portuguese emigrated and live in other European countries, Brazil, and the USA. According to the statistics, 20% of the Portuguese live in the diaspora;

their children were brought up away from the ancestral homeland. Often this generation does not speak Portuguese, but still, veneration of Fatima is an important part of the education (“equal to the passion for football and fado”, as the scholar argues), a significant feature of the Portuguese identity. This has led to the fact that those 20 to 30 year old Portuguese born in France or Switzerland or other countries, come to their parents’ motherland to make a pilgrimage to Fatima, to fulfil their promise. It does not resemble a serious religious pilgrimage, but rather looks more like a tourist trip. This type of visiting program is supported by the locals: there are special food-places which meet the demands of such pilgrims, hotels and disco-bars. During the discussion, many scholars gave examples of the transformation of the religious trips into entertaining tours with veneration of the saints and churches as points on the itinerary, but not the main focus.⁵

In the same panel, Elisabeth Tauber (Bolzano, Italy) read the paper “Ethnographic explorations of the wolf crossing the linguistic border of the Trentino-South Tyrol (Italy)”. The topical theme of the border is being studied by anthropologists, linguists, and other scholars since it has language, ethnic, cultural, and political dimensions. The scholar investigated two villages in one of the regions of Northern Italy, where there are German-Italian border passes, working with many interlocutors. According to the tradition, in the houses the sons (brothers) stay to live while the daughters (sisters) get married in other villages. The sons take the wives from other villages, where the other language may be spoken, and together with the brides the foreign language idioms mix up with the local ones. Linguistic border is not that strict anymore due to the permanent migration, the going back and forth. Not only the linguistic situation changes, but also the types of gardens, food habits, and households. Migration brings over innovations and changes the borders (cp.: Silverstein 2003: 193–229; Singer 2018: 83–90).⁶ This paper was vigorously discussed, many other interesting and funny examples of language and rites shifting around a border followed.

The presentation by Anna-Karina Hermkens (Sidney, Australia) “Transnational community ritual in PNG-Australian diaspora communities: the case of the Blessed Peter To Rot” was also vividly debated. The scholar from Sidney discussed the transfer of the ritual practices from Papua New Guinea to Australia. The majority of the inhabitants of PNG are Catholics. They are relocating Catholic shrines and ritual celebrations to Australia in order to celebrate their National Patron Saint Peter To Rot (1912–1945), a catholic priest who sup-

ported Papua during the World War 2 and was murdered by a maniac. Peter To Rot is venerated in PNG and in migration, where the migrants bring over his cult. Veneration of the saint in Australia and in PNG includes pilgrimages to sites and shrines dedicated to the Blessed Peter To Rot and are very popular. In Australia, this cult is supported by gay people, who celebrated their wedding in the Peter To Rot shrine. So, the cult is assimilated and transformed according to the local needs, which is frequently the case with “imported” saints.

Several panels reflected on the Holocaust; some of them were focused on the Polish case, including the paper by Piotr Grochowski (Krakow, Poland) “Hidden narratives and their social functions. What and why Polish peasants (do not) talk about the Holocaust”, read at the panel “Widening the focus on narratives [SIEF Working group on Narratives founding panel]”, treated the attitudes to the problem by the Poles. The catastrophe is openly discussed, but what is rarely spoken about is the participation of the Poles in the prosecution of the Jews. There are many disputes around the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. The museum is located in a spacious house, uses all the new multi-media technologies, and is very logically organized. On the other hand, many scholars insist on one-way ideology, which is debated at several museums in many countries.⁷

Gender topics are an imperative part of the Congress’ scientific program. The block “Gender” in Santiago de Compostela consisted of three panels: “Into a trans-forming world: exploring genders and postgenders [SIEF Working Group on Body, Affects, Senses, and Emotions (BASE)]”, “New Gender dynamics? Instrumentalization of gender in European neo-national and right wing movements”, and “Men’s commitment in long term care: changes in kinship and gender?” Another topic connected with gender centers on the investigations of LGBTQ-communities in different countries. In 2015, in Zagreb at the 12th SIEF Congress, there was a big panel “Queer ethnographies of the 21st century: heritages, realities, and perspectives”, but in Santiago there was not a special panel. Still, several papers on LGBTQ were delivered and the audience was quite representative. The paper by Cory Thorne (Newfoundland) “Hidden thoughts and exposed bodies: negotiating ethics and representation of Cuban masculinities and sexualities” drew the attention of many scholars. Cory Thorne together with Meltem Turkoz (Turkey) organized the panel “Art, artists, and social justice in folklore and ethnography”. In the paper based on long-term field research in the Caribbean archipelago, C. Thorne shed light on the presentation of masculinity

and sexuality in the paintings by modern Cuba painters, who work with acrylic on canvas. After many decades of isolation from the Western world, Cuba has become more open to American and European tourists. Many people visit the Island of Freedom as sex-tourists, because of accessibility and inexpensiveness of intimate services. A certain niche is occupied by gay tourists. They are the target audience of the young artists who are trying to demonstrate the appeal of masculinity and men's bodies – their own or their friends. As an illustration, one painting by George Michel Milian Maura “Testosteromania” (2012) was presented, and it provoked a vivid discussion. The results of the exchange of opinions on the art which seemed to everybody rather depressive is the following: 1) masculinity can be transformed into femininity, 2) the willingness to be young looks like a manifestation of femininity. The discussants argued that perceptions of masculinity, sexuality, and morality in different societies must be studied from different points of view.

A vast and vibrant topic of the SIEF congresses is always the reminiscence and reflections of the socialist past. The panel “Current Images of Socialism” with three convenors from the former “socialist camp” Lubica Volanska (Bratislava, Slovakia), Kirsti Jõesalu (Tartu, Estonia), and Jana Nosková (Praha, Czech Republic) gathered many scholars who delivered 10 papers in two sessions with a fruitful discussion at the end. The aim of the panel was to reflect on the current representations/images of socialism, as communicated by the generation of witnesses and transmitted to the younger generations. The very scholars who study socialism as a recent past period are from different generations: for some of them this is the time when they lived and worked. Others were born after the decay of the socialist system. This seems a very important distinction of how the epoch is seen and depicted. The presentations covered, mostly, everyday life and the socialist attitudes towards food and food ways, public canteens, rented or bought apartments. The paper “Family photographs as a means of remembering the past” read by Jana Nosková presented a project which took place in several Czech cities, when children had to choose three photos from the family album and to describe them. The analysis of the choice and stories proved the importance of such a program which allows the transmission of important knowledge of the Soviet period – joyful facts like festivals and leisure time, and sorrowful ones such as work camps and war episodes. Another project “Girls and women in Slovakia and Hungary (1955–1989). An Ethnological approach” is being carried out by Marta Botikova (Bratislava, Slovakia) and Zita

Figure 5. Procession “The Entry of Our Lord to Jerusalem”. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.



Deáky (Budapest, Hungary). The idea of the authors is to represent everyday life in socialist Slovakia and Hungary from women’s perspectives. They use their own autobiographic data, interviews, and evidence from printed and archival materials as well. Interestingly, in this panel there wasn’t a single scholar from Russia; there were only Estonians from the former USSR and researchers from Hungary and former Czechoslovakia. This fact was noticed in the discussion, and it was commented that the countries mentioned were more “western” compared to other republics of the USSR or socialist countries, and they had a better economic system, and the people suffered fewer shortages. So, the situation in each socialist country, and even in each city, was very different.

Apart from papers, discussions, film-shows and other academic and artistic activities, many organizational meetings aimed at getting the international scholars together and motivating the work in the field were held during the



Figure 6. The parishioners and pilgrims with olive branches. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

Congress. The leaders of the Working groups discussed the previous two years and the plans for the next two years; each WG held its own meeting, highlighting the main events before and after the Congress. The coordination meeting of university department representatives focused on collaboration and exchange programs between the universities, on folklore and ethnology, while the coordination meeting of journal editors aimed at promoting collaboration between journals and the discussion of the topical issues of the publication.

The Young Scholar Prize for the paper “The Concealed Revealed ‘The Afterlives’ of hidden objects in the home” was awarded to Cery Houlbrook (Hertfordshire, UK). The topic of the objects and their role in people’s memory and family narratives was in the center of the closing event – the round table “The materiality of transformations: Listening to the objects” run by Regina Bendix, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Dorothy Noyes, and Sharon Roseman.

Figure 7. Palm Sunday and Easter ritual cakes. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.



This event looked like a performance with some features of storytelling: the participants had to describe an object from their home and to track the transformation of the attitude towards it. The narratives were very emotional and showed another prospective, and possible, area of ethnographic study.

The Congress took place during the week of St. Lazar and Palm week, so the participants had plenty of opportunities to watch the picturesque Christian activity in the city, such as colorful ceremonies and dramatic processions with prayers and music.

The 15th Congress will take place in 2021, June 21–24, hosted by the University of Helsinki (Finland) under the general title “Breaking the rules? Power, participation, transgression”. We anticipate that it will be a fascinating scholarly event, with many interesting activities around it, since it will be held around the time of the Midsummer festival, so rich with rituals and celebrations.



Figure 8. A back-pack of a pilgrim. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

Notes

- 1 See the site of the Congress <https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2019/index.html>.
- 2 In the previous 12th congresses in 2015 in Zagreb the panel “Ethnography of rural spaces: between utopia and neoliberalism”, was one of the most visited (Vlaskina et. al. 2015: 251–273).
- 3 A special issue, Vol. 80, of *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* with childhood and maternity as major themes will appear in 2020.
- 4 In 2011 at the 10th SIEF congress which took place in Lisbon, the participants had the wonderful opportunity to visit Fatima.

5 Same types of semi-religious semi-entertaining tours are described in the article by Tanya Matanova published in this issue.

6 This topic is very popular now in the academic world. Just to mention that parallel to the SIEF Congress (April 15–17, 2019) in Lyon, France, there was the 12th Conference on small-scale multilingualism. Similar topics have been discussed there (Pierpaolo Di Carlo and Jeff Good (University at Buffalo, The State University of New York) “Indexical order, identity targets, and the typology of multilingualism”, Friederike Lüpke “A staged communicative event in Agnack (Lower Casamence, Senegal)” and others).

7 Such a discussion under the title “Jewish Diasporas in Europe and Beyond: Fieldwork and Source Studies” was organized by the Department of European Studies at Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Saint-Petersburg, November 6–8, 2017).

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I

**The Ritual Year on the Move:
Cultural Settings and
Systems of Values**

FOUR GLANCES AT THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION: THE HOLIDAY THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

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Abstract: In my article, I attempt to track the ritual year in different social and cultural settings. The Feast of the Assumption was chosen for this research as a traditional religious holiday in Lithuania. Various chronological periods and localities of the feast are under investigation: celebrations in the 19th to the first half of the 20th centuries; the Assumption as a Lithuanian national holiday in 1929 in Kaunas; the Feast as a Lithuanian holiday specifically celebrated in Pusk (North Poland) since 1967; and finally, as a non-working day in Vilnius and Vilnius environments since 2000. The comparison of these versions, forms, and meanings of the Assumption leads to the conclusion that even a religious holiday can embody different values in different sociocultural surroundings, ranging from religious, national, and ethnic significance, to simply an excuse for a day off from work.

Keywords: Feast of the Assumption, holiday, religiosity, Ritual year, secularity, values

Introduction

As Amitai Etzioni has said, “the editing and the limited re-engineering of holidays (rituals included) take place constantly, drawing on both new designs and

old patterns. How effective it is, and how effective it can be, is a major subject for social scientists, as it currently remains largely unstudied” (Etzioni 2004: 6). In my article, I make an attempt to track the ritual year in different social and cultural settings. The Feast of the Assumption as a traditional religious holiday of the 19th–first half of the 20th centuries in Lithuania; as a Lithuanian national holiday in 1929 in Kaunas; as a Lithuanian holiday specifically celebrated in Pusk (North Poland) since 1967; and as a non-working day in Vilnius and Vilnius environments from 2000 was chosen for this research.

Several stages can be discerned when analyzing the ritual year in Lithuania, as in other post-socialist countries. In the first stage, from 1918 when the modern Lithuanian state was created, religious holidays associated with the Church predominated. However, besides the liturgical element, there were also folk forms of entertainment that functioned in the Christian context of the celebration (Mardosa 2013: 58). In the second stage – in 1940–1941, and especially in 1944–1990, we notice fundamental changes that were unprecedented in Lithuania, where, as Catherine Bell said, “The new rites would replace older religious rites as communist morality and socialist internationalism would overpower bourgeois nationalism. Special commissions researched both general and local issues, devised systematic descriptions of particular rites, and gave practical assistance to those attempting to implement the rites on the local level” (Bell 1997: 226–227). The third stage, which Lithuania’s ethnologists have not yet properly evaluated, sees the “revitalisation” of old holidays in the formation of the “religious” ritual year. However, according to the ethnologist Petras Kalnius, we are living in a period when “more and more people accept God, but seek salvation through short-term obligations outside the Church sphere, where they promote ‘non-religious Christianity’” (Kalnius 2003: 186). In some cases, the holiday can embody different values in different social and cultural contexts, and have a radically different relationship with religiosity. I have already written on this theme when analysing Shrovetide in Lithuania (*Užgavėnės*), revealing this celebration as an agrarian, urban, socialist, and a “Lithuanian” holiday celebrated in emigrant families (Šaknys 2015a: 105–128). However, as a holiday, Shrovetide is not notable for its religious content and is only one day before the Lent period. Another type of holiday is the Feast of the Assumption (*Žolinės*), which has a clear and defined link to religion with its main rituals being carried out in the church. I have chosen the Feast of the Assumption for my study, since I intend to analyze whether a religious holiday can take on a secular form in a different social and cultural environment.

In Lithuania, this holiday is not celebrated by people of all confessions. Out of the larger confessions functioning in Lithuania, the holiday is important to Catholics (the dominant faith in Lithuania by number of followers), the Christian Orthodox, and the Old Believers. Back in the early 20th century, the Feast of the Assumption was celebrated at the state level. In the beginning of the 20th century, when most of Lithuania belonged to the Russian Empire, the Feast of the Assumption was not a regular work day; in 1918, this status quo remained in place when Lithuania regained its independence. However, when, in 1915, the Gregorian calendar was adopted, the Assumption was celebrated on August 15th by Catholics, while the Christian Orthodox and the Old Believers kept adhering to the Julian calendar and therefore celebrated the Feast of the Assumption twelve days later (Šaknys 2015b: 103).

My research on the Feast of the Assumption is based on personal field research conducted at different periods. Material about the traditional Christian calendar holidays was selected from various locations in Lithuania ranging from 1988 to 1995. The traditional and modern customs alive in the Pusk (North Poland) area were analyzed in 1989 and 2005. Today's situation was documented by conducting research on the leisure time and holidays in the daily life of Vilnius and the Vilnius surroundings, in 2012–2016 and in 2017–2018, respectively. A semi-structured interview was not the only method used; while living in Vilnius at various periods, I had the opportunity to observe this celebration in Vilnius city, and in 1989, I observed how the Assumption was celebrated in Pusk. Press publications (the main source when analyzing the situation in 1929) and internet sources were also used. Ethnologists' research and the data they collected was also useful, especially the works by Maria Znamierowska-Prüfferowa (Znamierowska-Prüfferowa 1997; 2009), Angelė Vyšniauskaitė (Vyšniauskaitė 1993), Nijolė Marcinkevičienė (Marcinkevičienė 1998), Aldona Vaicekauskienė (Vaicekauskienė 2004: 3–22) and Jonas Mardosa (Mardosa 2004: 93–112; Mardosa 2007: 155–168; Mardosa 2016a: 53–67; Mardosa 2016b: 291–311).

The Feast of the Assumption as a Religious Holiday

The celebration of the Assumption in the Christian liturgical year was established in religious documents in the first centuries of Christianity. The custom of the consecration of herbs, common to the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven, started in the 10th century; details on the prayers of

the consecration of flowers, in which God is asked for the herbs to be beneficial both to the healthy and to the ill, to humans and to animals, are well-known to us. This tradition reached Lithuania along with Christianity; similar prayers can be found in 17th century Roman Catholic Church documents (Mardosa 2016b: 309).

This day was also related to folk beliefs associated with the end of the most important field work, and with the juncture of summer and autumn. The Lithuanian name for this holiday (*Žolinė* ‘grass day’) confirms this association. In South Lithuania (Dzūkija), *Žolinė*, the Feast of the Assumption, was also known as *Kopūstinė* (‘cabbage day’). Apart from flowers, in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, the first fruits and vegetables of the season would also be brought to the church to be blessed. For example, in South Lithuania the bouquet would also have a carrot, turnip, peas, beetroot, and a head of cabbage (Vyšniauskaitė 1993: 106). Rye, wheat, and oats would also be sanctified, and these grains would be mixed with all the grains before sowing for a better harvest (Šaknys 2007: 129). All members of the family would eat these blessed vegetables and would share them with their livestock to protect them against disease. Dried grass would be kept in the cottage tucked behind pictures of saints, and during thunderstorms, this grass would be set alight, allowing the smoke to waft around inside; the ill would drink tea brewed with this particular grass (Vyšniauskaitė 1993: 106). Certain restrictions regarding food were also associated with the day of the Assumption. Women who had lost at least one child were not allowed to eat apples until the day of the Assumption had come. During expeditions into various regions around Lithuania, I also heard stories about how mothers who did not abide by this restriction (several women spoke about their own personal experiences) would have dreams about their deceased child, who complained that it was her fault that God did not give him any apples, because his mother had already eaten them. As a result, women from various regions around Lithuania who had lost children strictly followed this prohibition. When writing about the customs alive in the Vilnius surrounds, ethnologist Maria Znamierowska-Prüfferowa mentioned that for the same reasons, women would not eat carrots, beetroot, cabbage, pears, and even potatoes, believing that God gave fruit only to those deceased children whose mothers restrained from eating them until the day of the Assumption (Znamierowska-Prüfferowa 2009: 196). In some areas, the same prohibitions were followed, only that it was the Virgin Mary who shared and gave out the fruit in heaven, not God (Marcinkevičienė 1998: 124–125). The grass blessed

during the Assumption celebrations also performed a specific function in funeral customs. Even today, there is a custom where the grass is placed in a coffin (inside the pillow or underneath the body of the deceased) (Mardosa 2016b: 300–301). In some areas in South Lithuania, people would still give alms to beggars in the early 20th century. On that day, meals would be prepared from that year’s harvest. Everything that was set aside for beggars would be placed on the table – a mutton leg, several loaves of bread, or cake. Then the head of the household would light a candle, say the Litany of the Saints, and pass it around the food set aside for the beggars three times. After breakfast, the family would go to church and give this food to beggars near the church or leave it at a shelter (Lit. *Špitolė* from Ger. *Spital*, an early form of ‘hospital’) for distribution (Marcinkevičienė 1998: 125).

These examples show us that in the late 19th to the first half of the 20th centuries, the Feast of the Assumption was an important religious holiday in the agrarian community, though not as significant as Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost, which were celebrated for two to four days, nor did it lead to secular entertainment that would gather all the people from the village (shared feasting, walking around together, swinging on large swings, etc.). The Feast of the Assumption was purely a celebration for farmers, and we shall analyse whether it had the same significance in the city as a state holiday in the next section, by looking at how it was celebrated in the temporary capital of Lithuania, Kaunas (the Lithuanian capital Vilnius was under Polish occupation in the years 1920–1939).

The Feast of the Assumption as a National Holiday

The concept of the “National Day” was used in Lithuania in the years 1918–1940 to identify the most important state holiday. However, over time, the “National Day” title was also given to a range of different celebrations: the day of the Declaration of Independence of the Lithuanian state (February 16th), the day when the Constituent Assembly gathered (May 15th), the Feast of the Assumption (August 15th), and the day of the coronation of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas the Great (September 8th). Over the perspective of time, the significance of these holidays changed due to political circumstances (Šaknys 2018: 129–154). A surprising decision was reached in 1929; on August 14th, 1929, an important Lithuanian state newspaper, *Lietuvos aidas*, featured the following information: “Tomorrow we shall be marking the National Day. Our

government has combined all national and state holidays into one national holiday, giving it one day, August 15th, which is a church feast day” (*Tautos šventė* 1929: 1). This holiday was described in a similar way in the Lithuanian military weekly *Karys* (*karys* ‘soldier’): “August 15th is a major holiday for us because it incorporates the ceremony set aside for February 16th – our great military parade – and May 15th, and the fine autumn, the Feast of the Assumption, church holiday that is celebrated so widely and nicely by our people” (Kpt. Balčiūnas 1939: 531). So, this National Holiday had combined three occasions into one. A strange motive was given as the foundation for this decision; the Feast of the Assumption was announced as the National Holiday in 1929 in the lead article in the *Lietuvos aidas* newspaper, stating that it was more convenient to celebrate this occasion in the summer rather than on February 16th, while May 15th was a busy time due to all the spring-time related work. August 15th was the most convenient day for the National Holiday, which was also a Church holy feast day, and thus it had to be celebrated as such, and not increase the number of days off from regular work (*Tautos šventė* 1929: 1). It appears that this was important to Lithuania in light of the global economic crisis, however, “the combination of all national and state holidays” could hardly have created one holiday and its respective rituals. At least in Kaunas, its seasonality was not very evident. As was the case with all major state holidays, it began the day before by expressing respect for the nation’s dead heroes. The morning of the holiday would begin with a parade, followed by mass held at church later in the day, the president of the Republic of Lithuania would give a speech and there would be a military parade. The city would be illuminated with lots of lights (Kriaukeniškis 1929: 3). As such, the holiday was not as modest and inexpensive as one would expect, given the conditions of a global economic crisis. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how the Feast of the Assumption – the day when the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up into Heaven – could have satisfied the population from the Klaipėda Region that had recently been incorporated into Lithuania (1923), most of whom were Evangelical Lutherans. Nor is it likely that the Assumption, as the most important state holiday, could have been accepted by other people who did not profess the Catholic faith (as was already mentioned, the Orthodox and the Old Believers who marked this holiday did so on a different date). It shows that the artificially formed seasonal aspect of this holiday would not necessarily become the basis for a successful ritual. On the other hand, this was the only and the most important national holiday that had no links to events considered important to the state, and was

thus difficult for society to comprehend. It could be said that the experiment of combining a religious and a secular celebration into one did not succeed. In 1930, this National Day was changed to a new date, September 8th, which commemorated the failed coronation of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas in 1430, as well as a religious celebration – the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sirutavičius 2001: 134).

The Feast of the Assumption as a Holiday for Lithuanians in Pusk

The public commemoration of the Feast of the Assumption as a religious or Lithuanian national holiday under the conditions of Soviet atheism and internationalism was not possible in Soviet Lithuania. Even in the case of religious feast days, the holiday would be moved to a weekday, and people who held important positions in the education or culture spheres would place their careers at risk by participating. However, there were exceptions in the neighbouring socialist countries. The significance of the Assumption as a religious and national holiday was combined with a feast day ordinarily celebrated in the Pusk parish. The parish, which consists mostly of Lithuanians, belonged to the People's Republic of Poland, where atheist policies were not expressed so intensively. The situation of Pusk, as a remote provincial Polish town, increased the local population's opportunities to organize public events and even express national views during religious celebrations.

According to the research of ethnologist Aldona Vaicekauskienė, the Assumption folk traditions alive in the Pusk area were similar to those in South Lithuania. It was believed that grass blessed on the Assumption would offer protection from thunderstrikes, it was used to cure children of being scared, women would prepare bouquets of this grass to be placed in their coffins for the day when they died. Blessed stalks of rye, barley, and wheat would be scattered into grains for sowing to protect them against hail and drought, and to ensure a better harvest (Vaicekauskienė 2004: 9). However, besides being just a religious feast day, this holiday had other types of activity. One of the most important elements were Assumption Day wreaths. Algis Uzdila presents a brief history:

The Feast of the Assumption is a special celebration in the Pusk parish. It started being celebrated in a particular way in the times of Fr Ignas Dzermeika. The priest, who was very experienced and had a broad

imagination, arrived in Punska in 1967 and started organising the making of the wreaths for the Assumption holiday. Among the first to show their enthusiasm were the villagers from Vaitakiemis, or more precisely, the young people there, who included some active students. Other neighbours followed their example. Up until then, women would go to church with bouquets of flowers, but these started being replaced by artistic small altar-type creations – Assumption Day wreaths. Word spread about these wreaths, tourists became interested in the new phenomenon and kept arriving in ever larger crowds. Photographers and filmmakers also came. Punska began to attract more and more attention (Uzdila 2005: 18).

During the first years these Assumption Day wreaths were made, parish villages inhabited by Poles also participated, though later on, only the Lithuanians kept up this tradition (Svidinskaitė 2006: 245). The wreaths often embodied national symbolism. In 1967, a wreath made by someone in Vaitakiemis even incorporated the Gediminid Columns made from the upper grain stalks, thin wire was used to attach a Vytis cross, while a wreath from 1988 featured the Vytis, and in 1991, in memory of the bloody events of January in Lithuania, one wreath had a heart pierced with arrows. When the survival of the Lithuanian parish in Vidugiriai (a village near Punska) was threatened, a wreath was made depicting a model of its church with its doors locked (Vaicekauskienė 2004: 9). Symbols of the Gediminid Columns and the Vytis cross were not tolerated in the Lithuanian SSR and were strictly banned in the public religious and secular space until 1988. The act of making these wreaths in the past was, and today is, usually the domain of younger people. The Assumption retains certain features of a traditional celebration; after a ceremonial procession, the wreaths would be placed in church; after several weeks, each village would take back their wreaths and divide the grains among the wreath-makers. According to tradition, everyone would add these grains to those set aside for sowing, or feed them to their livestock or chickens. Some believed this would ensure a good harvest or success in breeding heads of cattle. On the other hand, a number of innovations were also present in how the Assumption was celebrated in Punska. Fairs were held starting in 1983 with a festive program; and starting in 2000, folklore ensembles were invited to perform. From 2004, the Bread, Honey, and Milk Festival also started being held to coincide with the Feast of the Assumption (Vaicekauskienė 2004: 3–22). In 2019, the Assumption holiday lasted for five days. However, the celebration was only related to religion on August 15th,

from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (three mass services, the blessing of the wreaths, praying the Rosary, and a ceremonial procession). The rest of the time was dedicated to performances by local Lithuanian folklore ensembles, or ones that had arrived for this occasion from Lithuania, traditional and modern music concerts, theatrical performances, dances, a folk artists' market, and the Bread, Honey and Milk Festival (*Žolinės Punske*). By attracting Lithuanian musicians and other cultural activists, traders and tourists from Lithuania, the people of Pusk truly made this a “Lithuanian holiday”. It became hugely popular among young people. I was convinced of this when watching the celebrations back in 1989. There was not a single person in Pusk who had ignored the holiday or said it was not important to them. In 2005, during other field research, I asked respondents aged 17–19 from around the Pusk area (43 semi-structured interviews) to name their favourite holiday. “The Feast of Assumption” was named as their second-favourite holiday, after Christmas. Explaining their choices, the young people listed the holiday's events, highlighting how they happily spent time with their friends and especially the “Lithuanian music” aspect (Šaknys 2009: 90). Thus, this is an example of a successful attempt at giving a secular form to a religious holiday.

Let us now look at how a similar task has been handled in recent years on a state-wide scale in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius and in surrounding villages, towns, and cities where, like in Pusk, the religiosity of people is greater than the average in other places in Lithuania.

The Modern “Assumption Day” Holiday in Vilnius and Its Surrounds

In order to understand the modern “Assumption Day” holiday, we should look back to some holidays of the Soviet period. From the very beginning of the occupation (1940–1941; 1944–1989), Soviet authorities changed the entire system of calendar holidays in Lithuania. In the entire Soviet Union, revolutionary festivals were marked as official holidays. The period under the Soviet regime was a time when new traditions were being reinvented. New ‘socialist’, ‘communist’, or even ‘new life’ traditions were created, with the intention to replace the old ones that embodied religious beliefs. Therefore, during the Soviet period, in many cases, the family remained on the sidelines of ideologically transformed holidays and was able to preserve a significant portion of the old

traditions (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2016: 31–34). However, we cannot dismiss natural modernisation or secularisation processes that had an impact in Soviet Lithuania, and even after independence was reinstated after 1990. According to Laurent Sébastien Fournier (2019), the word *festival* remains because of its positive values, but the content has dramatically changed as festivals have adapted to a new world in which the family and the community have been replaced by the media and the market.

Specific conditions were created for “Assumption Day” in Lithuania, on account of it being a religious celebration. It was declared a state holiday in 2000, giving it the status of a non-working day. When analysing how the Feast of the Assumption is celebrated today, particularly in Vilnius by Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians, Jonas Mardosa noticed that the holiday’s transformation into a truly significant day in the state holiday calendar became a theoretical and practical problem for the city (Mardosa 2016b: 292). Its status does not raise any problems for those faithful who have preserved the same religious understanding of the holiday of the Blessed Virgin’s ascent into Heaven, and the day off from work allows them to actively participate in the liturgy, which has not changed over time (Mardosa 2016b: 295). For non-believers or those who do not associate the Feast of the Assumption with a state holiday, like for Orthodox believers who celebrate their “Assumption Day” on August 28th, it is simply an additional day off from work that does not have a place in their concept of celebration (Mardosa 2016b: 305). According to the ethnologist’s research data, as many as 42.4 percent of Lithuanians, 40.3 percent of Russians, and 26.7 percent of Poles do not understand the meaning of the holiday (Mardosa 2016b: 296).

As part of my own research data collected in 2016–2017, I asked young residents of Vilnius whether they celebrated this occasion with their family, with friends, with co-workers, or not at all. I also asked them to name three of the calendar holidays they identified most with their friends (40 semi-structured interviews). A total of 67.5 percent of respondents did not celebrate “Assumption Day” at all, 12.5 percent celebrated it with their family, 15 percent with friends, and 4.5 percent with co-workers. One respondent took the opportunity to travel (to Denmark) with friends, others spent it at a farmstead with university friends, at a village, or with their families. Incidentally, 4.5 percent of respondents named “Assumption Day” as one of the three most important holidays spent with friends (Šaknys 2019: 256). According to its unpopularity among holidays that have been made official non-working days, the Feast of the Assumption

competes against International Labour Day (82.5 percent of respondents did not celebrate this occasion) and the Coronation Day of Mindaugas, which was celebrated somewhat more often (57.5 percent of respondents did not mark this day). Even though these holidays often fall on a regular weekday (if it does not happen to be a Saturday or Sunday in a given year), in terms of its popularity this day is even surpassed by International Women's Day and St. Valentine's Day, which were not celebrated by only 32.5 and 42.5 percent of respondents, respectively. When asked why they did not celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, a majority of young people replied that they did not know how it was supposed to be celebrated, or in some cases, they explained that they were not religious and saw no reason for having to mark this day (Šaknys 2019: 256). This situation was confirmed at the Feast of the Assumption holiday mass held on August 15, 2019 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Vilnius. Elderly people made up an absolute majority of those gathered, with but a few younger people. Nonetheless, there are a number of opportunities to happily mark this holiday in Vilnius and its surrounds.

Let us look at how the celebration of "Assumption Day" in 2019 was described in advertising websites. The residents of Vilnius were invited to Trakai (30 km away from Vilnius) to hold the Feast of the Assumption, and to attend the celebration organised for this occasion. Aside from mass in Lithuanian and Polish, to which people were encouraged to come dressed in national costumes and to bring healing herbs and grasses, flowers, grains, and vegetables to be blessed, and which would then be used as part of the ceremonial procession, there was also going to be a non-religious "*Kopūstinė*" celebration where a number of folklore ensembles from Trakai and the neighbouring cities, as well as other art collectives would perform, followed by an educational program involving grass bouquet composition, saying spells, making bracelets, tying sashes, painting wooden flowers, and even carving wooden spoons. The celebration would end with a free tasting of cabbage soup. A free excursion titled "The Blossoms of Summer" was planned for the historical surrounds of Vilnius, plus a cultural program by the river, a film screening, and a special "Assumption Day" marathon around Vingis Park. An event was also planned at the Franciscan Church, a concert by the Jauti rock group for young people, and an open-air screening of a Charlie Chaplin film in the courtyard of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. Excursions into the countryside and forests were on offer, encouraging the public to admire the beauty of nature not far from Vilnius by taking the Grabijoliai walking track. Turgeliai, a town 33 km

away from Vilnius, was organising the traditional religious feast day celebration and a concert. An event was also planned at the Centre of Europe Golf Club 60 km away from Vilnius, where people could try playing golf. A hemp-tasting event was also proposed at the Vilkinė Restaurant. Another celebration was planned at the folk culture-oriented Open-Air Museum of Lithuania (71 km from Vilnius), where mass was also going to be held at the town church, to be followed by “a traditional blessing of this year’s harvest, flowers, and grasses”. Also, according to the organisers, “a market was going to be held at the museum, where staff would tell visitors about the healing properties of herb gardens and grasses, and make ‘Assumption Day’ bouquets” (Andrijauskas 2019).

As can be seen, there was no shortage of events set up for the residents of Vilnius and nearby cities. However, even though this holiday is growing in its entertainment and commercial meanings, these events are capable of drawing only a limited number of people. The question arises, why is “Assumption Day” not a holiday that is suited to be celebrated in city/urban surroundings? According to the data of ethnologist P. Kalnius, who studied weddings held in the Advent and Lent periods in 1977 and 1992, it is the South East regions that are the least secularised in Lithuania; whereas cities are more secular than rural areas (Kalnius 2003: 192–193). This leads us to believe that even now, the Feast of the Assumption is celebrated more widely in provincial, or rural areas. However, as the research showed, the situation is not all that different. My field research conducted in 2017–2018 in villages, a town, and cities near Vilnius, where older people (an absolute majority were aged 50–93; nationalities included Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Belarusians, Tatars, and Karaims; confessions included Catholics, Orthodox, Old Believers, Muslims, and Karaims; 45 semi-structured interviews) were surveyed, it became apparent that only 45 percent of respondents celebrated the Feast of the Assumption: 29 percent celebrated with their families, 12 percent did so with their friends, and 5 percent with their co-workers. This occasion surprisingly was only celebrated by some respondents from Trakai, where the Feast of the Assumption is marked by a traditional religious celebration. Nor was this day marked by Tatars or Karaims, or older Christians. As a 63-year-old Lithuanian Catholic from Nemenčinė explained, this celebration was held only by his parents and grandparents. Public events to which people were invited through Internet portals attracted only a small portion of inhabitants from the Vilnius surrounds. The essence of the holiday was accurately described by a 56-year-old woman from Trakai: “When the holiday comes around, sometimes it doesn’t say to our hearts that

we need to actually celebrate [it] at all". Summarising the material, it can be said that this holiday was most commonly held in villages in the Vilnius surrounds, by Poles who professed the Catholic faith. Going to the ceremonial mass held at church on this day, followed by feasting with relatives, or family members, served as a special occasion in their ritual year.

Conclusions

The research revealed how a religious holiday – the Feast of the Assumption – embodied different values in different sociocultural surrounds: as a Christian holiday in the late 19th to the first half of the 20th century in Lithuanian villages; as a Lithuanian national holiday in 1929 in Kaunas; as a Lithuanian holiday marked in Pusk (Poland) from 1967; as a non-working day in Vilnius and its surrounds from 2000. The comparison of these meanings leads to the conclusion that even a religious holiday can embody different values in different socio-cultural surroundings, ranging from religious, national and ethnic, to simply an excuse for a day off from work. As today's situation in Vilnius shows, and the research conducted in its surrounds, people of different ages and religions, and even from the same location, each have their own understanding of the holiday. This ranges from "a very important and meaningful holiday", to "a day off work without a clear reason as to why it should be celebrated".

Four of the festive episodes show significant changes over time. A religious holiday can take on a national, ethnic, or even commercial attributes. This is evident from the rapid expression of modern culture. Traditions that are created and re-created by ruling structures have no guarantee of being successful. The attempt at combining two national and one religious holiday into "Assumption Day" lasted just one year, 1929, when religious rituals were supplemented with secular rituals. However, a similar attempt in 1969 (without combining separate holidays) in the Pusk area was justified. The celebration enjoys great popularity and draws tourists to this day. Last year, it continued for five days (combining it with the newly formed Bread, Honey, and Milk Festival), and a majority of the events are secular in nature. Attempts are made to give the holiday a similar character in Lithuania as well, however, only a small part of the population of Vilnius and the Vilnius surrounds are informed of the large number of events that are on offer, while during interviews, young people, and often older respondents as well, admit that they do not understand the meaning of the holiday at all.

All four holidays are related to religious practices and symbols, at the very least they are celebrated according to the Church calendar. However, as the research showed, over time less and less of these remain, with an increase in secular, often also commercial, forms of entertainment that merely seek to attract larger numbers of participants to the celebration. The range of entertainment available however does not always guarantee the holiday's success or the ability of people to grasp its meaning, where a majority simply treat it as another day off from work.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SOCIOCULTURAL VALUES IN THE LITHUANIAN RITUAL YEAR

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Abstract: Research into the community customs in the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century in villages, towns, and cities near Vilnius allowed to distinguish two types of neighbourhoods: distant (official) and close (informal) ones. The first one was determined by territorial proximity, the second is revealed in more than just territory. The former is exposed also as a group formed around common interests, people, who are free to choose to spend leisure time or celebrate special occasions together. The festive communication results in sort of a ritual year of the neighbours, covering the common neighbours' celebrations of life cycle as well as calendric cycle festivals and holidays. A close neighbourhood based on spending leisure time and celebrating together in some cases determines certain differences between neighbours of different religions. I'll look at this process analyzing different types of settlements, showing the development of neighbourhood relations during the last 60 years.

Keywords: neighbourhood, religion, ritual year, sociocultural values, town, village

Introduction

It is difficult to talk about the ritual year in contemporary society, especially in a multicultural environment where a combination of religious, state and

entertainment-oriented festivals are celebrated by people of different religions and nationalities (cf. Laučkaitė 2009: 27). However, rituals and celebrations have retained an important social meaning in modern society. As Ursula Rao mentioned, “rituals serve important functions for the organisation and reorganisation of social contexts. It’s like a medium for the integration of society, and interestingly, this idea remains important even where attention is shifted to conflict and change” (Rao 2008: 143). In this article, I shall analyze the relationship between contemporary local neighbourhood communities and the ritual year, which has not yet been investigated in the Lithuanian context.

The neighbourhood is a very wide concept with multiple ways of being understood that is used in research by geographers, historians, sociologists, lawyers, architects, anthropologists, and ethnologists. From the perspective of ethnologists, the notion of neighbourhood balances between a geographical concept and a value category. When analyzing the formation of a community, Ferdinand Tönnies distinguished three types – based on family relations, neighbourhood and friendship, and using friendly connections to achieve specific common goals. According to the researcher, the concept of neighbourhood dates back to a common life in rural surrounds, with short distances between buildings, and common meadows/pastures which determined tight links and communication between people (Tönnies 2001: 28). Werner Rösener, who has studied the culture of European peasants, also indicated that village structures and the inner relations within a community were also affected by neighbourhood links, which were considered the main factor in the development of peasant communities (Rösener 2000: 173–174). In all European countries, the neighbourhood was the main element of communication among peasants. Note that the introduction of three-field crop rotation played a significant role in the formation of neighbourhood links. This and other similar land use systems were adopted in villages in the 11th–14th centuries in a majority of Western European countries. In Eastern Europe on the other hand, a multiple-field form of farming became widespread only in the 15th–16th centuries, or even later (Rösener 2000: 174). Wherever it was adopted, this kind of farming system soon began to dominate, and peasants were forced to cooperate more than they had previously. The peasant way of life formed a particular kind of community awareness in villages, which could be described using the words “good neighbourly relations”. According to the author, small villages and their cosy surrounds created a family atmosphere, which was further strengthened by the more frequent marriages between village members, people worked alongside one another,

attended church together and celebrated village festivities together (Rösener 2000: 179). In Lithuania, three-field crop rotation and changes to the village planning structure are related to the Volog Reform, introduced in the second half of the 16th century, which lasted until the beginning of the 17th century (Puodžiukienė 2014: 15). According to the ethnologist Auksuolė Čepaitienė, the neighbourhood is a form of social commonality based on shared territory and living in close proximity to other members of the same group. It is also an interpretation of social relations, values and daily practices (Čepaitienė 2013: 395). In the 19th–early 20th centuries in Lithuania, the neighbourhood was associated with one's living surrounds and interpersonal communication and relationships, mostly based on mutual social assistance in labour and in case of accidents, common farm and other work, the loaning of necessities (fire, bread, grains for sowing), sharing, and also honourable behaviour and the protection of one another's property (Mažiulis 1940: 242–246; Mažiulis 1941: 91–96; Vyšniauskaitė 1964: 527–550). In Lithuania, it was often said that “a good neighbourhood is better than kinship”.

This article is based on field research conducted by the author in Vilnius, Trakai and Širvintos districts (all of these districts belong to Vilnius county) in 2017 and 2018 in locations of different sizes, and of various ethnic and religious composition. During the fieldwork, the semi-structured interview method was used with 44 respondents born between 1934 and 1991.

Three villages were under investigation: Medininkai (a population of 493 according to statistical data from 2011), Marijampolis (870) and Nemėžis (2,498). Nemėžis has already become a suburb of Vilnius. Medininkai, a location near the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, is famous for its remarkable past; the Medininkai Castle near the village dates back to the 14th century and continues to attract tourists, while the castle museum is the employer of a number of the local villagers. Marijampolis is known for its Lithuanian school which was attended by children from both the Vilnius District and by Lithuanian children from the Lithuanian ethnic lands in Belarus. Respondents in Marijampolis were Lithuanians and Poles (all Catholics); in Medininkai – Poles and a Belarusian woman (Catholic) and a Russian man (Christian Orthodox) were interviewed; in Nemėžis interviews were conducted with Poles (Catholics), Tatars (Muslims), and a Russian woman (Christian Orthodox). Cities of different sizes were also researched: Kernavė (a town), Trakai and Nemenčinė (cities). Kernavė was an important centre in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, while now it is just a local eldership (*seniūnija* – the smallest current administrative-territorial unit in

Lithuania) centre. Trakai was the former capital of Lithuania (before Vilnius became the capital in 1323) and is the only one of these cities that is a district municipality centre. Like Kernavė, Trakai is an important tourist attraction. According to statistical data of 2011, Kernavė has a population of 272, Nemečinė has a population of 4,613, and Trakai has a population of 4,933. All the respondents interviewed for this research in Kernavė were Lithuanians (Catholics); in Trakai – Lithuanians and one Polish woman (Catholics), Karaims (Karaim), and a Belarusian woman (Christian Orthodox); in Nemenčinė – Lithuanians and Poles (Catholic), and a Russian woman (Christian Orthodox).

The current Law on Religious Communities and Associations in the Republic of Lithuania (No. I-1057, October 4, 1995) distinguishes nine traditional religions. Alongside the Christian Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, Orthodox, and Old Believer faiths, the state also supports the Jewish, Sunni Islam, and Karaim religions. Thus, the respondents who were surveyed represent five of these confessions. The dominant ethnic groups in Lithuania according to population figures are Lithuanians, Poles, Russians and Belarusians (respectively 84.2; 6.6; 5.8 and 1.2 percent). Karaims and Tatars were also interviewed, who, according to Ives Plasseraud, hold a historically important place in the Lithuanian space (Plasseraud 2006: 130). This fact makes it possible to look at the situation in the researched locations from a multicultural aspect.

The selection of these particular research locations was determined by the Lithuanian Institute of History's research program "Leisure, Festivals, and Rituals in the Vilnius Area: Social and Cultural Aspects". The aim of this program is to answer the question of how shared leisure time, celebrations and rituals help maintain social interaction between settlements of different types, and different ethnic and confessional composition, and to reveal the cultural expression of this process over the perspective of time. Analysis of neighbourhood links helps the scholars to answer the question whether, and if so, how have neighbourly relations maintained their social significance in various kinds of locations in Lithuania. As the research was conducted in poly-ethnic and poly-confessional environments, I had the opportunity to work out whether ethnic or confessional belonging was important to the intensity of communication and friendship between neighbours. The ritual year – as a space bringing neighbours together – was the background chosen for this research. In this article, I seek to analyse the neighbourhood not just as a territorial or economic necessity, but as a group bound out of common interests, which is determined by the free

choice of neighbours and the communication and friendship of its members during family and calendar celebrations¹.

The respondents were randomly selected, without discriminating for gender, nationality, or age. Going from door to door, I asked all adult individuals who agreed to answer my questions about their personal views on neighbourhood, their mutual communication, and friendship at various stages in life. The interviews took place in Lithuanian or Russian, and when necessary, some terms were translated into Polish.

Studies of Neighbourhood

As Zygmunt Bauman noted, the term “community” is one of those words that arouses good feelings (Bauman 2001). On the other hand, as Thomas Hyland Eriksen argued, “in fact virtually no local community is completely self-sustaining and unchanging through time” (Eriksen 2001: 58). According to the study by Andželika Bylaitė-Žakaitienė, the geographical and social mobility that commenced in the second half of the 20th century, the decreased levels of experience of the older generation, the disappearance of the community’s authority, and the responsibility for the behaviour of its members destroyed the community neighbourhood traditions that had dominated in Lithuanian villages up to the mid-20th century. As distance in personal relations appeared, utilitarian values also seemed to take on shades of alienation in certain cases, thereby changing neighbourly relations and norms (Bylaitė-Žakaitienė 2012: 282).

It would appear that the neighbourhood was important only in terms of the traditional, pre-collectivisation Lithuanian village. However, according to Teodor Shanin, even collective and commune-like communities maintained a number of the typical features of a peasant community (Shanin 1990: 45). What situations unfolded in the contemporary Lithuanian village, town, or city?

Numerous studies have been conducted in Lithuania that unveil the features of neighbourhoods in 19th- and early 20th-century Lithuania. However, the pioneer in systematic neighbourhood research would be Antanas Mažiulis, who studied interpersonal relations (in the early 1940s in Lithuania, and later on as an immigrant in the United States). When describing the interpersonal relations in the Dusetos and Kamajai small rural districts (North East Lithuania) in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, the author dedicated several articles to neighbourhood traditions. Mažiulis’ greatest contribution to neighbourhood research historiography was distinguishing between the concepts of the “close” and the

“great” neighbourhood. A close neighbourhood (also known as a “*savybė*”, Lit. ‘a quality’) was usually defined as two or three of the nearest yards, or properties, that maintained particularly close links. For example, if someone came over to borrow an item, but did not find their neighbour at home, the required item could be taken without asking, and the neighbour could be informed of what had been borrowed that evening. These kinds of *savybė* neighbours also often jointly kept bees and maintained common beehives, they were godparents to each other’s children, and would attend the same bathhouse. One neighbour’s misfortune was another neighbour’s misfortune; it was experienced together and they would help one another in times of need. The greater neighbourhood, which encompassed a small village or part of a larger village, was in most cases not very close, and existed “more out of dependence than out of sincerity” (Mažiulis 1957: 244). This implies that the neighbourhood can be related to trust and to deeper feelings.

Only a handful of papers have been dedicated to the research of current neighbourhood links in Lithuania, from which I would draw attention to a study conducted in North East Lithuania. This work compares the situation in Kupiškis and nearby rural locations, as well as the cooperation among neighbours of different nationalities. Having completed this research, Eglė Udraitė stated:

When I spoke to those respondents from these villages, I noticed that their concept of a neighbour was somewhat different to the responses coming from city dwellers. They viewed a neighbour as someone who just happened to live right nearby. In villages, the communication between people who lived near one another was usually more active than in the cities.

Meanwhile, in the city, in Kupiškis, according to the author:

...the following kind of concept of a neighbour became apparent: a neighbour is not just someone who lives nearby, but also someone who might live in the same street, or sometimes even a little further away, with whom one would meet quite often to chat, have fun, help one another, or come together to do their work...

However, according to the author, in various types of locations, neighbourly relations with people of different nationalities did not diverge. Youth of different nationalities went to dance together in their free time (Udraitė 2016: 920–924).

The Close and Distant Neighbourhoods

The research conducted in the villages of Marijampolis and Nemėžis, and the town of Kernavė, revealed that neighbourly relations are based on social assistance and a sense of obligation towards people living nearby. This form does not change much over time and encompasses mutual assistance in taking care of children, animals and household items; carrying out compulsory work around the house and farm, providing emotional and financial support in the event of illness or death of a close one, loaning things, and participating in communal work (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 35–62). On the other hand, in these locations, good relations between neighbours was not limited only to fundamental social assistance. A similar situation was found to exist when the research was extended into the cities of Nemenčinė and Trakai.

According to a Karaim woman from Trakai who was born in 1951, a “neighbourhood is first of all help, but not only when something goes wrong. It is friendship when you want to share your joy with others. All of my neighbours are like friends. Good relations with neighbours lead to friendship and understanding”. The respondent believes that she adopted the tradition of getting along well with her neighbours from her grandparents. According to the woman, “you need to be nice to everyone, and shouldn’t keep a stone ready behind your back, so to say. Neighbours are like family, as they are near, while relatives are far away”. A Lithuanian woman born in 1956 from Trakai made similar comments, however she also distinguished the bad neighbour category. She said that “there were good and bad [neighbours], who did not want to be friends”. But according to a Lithuanian woman from Nemenčinė born in 1947, the whole street full of neighbours was like family. In her view, perhaps three years ago everyone was much closer, but her older age did leave an impact. Now, she was “more friendly” with six or seven families, yet she did not equate her neighbours to friends. As the respondent said, “friends are friends, while neighbours are just that, i.e., a neighbour is a neighbour, not a friend”. A Lithuanian woman born in 1952 from Trakai placed great significance on the assistance offered by neighbours in the protection of property: “a neighbourhood is good, e.g., if you need to go away somewhere – one would say “we want to hand over our home”, i.e., to ask someone to look after your place”. A Lithuanian woman from Nemenčinė born in 1954 said that “you need to get along well with your neighbours, because it’s like being part of a family – not getting along is not an

option”. The research in the village of Medininkai revealed a similar situation. According to a Polish woman born in 1969, “neighbourhood is when you can trust those people. Earlier, you would take your daughter over to the neighbours to be looked after for a while, or drive them where they needed to go, or would help one another with any concerns. Now, there are no good neighbours left around here. There are alcoholics you just don’t want to have anything to do with”. A Russian Orthodox man born in 1963 from the Medininkai village said that he got along well with neighbours everywhere, and that “neighbours are people who can help one another”.

When analysing the situation in the locations studied in the second half of the 20th and the early 21st centuries, I reached the conclusion that people’s attitudes towards neighbours and the neighbourhood can be distinguished into several groups: 1) good neighbourly relations are just as important as friendship and even kinship; 2) good neighbourly relations are not as important as family relations or friendship; 3) good neighbourly relations are not important at all. The first group of people usually associate good neighbourly relations not just with interpersonal relations, but also with the pleasure gained in being together. The second, and sometimes respondents representing the third group, think that good neighbourly relations are only associated with obligatory mutual assistance. Thus, I distinguished two types of neighbourly relations: 1. distant (official) and 2. close (informal) neighbourly relations. The first is determined by territorial proximity, the second represents a group formed around territory and common interests, which rests on the independent choice of each participating neighbour. Distant neighbourly relations are based solely on social assistance and obligations towards the people living nearby. Aside from social assistance and obligations towards neighbours, close neighbourly relations involve other links unrelated to social assistance and non-obligatory daily and festive interaction. The result of these kinds of neighbourly relations is interaction between neighbours during leisure time, as well as in the perspective of calendar and life cycle celebrations, which will be discussed in the next section.

The Ritual Year and Close Neighbourly Relations

The locations researched in this study are of mixed confessions. The respondents belong to different confessions which celebrate different festivals, in particular Tatars and Karaims who belong to the non-Christian confessions (they profess

the Islamic and Karaim faiths). Their celebrations and customs are very different from the celebrations and customs of people belonging to the Christian religions. On the other hand, the number of Karaims and Tatars is not so great, they do not live in a compact area (an exception could be Karaimų Street in Trakai where several Karaim families still live²) and in most cases, they live surrounded by people professing one of the Christian faiths. However, based on the research conducted by Žilvytis Šaknys in Vilnius, as the number of mixed-faith families grows, the celebrations of different faiths end up being marked. For example, a Karaim woman from Vilnius indicated *Kūčios*, or Christmas Eve, as the second most important celebration after *Tymbyl chydžy* (the Karaim Easter), as her daughter-in-law was a Catholic, she would spend this celebration with her children, while on New Year's Eve she would look after her grandchildren (Šaknys 2019: 261). As Jonas Mardosa noticed, the main Catholic calendar celebrations and the celebrations of most significant political dates for Lithuanians are dominating in the multicultural Vilnius. The entertainment-related part of these celebrations facilitate their celebration as the people at large are drawn to public events regardless of their nationality or religious identification (Mardosa 2013: 58). This makes it possible for neighbours of different religions to share common celebrations. However, unlike the situation in the capital city, the data from the locations I studied showed that neighbours of different confessions often mark non-religious calendar and family celebrations together.

The holiday most commonly celebrated together with one's neighbours is January 1st – New Year's Day, which is an important festival for neighbours of various nationalities and confessions. Even though Muslims and Karaims celebrate the New Year at a different time, and the Orthodox and Old Believers celebrate it according to the Julian calendar, January 1st does make everyone in the researched locations come together. This is the most stable state celebration marked in the researched locations that belonged to the Russian Empire, Poland, the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and the Republic of Lithuania (Šaknys 2016: 258). During the Soviet period, this celebration was given particular significance in order to push aside the religious-focused Christmas celebration (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2016: 24). For example, a Karaim woman from Trakai born in 1951 reported that in her street, the tradition of wishing neighbours a “Happy New Year” by going from door to door exists even today. According to the woman, she gets along equally well with neighbours of other nationalities. A Tatar male born in 1959 who lived in an apartment building in the village of Nemėžis explained, how at midnight on New Year's Eve, the neighbours would all come out into

the stairwell to drink champagne together. An account by a Lithuanian woman from Kernavė (born in 1966) was also similar – the neighbours who wanted to, would gather with their families at midnight on New Year's Eve by a pine tree on their street to pop a bottle of champagne. People would wish one another "Happy New Year" and then go back to continue celebrating separately at their own homes. Thus, in the villages, towns, and cities researched in this study, a New Year's Eve tradition that exists to this day is to go out with champagne into the street, by a pine tree or a bonfire, and let off fireworks at midnight. After midnight, some people sometimes invite their neighbours to continue celebrating back at their homes. However, certain changes to this tradition are evident. As a Lithuanian woman from Nemenčinė born in 1947 explained, the neighbours in her street (who lived in separate, private houses) would gather in the forest or other natural surroundings to celebrate the New Year. In earlier years, around 30 people, adults and children, would gather. They would choose someone to play Grandfather Frost and his female partner Snow Girl, and think of different ways to entertain themselves – everyone would bring some food, it would be set out on a sledge for everyone to share, and later everyone would take turns riding the sledge down the hill. The woman recalls it was lots of fun, however these traditions are disappearing because young people more often choose to celebrate New Year's Eve with their friends, rather than with their neighbours, and the older people come out for this gathering more rarely. A Lithuanian woman born in 1954 from Marijampolis, also said that it was a shame that neighbours no longer gathered at the same fir tree with champagne like they used to twenty years ago.

International Women's Day is a celebration held together with one's neighbours. It was most intensively observed up to 1990 when neighbours would exchange cards, men would give their female neighbours flowers, sometimes whole families of closer-knit neighbours would gather to mark this day. A Belarusian woman born in 1982 from Medininkai also mentioned special community celebrations. Neighbours from their street would bring a huge table to the Autumn Festival held in the Medininkai Castle, everyone would bring food and drinks, and try one another's food. Groups of neighbours from nearby streets would have similar tables where everyone would bring food and drink. Other celebrations with a Christian element, like the second day of Christmas, Easter Monday, or St. John's Day would also be an opportunity to get together with neighbours who were Catholics or professed other Christian faiths. According to a Polish woman born in 1974 from Nemėžis, neighbours would

go around visiting one another on the second day of Christmas and Easter Monday, while everyone would celebrate St. John's Day outside in natural surroundings. A Lithuanian woman born in 1947 from Nemenčinė explained how she and her neighbours celebrated St. John's Day together. People from their street (and other streets) would gather by a stream and light a bonfire. There would be lots of fun and games.

Parish feast days also sometimes gathered Catholics and neighbours of different nationalities (Lithuanians, Poles, Belarusians). A Belarusian woman born in 1982, who was a Catholic from Medininkai, recalled a lot about the Feast of the Holy Trinity during which neighbours from one or several streets would collect money and decorate the interior of their church.

A Lithuanian woman born in 1947 from Nemenčinė said preparation ahead of certain celebrations would bring neighbours closer to one another. Everyone would come together to help out in cleaning up their immediate surrounds. For example, before Easter, neighbours would decide on a day where they would pick up litter, clean up the surrounding yard, and then bring food and drink to share after the work was done.

Birthdays are unquestionably the most important occasion out of the life cycle celebrations when neighbours of different nationalities and religions would come together. A Belarusian woman born in 1982 from Medininkai said that good neighbourly relations were related to visiting one another not just on ordinary days, but especially on birthdays: "Some just say hello and that's it, but others are much closer, especially when neighbours' children play with one another. Then they visit one another, celebrate birthdays together. Closer neighbours often come over uninvited to wish their neighbours a "happy birthday", and then they're asked to join on in the party." In some cases, neighbours would only come over if they were invited. According to a Tatar woman born in 1945 from Nemėžis, when her generation was much younger, everyone was much closer to their neighbours. It was quite acceptable to invite not just one's relatives to a family celebration, e.g., a birthday, but closer neighbours as well. Not inviting them would have been considered rude. When special anniversary birthdays were being celebrated, even more neighbours would be invited. However, as the respondents noted, in recent years birthdays are being celebrated more and more often at restaurants where only family members and friends are invited, but not necessarily neighbours. According to the recollections of a Lithuanian woman from Nemenčinė born in 1947, when she celebrated her 50th birthday, she invited both, her relatives and her neighbours.

She said “now it is difficult to organise something like that at home. Everyone goes to a cafe or restaurant, and they end up inviting less guests”. People keep in contact with their neighbours in ways such as that described by a woman from Kernavė born in 1966, where even though she lives near and is rather close to several neighbouring women, they congratulate one another on their birthdays by sending SMS messages or by telephone.

Name days are rarely celebrated with neighbours, even though they are likely to pass on their wishes to that person if they share the same faith. According to a Lithuanian woman from Nemenčinė (born in 1981), she always goes to congratulate her neighbour Antanas (Anthony) on his name day. A Lithuanian woman born in 1959 from Kernavė also mentions going to wish her neighbours well on the occasion of their name days. But another Lithuanian woman from Kernavė born in 1953 said how her husband Jonas (John) would only receive well-wishes during the Soviet years, and that now this tradition had disappeared.

The respondents mentioned common celebrations of children’s baptisms, or the seeing-off of youths recruited into the army, and more often – at weddings and funerals. As the research showed, the mentioned events in people’s life cycles could bring neighbours of different faiths closer to one another. For example, a Russian woman born in 1934 from Nemenčinė would always attend her neighbours’ funerals regardless of their faith. A Polish woman born in 1954 from Nemėžis spoke about a case where, when her neighbour’s son, a Tatar, died, she helped clear his room after the funeral and would sometimes invite the woman over for a visit, to help her cope with the loss of her son (even though they had not been close neighbours before his death). A Polish woman from Marijampolis born in 1956 indicated she had helped her neighbours prepare food for weddings and funerals – “no one used to expect to be paid for that kind of help earlier. And now it’s just not necessary, because many families started using [the services of] funeral homes. They hire a cafe for the catering of the post-funeral mourning dinner. Weddings are also rarely celebrated at home these days. This trend began around ten years ago”.

Daily communication and the gathering for calendar and family celebrations strengthen neighbourly relations. For most respondents, this means mutual support and being on friendly terms. On the other hand, a reduction in neighbourly links must also be acknowledged, first of all to the detriment of close neighbourly relations. A majority of those interviewed admitted that over the perspective of time, social contact with their neighbours had decreased. This phenomenon was usually accompanied by a change in neighbours, either when

new ones moved in, or they themselves moved elsewhere to live. Modern life in the village or the city is not noted for being sedentary. For example, according to a Polish woman from Trakai who was born in 1970, she currently lives in an apartment building where the old neighbours say hello to one another, whereas the new inhabitants do not. In her parents' generation "a different kind of friendship existed amongst neighbours. There were shared celebrations, communal work, but now each person keeps to themselves". A Polish woman from Marijampolis born in 1954 says that when she used to live in an apartment building, she was closer to one neighbour with whom she would celebrate birthdays, sometimes other festivals as well, but now that she lives in a private house, she has no close neighbours with whom she spends more time with than her earlier neighbours. According to a Lithuanian woman born in 1953, when she lived in Musinkai, she was so close to one particular neighbour that they became proper friends. They visited one another, celebrated birthdays together. But when she moved to Kernavė, her neighbours obviously changed. She gets along with her closest neighbours, especially one particular family, but there are also others nearby with whom she would not want to be friends at all, because one neighbouring family drinks alcohol excessively, another is known for spreading rumours about the other neighbours, etc. So, there is also the downside to neighbourly relations which can be a source of inconvenience or not inspire the desire to foster close neighbourly relations. The weakening of such relations is also affected by rapid modernisation processes that make it possible to remain independent from others living nearby, leading to the development of alienation.

Conclusions

Research into the types of community customs in the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century in villages, towns, and cities near Vilnius allowed me to distinguish two types of neighbourhoods: distant (official) and close (informal) neighbourhoods. The first was determined by territorial proximity, the second is revealed in more than just territory but also a group formed around common interests, who are free to choose to spend leisure time or celebrate special occasions together. Whilst analysing the ritual year as a space where neighbours can gather, close relations are an important factor. These relations are expressed in a similar way in various types of settlements. Not only in villages but in the city as well, good relations between neighbours are not limited

exclusively to offering obligatory mutual assistance, but also include spending leisure time and celebrations together of the neighbours' own free will.

Research of distant relations in neighbourhoods showed that being of different nationalities or faiths did not play a role in the formation of mutual neighbourly relations. One's living surrounds, their plot of land and a farm that required constant maintenance were more important in upholding neighbourly relations. A close neighbourhood based on spending leisure time and celebrations together could in some cases determine certain differences between neighbours of different religions. The religious nature of certain celebrations limits neighbours of different faiths from spending time together at these celebrations. Neighbours of all nationalities and faiths do gather to celebrate the New Year and birthdays, the same can also happen during other non-religious celebrations. Christian neighbours usually come together on the occasion of name days, Christmas, Easter, and on religious feast days. The greatest differences in how neighbours get along are revealed over the perspective of time. The younger generation's views towards neighbours differ from those held by older people. A reduction in good neighbourly relations does admittedly exist, to the detriment of a close neighbourhood. People from the older generation notice major shifts that have taken place within the last few decades. The weakening of social relations between neighbours is influenced by the age of respondents, changing neighbours, and rapid modernisation processes that make it possible to remain independent of people living nearby.

Notes

1 One article on neighbourhoods in this region has already been published (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 35–62). It was based on answers from 24 respondents from Marijampolis, Nemėžis and Kernavė. The scope of research for this article was doubled, analysing the situation in villages, a town, and in larger cities as well. Unlike this article, the previous one did not focus on the analysis of the ritual year.

2 The article by Žilvytis Šaknys and Daiva Lapinskaitė mentioned the tradition of neighbours making Easter *tymbyl* unleavened bread together, and even the belief that if someone visited seven neighbours and tried their *tymbyl*, they would marry soon (Šaknys, Lapinskaitė 2008: 85).

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BULGARIAN MEN'S TRAVELS TO MOUNT ATHOS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RITUAL YEAR

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Abstract: As several monasteries and shrines of the monastic republic Mount Athos are connected with the Bulgarian history, in some cases they function not only as places of religious worship by Bulgarian men but also as sites of national memory. Therefore, placed in the context of the ritual year of pilgrimage, as an object of research are chosen Bulgarian men's 21st century group travels to Mount Athos. More exactly, the focus lies on the places, holidays and celebrations instigating Bulgarian men to visit different destinations at the monastic peninsula, following different routes and motives. Further attention is paid to the performed religious and commemorative practices at the various locations of the Athonite peninsula.

Keywords: commemorative practices, Mount Athos, religious rituals, trails, worship

Located in northern Greece, in the Eastern peninsula of Chalkidiki, the UNESCO World Heritage Site Mount Athos houses hundreds of monks and novices of different national and ethnic origin. It is a self-governed part of the Greek state, politically subject to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople because of its religious aspect.

There are twenty monasteries: a Serbian one, a Russian one, a Bulgarian one and seventeen Greek ones. The area of every monastery belongs to the very monastery and not to the state from which the brotherhood originates.

Mount Athos, and more exactly Zographou monastery “Saint great-martyr George the Zographos”, is also one of the reasons for the millennial Bulgarian history as it preserved the very national spirit of the Bulgarians, their national awareness, language, culture, written records, architectural monuments and other heritage in the years when Bulgaria had been under foreign rule. As such it functions not only as a place of worship but also as a site of memory.

Pilgrimage of Bulgarians towards Mount Athos begins with the foundation of the first monasteries on the peninsula as Bulgarian tsars help by the appraisal of Zographou monastery in 9th–10th century (see Bolutov 1961: 106). During the period of the Ottoman Empire in Bulgaria and the following centuries (from 14th century onwards) travelling to Mount Athos does not stop and happens as before with a slow tempo, led by monks or clergymen and including above all Bulgarian men of means. For example, the Third Zographou obituary list encompassing the period 1527–1728 includes names of pilgrims from Tarnovo, Lovech, Gabrovo, Etropole, Vratsa, Samokov, Dupnitsa and other towns (Todorova 1997: 267). With the improvement of the vehicles and therefore the ability for a faster and easier mobility journeys to Mount Athos get less complicated. Even though in Bulgaria there is not a continuous tradition for advertising pilgrimage movements and during the socialist period (1944–1989) migration is restricted (see Radev 2016), the monastery continues also nowadays to attract Bulgarian clergymen and secular people. As a consequence, thousands of Bulgarian men moved by different reasons and following various routes visit Zographou monastery and other shrines on the Athonite peninsula. The post-socialist period is characterized by a redirection of the faith of Bulgarians, returning to the Orthodox Church and (re)vitalisation of the personal religiousness¹ through visits to new and old sacred places. As a result, are grounded many “religious associations and non-governmental Orthodox organizations and church brotherhoods that take over the care for the organization of pilgrimages to main Christian Orthodox holy places and objects” (Troeva 2019: 613).

Rarely men travel individually, most often they do it in small groups. Some of the pilgrims set off if a motive occurs (for example, to bring a thanksgiving), others do it as a part of their Athonite ritual year, several times on appointed dates every year.

Research Object

It is nowadays accepted among scholars studying pilgrimage practices that pilgrimage is a blended with tourism “major journey, usually by modern means of transportation, to a national or international shrine” (Turner & Turner 1978: 240) that combines pious intentions with historical and cultural behaviors and meanings (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 3). Pilgrimage is in fact “a holistic phenomenon with religious and secular foundations, encompassing sites that can emerge from both religious and secular contexts” (Collins-Kreiner 2016: 6; Coleman & Eade 2004).

Having this in mind, as an object of research are chosen Bulgarian men's group travels to Mount Athos in the 21st century, presented through the emic view of the individual participants. They will be examined from the perspective of the ritual year, featuring ritual celebrations at liturgical holidays, calendric national commemorative practices, donations and different places of worship reached via different routes. The men included in the research are of different social status: students, cooks, photographers, businessmen as well as highly educated doctors, engineers, scientists, journalists but also novices in monasteries, priests, monks and retirees.

Empirical data for the comparative and phenomenological approach² is gathered through primary and secondary sources. The first ones include semi-structured face-to-face and structured email-interviews with travelers of the route (organizers, participants, route-leaders) and monks involved somehow in the pilgrimages (eight men altogether). As secondary resources are chosen published news on the internet, in books and participants' online travelogues (more than 30 text and video travelogues).

Travelling Groups

The groups going to Athos that will be analyzed here are usually not numerous, generally up to seven-eight men, setting up from municipal towns as Sofia, Bansko, Sandanski, Stara Zagora, etc.³. Travels are explored according to the route configuration and implementation. Some group travelers aim to reach directly their destination, the Bulgarian Zographou monastery. One *communitas* (Latin ‘unstructured community in which all members are equal’, Turner & Turner 1978) tries to cover every year the so called itinerary “On the trails

of Zographite saints” that combines old disused pilgrim and travel paths, main road and highway segments and above all intentionally added stops related to the Bulgarian history and to the life of Bulgarian saints who at some point lived in the Zographou monastery or played an important role for the Bulgarian Revival and the preservation of the Bulgarian cultural and Orthodox spiritual heritage. In comparison to them members and friends of the “Athonite Balkan Association” combine pathways between Xenophontos monastery and other sacred places situated on the Southern side of the peninsula. At the end are presented group travelers – with a clergyman at the head – whose ritual year comprises several travels to Mount Athos connected mainly with liturgical holidays of different Athonite monasteries and hermitages (sort of colonies of the larger monasteries that are smaller and easier to keep up).

Directly to Our Monastery on Mount Athos

Bulgarian men from the town of Bansko feel especially connected with Zographou monastery as one of the founders of the monastery of the 18th century, Hadzi Valcho (one of the brothers of Paisius Chilandarite), was born in their native town. Since the beginning of the 21st century “Bansko reconstructs its active linkage with the Zographou monastery – as a spiritual necessity, a historical duty, and for material assistance” (Trencheva 2019). Not only groups of young men from the town but also men from Bansko municipality offer their mite for the monastery: “They organize the main repair activities, donate money, work, repair materials, foodstuffs, etc.” (Zherev 2018). A co-chairman of the initiative committee for the restoration of the Bulgarian monastery is mayor Alexander Kravarov and after his death this generous act is continued by his follower, Georgi Ikonov. According to a monk of the Zographite brotherhood there is “a group of young men from Bansko who take part in the repair activities twice a year” (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1). Here should be mentioned that donations for religious purposes are not only a kind of a sacrifice of personal time and money for God which will be memorized in the corresponding monastery (or church) list of *ktetors* (Greek ‘donators’) but gain also a higher public status.

Another group from Bansko “cleans the kitchen before monastery holidays and after that washes glasses and dishes” (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1). They go also to help with the harvest of olives:

*The monks make olive oil because they earn their daily bread. (...) We would have to expend effort in the kitchen as more than 500 guests are expected for the holiday. It does not oppress us, then we often go to work on Athos.*⁴

The important task to prepare the fish for the monastery feast on 6th May/23rd April⁵ is given to a cook from the town of Sandanski: "There is Sandi, the owner of pizzeria 'Sandi' in Sandanski who comes with other men and together they prepare the fish" (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1).

For the *panegyrs* (Greek 'religious celebrations associated with church patron saints' days') a party of men from Asenovgrad and Plovdiv comes also and

serves in the refectory, because it is... while you serve and clear the communal tables once or twice for lunch⁶, the time to cook for dinner has come. (...) They are very well organized and are at about thirty men (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1).

Many of those men from Bansko, Sandanski, Asenovgrad travel to Zographou monastery also on 18th/5th January for the feast of Epiphany (19th/6th January). Since the beginning of the 21st century, after the end of the divine liturgy in the church most of the men go downhill to the shoreline to participate in the ritual "throwing of a cross" at the shoreline of the monastery harbor. In Bulgaria and some other countries usually one cross is being thrown in the water and then taken out by the fastest young man. The ritual practice in Zographou monastery differs: there are several wooden crosses and one silver cross being thrown into the sea. About fifty men jump into the waters of the sea to take out the crosses thrown inside by priest-monks of the brotherhood. This cultural practice is performed not only Bulgarian Athonite monastery⁷ but also in Iviron and Xenophontos monasteries and it is believed that catching the silver cross promises a blessed year for the winner and his family.

To this category should be added also the group of Bulgarian dentists who travel to Zographou in order to treat gratuitously the monks' teeth, but also to participate in the calendric holidays:

A dentist from the town of Chirpan gave the equipment. Dr. Lenkov from Stara Zagora is the main person who managed its creation. There is an x-ray too. Two-three doctors from Sofia go there, and from Sandanski as well. They travel in their holidays and treat their teeth (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1.).

One of them shares: “Every time we go there they expect us as they know the group of dentists is coming. Thus we help them. If there is a great feast, we help also washing the dishes, cleaning the refectory” (AIF I No 595, a. u. 3.). This respondent tries, if possible, twice a year to visit the monastic peninsula, every time with a stop at Zographou:

I go when I have an opportunity to go, not always for a panegyri. With the group we visit monasteries we like and on every journey we try to visit also other monasteries that we haven't visited before. (...) I like the atmosphere in the Zographou church. There is no electricity. Everything is old styled. Candles are lit, prayers are read. Everything is mystical and muffled. The monks sing. When I was there for the first time I didn't know where I was (AIF I No 595, a. u. 3.).

Another example for groups visiting the monastery for work are the *harisanins* (a man who gives (God) something as a present), who so to say donate their work and time. One of them says:

I traveled with a group of harisanins. We were three cars with four-five men in each car... The men come from all over Bulgaria and exercise different professions. A man, not a company, organizes the diamonitirions (Greek 'visa'), ship tickets and coordinates with the monks the work that must be done: picking olives, cutting fruit trees, working in the vegetable gardens, chopping wood, etc. Sometimes we mix concrete for the running restoration works. The last time I helped in the archontariki (Greek 'guest room'), i.e. I cleaned rooms, washed blankets (FnAIF No 2987, a. u. 4).

If the above mentioned groups follow normally the fastest route from their starting point to Zographou monastery, one *communitas* covers – if possible every year – a special itinerary “On the trails of Zographite Saints”.

“On the Trails of Zographite Saints”

The itinerary “On the trails of Zographite Saints” was started in 2010 as a fulfillment of the *idea* of a clergyman, hieromonk Gabriel from the Zographite brotherhood, co-elaborated with a layman, Dimo Uzunov from Stara Zagora. All stops, proposed by the layman and blessed by the abbot of Zographou Archimandrite Ambrosio, are related, respectively dedicated to the Zographou

monastery (its patron the saint St. George) and to the Bulgarian saints Kosmas Zographite, Pimen Zographite, Paisius Chilandarite, 26 Zographite martyrs and St. John of Rila – the protector of all Bulgarians “and to everything related to the spiritual and cultural fortress of the Bulgarian Orthodoxy during the time: the Zographou monastery” (Uzunov 2012: 70).

The length of the whole combined trail is about 775 km, 516 km of which is on the territory of Bulgaria, 174 km – in Greece, 65 km – waterway, and 20 km – on the Holy Mountain. At about 55 km the participants go on foot: 35 km in Rila Mountain⁸ and 20 km on the monastic peninsula. Unlike Camino de Santiago, the Way of St. Olav, Via Romea, and others this route is not a natural one but a purposively constructed (“designed”) trail, because it is comprised of segments that are intentionally developed to link together routes (some of them of organic origin) and locations that have some sort of common history and thus commemorate the lives of celebrated religious figures and the given sacred places.

Concerning the stops of the trails, it is typical for pious pilgrims to worship a saint at his holiday in his shrine during a divine service. That is why as a beginning for this journey is chosen the day of 22nd September, when according to the Christian Orthodox calendar in Bulgaria is honored one of the saints worshiped during the trail, namely, St. Kosmas Zographite. A starting point is always the church “St. Kosmas Zographite” in the mineral water baths complex close to Stara Zagora, i.e. the only sacred place under his protection in Bulgaria the construction of which is initiated by the group participants. After a blessing by the local priest the group – including mainly men (most often aged over 40) from the region of Stara Zagora (and Plovdiv) – drives to the nearby town and visits the church of “St. Paisius Chilandarite” there. Reaching Sofia by car they go to the church-rotunda “St. George” that was passed in the 13th century by Bulgarian tsars into the hands of Zographou monastery. Here another Zographite saint, the born in Sofia St. Pimen Zographite, as a novice had learned and icon-painted the interior (Uzunov 2012: 71). Next stop is the German monastery “St. John of Rila” which is an extraterritorial foundation of Zographou since 1926. After spiritual conversations with the local monks – who are representatives of the Zographite brotherhood – the pilgrims drive further to the Rila monastery “St. John of Rila” with a short stop at a heritage site, the monument of another Zographite saint, St. Paisius Chilandarite. During their stay in Rila monastery they pay homage to the relics of St. John of Rila there, visit church services, talk with the monks of the brotherhood and hike to the grave and the cave of St. John some kilometers away from the monastery

(Uzunov 2012: 81). On the next day the men start a pilgrim walk, which is at about 40 km long and goes through the so called “Rila desert” encompassing some high Rila mountainsides. This trail section has been a part of an ancient (pedestrian) path from Sofia to Mount Athos, as well as of the Bulgarian Revival (17th–18th century) pilgrim route between Rila and the Zographou monasteries. That is the reason why it is chosen to be a part of the route under study. After two days they arrive at the village of Dobarsko, which according to a Rila charter of Tsar Ivan Shishman from 1378 together with other villages, lands and forests is being donated to the Rila monastery and as such has been traversed by pilgrims, walking from Rila monastery to Zographou monastery (Uzunov 2012: 83). In Dobarsko they are welcome by the local mayor and the church manager who introduce them in the built in 1614 church “St. Theodore Thiron and St. Theodore Stratilat”, which because of its ancient frescoes and authentic architecture is declared a monument of the Bulgarian cultural heritage and is under the protection of UNESCO. The next stop is Bansko where they visit the local church, the chapel dedicated to the saint and the memorial house with a reconstruction of the his Chilandar cell.⁹ In the house they have a lecture by the museum-curator about the life of saint Paisius, the vernacular mnemonic practices and the strong linkage between the people in Bansko and the Zographou monastery (Uzunov 2012: 84). Shortly after that they continue their trip by car to the resort of Ouranoupoli, where early in the morning they get on board of a ferry that brings them to the harbor of “St. Anne” hermitage. Getting there and paying homage to the wonderworking icon of St. Anne in the hermitage church, they start their six-hour’ trek that goes through the chapel devoted to the Mother of God and continues to the peak Athos and the chapel “Transfiguration” at 2033 meter above sea level, where they make photos of the whole Garden of Virgin Mary. With a ferry from the harbor of “St. Anne” hermitage they reach the harbor of Zographou monastery and then walk up the hill arriving on (the eve of) 27th September – St. Cross’s day (local calendar, so called “old style”) at their destination: Zographou monastery. Upraised in the 9th–10th centuries four kilometer aside from the South-West coast, this monastery is the most often visited place by Bulgarians on Mount Athos. It is perceived as a Bulgarian national monument (Bolutov 1961: 106) even it has not the status of an official Bulgarian national territory. The participants attend church services, have a meeting with the brotherhood, in which they share their experiences of the Zographite trail. Some of them make a confession and take communion. If possible, they visit the cave of St. Kosma Zographite not far

away from the monastery. The pilgrims go also into the library of Zographou, a heritage site, in which are kept a multitude of handwritings from the Second Bulgarian State tsar's letters, divine service books. A more special respect there receives the original of the "Slav-Bulgarian history". In the yard of the monastery there is another memorial site, namely a monument of the 26 Zographite martyrs.¹⁰ Here the travelling men take photos of themselves in front of the heritage site and on the next day with the blessing of the abbot they travel back to Bulgaria (Uzunov 2012: 103).

The same men like visiting Zographou also at other occasions. At Easter they transport very often the Holy Fire brought to Sofia from Jerusalem.

Actually, the pilgrimage trips of these men start in 2001 and since then male groups from the regions of Stara Zagora and Plovdiv, led by Dimo Uzunov, help the monastery with finances, with the repair and other development activities or clean the church accessories in all three churches before a monastery holiday:

They are the main group. They come from the Thermoelectric Power Station "Maritsa Iztok" and clean the big chandeliers. They take them apart, clean and assemble them again. Depending on their engagements, sometimes they stay also for the panegyri, sometimes they leave before the feast (AIF I No 595, a. u. 1).

One of them writes later: "I had the chance to wash seven silver hand censers three centuries old. And such a feeling I have never experienced before and afterwards" (Enev 2017).

Regardless of the motives of the participants and whether or not the trail is organic or purposive, consisting of religious or memorializing national sites, it plays an important role for the awareness and conservation of this heritage as well as for the strengthening of the faith of the Bulgarian participants and the veneration of Bulgarian saints.

Travels to Xenophontos Monastery

The analysis of the online travelogues of the pilgrimages of representatives of the Balkan Athonite Association shows that in difference to the mentioned above groups this one has usually as a destination Xenophontos monastery. Since the establishment of the association in 2010 members visit this monastery at least once a year for its great feast on 6th May/23rd April, St. George's Day.

Since the formation of the association they organize travels also for non-members. First, these are boys of the Russian school at the Russian Embassy in Sofia and representatives from Russian institutions (the Embassy, the church). After the year of 2017 travels – lasting two-three days – are opened also to every man in Bulgaria regardless of his ethnic origin and nationality. These groups of six-seven men have different itineraries combining paths between monasteries and hermitages in the upper, Northern part of the peninsula (the monasteries “St. Panteleimon”, Docheiarou, Iviron, Stravronikita, Xeropotamou, Vatopedi, the cell “Xilurgou”, etc.) always passing through or arriving at Xenophontos. The ritual year of the organizers of these travels, one of which always participates in the journeys, encompasses visits during the Lent, at and after Easter, at Epiphany, at *panegyri* feasts but also usual calendar days in the spring, summer or autumn. Sometimes their travels are connected with the transportation of a copy of a miraculous icon or relics between Mount Athos and Bulgaria and as during their other visits they take part in the divine services held in the church.¹¹

Even this kind of group travels is not related to the maintenance of Bulgarian heritage and national memory on the peninsula as Zographou monastery and other historically Bulgarian places are not a priority during the trips, this kind of travels are contributory for the strengthening of the participants’ faith, for the cultural acquaintance with the Byzantine architecture, art, rituals and monastic life.

All around Mount Athos

Groups led by pilgrims differ from the ones with a clergyman at the head, because the latter predisposes a more theological journey as the presence of a priest means a greater access to sacred spaces and relics in the monasteries but also the presence of the Holy Spirit, of a theology expressed in conversations while walking or consuming coffee, *raki* (Greek ‘brandy’) and *loukoumi* (Greek ‘traditional sweet’) at an *archontariki*.

The last example is about journeys starting in Sofia and going via Ouranopoli which are organized by a monk, living in a monastery in Western Bulgaria who, accompanied by other clerics or laymen, visits regularly the Holy Mountain “to learn and to participate in services” (AIF I No 481, a. u. 1). At the beginning journeys happen mainly around the *panegyri*s of Zographou monastery (St. George: 6th May/23rd April, 16th/3rd November; St. Kozma Zographite: 5th October/22nd September; 26 Zographite Saints: 23rd/10th October). During

a stay on Mount Athos, if possible, are visited also other spaces of religious and national worship as the already mentioned monument of the 26 Zographite saints, the cave of St. Kosmas Zographite but also cells that have been inhabited by Bulgarian monks or are linked with the Bulgarian history as “Axion esti”, “Xilurgou”, and others.¹² Everywhere the clergymen of the group take part in the divine services as priests or chanters. Their contemporary Athonite ritual calendar includes many travels with various routes to most of the monasteries and several hermitages regardless of their geographical location. Instantly visited places besides Zographou are also the Grand Lavra,¹³ Esphigmenou monastery¹⁴ the cell “Mikri Agia Anna” (Greek ‘Little St. Anne’),¹⁵ the cell “St. Eustace”,¹⁶ the *hesychasterion* (Greek ‘a small hermitage where intensive hesychasm is practiced’) “St. Sava of Serbia” in the region of Karoulia,¹⁷ and others. Even all sacred spaces are visited lead by religious or educational motives, their descriptions of stays at holy places connected somehow with the Bulgarian history and the life of Bulgarian monks, reveal the pilgrims’ national pride and joy of being at places where have lived great Bulgarian men. Thus such places become also spaces beyond religious worship: “On the left side of the nartex, where frescoes were recently restored, we read with joy the names of *ktetors* of the cloister from the 18th century: Valko, Stoyko, Dobrinka – evidence for the former piety of our people” or

*In cell St. Eustace, famous also as Mylopotamos, we were welcomed by monk Joachim. (...) It is not a well-known fact that founder and restorer of this cell is metropolitan Joachim of the Patriarchate of Constantinople who was throned twice as a patriarch.*¹⁸

Performed Rituals: Religious and National Commemorative Practices

Religious Elements

Ritual performances, such as sayings of prayers individually or collectively during a liturgical worship are essential elements of Orthodox Bulgarians visiting the Holy Mountain. The collective rituals “create affective connections between pilgrims, raising profound feelings of togetherness, the so called *communitas* (Turner & Turner 1978), based on the sharing of faith; they embody

and celebrate symbolic reality” (Terzidou *et al.* 2017: 124). Additionally, all male participants perform also other typical for pilgrimages rituals such as veneration of icons, making the sign of cross, lightning of candles, attendance of church services, conversations with monks, familiarization with the biographies of the saints and greater monks of the brotherhoods: “After an hour and a half they reach the peak Athos – 2033 m above sea level – and the chapel Transfiguration. Here as at other already marked stops are sent up prayers” (AIF I No 595, a. u. 4).

Very often men are motivated to set off to Mount Athos as they believe that with the mercy of God their religious ritual practices could provide cure of an illness, disability or pain. In this regard, should be mentioned the *liti* (Greek ‘a procession with an icon’), performed in Zographou monastery (but also at other monasteries). On its saint’s day – 6th May – the miraculous icon of St. George is brought out of the church and the monastery yard, held by a monk and two laymen whereas the laymen change every several meters (actually every ten steps), and is moved to the chapel “St. George” nearby and back again passing also by the monument of 26 Zographite saints in the yard. Bulgarians believe that according to their faith God could bring them health or fulfill their wishes: “I pray to St. George to give me health”.¹⁹ A monk of the brotherhood shares that many men after holding the icon during the procession their life has changed and their wish has been fulfilled.²⁰ According to another monk a stay in the monastery is enough as “before he knows, a man cleans his soul, removes his burden. Many of them get free of a disease” (AIF I No 595, a. u. 4).

Generally, all pious pilgrims while attending church services or individually (between the services) express their devotion to God through different ritual performances characteristic for Orthodox Christians. Visiting the elective monasteries gives them the opportunity, on the one hand, to mediate away from their cares and distractions of everyday lives and, on the other hand, to derive spiritual sustenance.

A common characteristic of the ritual year of the studied Bulgarian men is that their travel to the Holy Mountain is connected with the cloisters’ feast days, their *panegyrs*. Depending on the groups’ interests the ritual calendars include St. George’s Day – which in Bulgarian is a (day off) national holiday – and other feasts on which Bulgarian or other ethnic saints are venerated. More seldom Holy Mountain is visited for Christian Orthodox holidays as Easter, Nativity, Epiphany, Transfiguration and others. On the one hand, it could mean that the latter feasts are preferably celebrated within the family, the parish, the homeland. On the other hand, monastery (hermitage, cell) patron days are visited

by more guests who at the same time have the opportunities to enjoy their stay there by attending church services or/and to help with the feast preparations.

Maintenance of National Memory

The most contributory role for the maintenance of the Bulgarian memory and heritage in national and extra-national settings have the stops at Bulgarian memorial signs (monuments, exhibitions, a cave, a library) included in the trail of Zographite saints but also visited places connected with the Bulgarian history that function as markers of national collective memory and identity too.²¹ In such cases religious sites are simultaneously significant cultural sites. Zographou monastery could be considered as a memorial sign of the Bulgarian history as well, because it connects the Bulgarian man with his past and his heritage: "The magnificent view makes us feel as sand particles and at the same time proud to see what and how our ancestors had built, incited by their faith in Christ" (Dimitriy 2008). In the opinion of the contemporary Bulgarian metropolitan Naum:

every Bulgarian man who has visited Zographou had the genuine feeling of national pride and spiritual consolation by the contact with the power of the holiness, combined with the material evidence of a strong belief and a high national spirit (Radev 2016: 7).

Being there pilgrims immerse themselves in the history and heritage of the monastery and Bulgaria and "unconsciously absorb from the feats of the Zographite saints" (AIF I No 595, a. u. 4). In some cases it is the interplay of memories and feelings triggered by the site, the sharing of stories among friends or lectures at the place that illustrate what the site 'means' to people: if it is perceived as vernacular or national heritage or religious site, because "heritage sites also have the ability to possess heightened meaning for their visitors" (Palmer 2003 in Gouthro & Palmer 2010: 5): "when you see the monastery for the first time, beamed with its sacred millennial history and charters of many Bulgarian tsars, there is no way not to be bowled over" (Enev 2017).

Furthermore, the itinerary "On the trails of Zographite saints", but also all other routes having points of contact with the Bulgarian culture and history, contribute for the preservation of the Bulgarian heritage and memory about the great Bulgarians outside the territory of Mount Athos, because the effect of

the experienced is certainly being shared with their compatriots as travelogues are written and presented in social media, exhibitions are shown in different Bulgarian towns, conversations with students are organized and books are published and translated.

Conclusion

The present paper explored male visitors' ritual year(s) on the holy place Mount Athos. It involved comparative and phenomenological approaches undertaken through interviews with visitors and reviews of narratives published online.

From the findings of the study, it is evident that Bulgarian men's pilgrimage calendars include visits at different cloisters (and their cells) on the peninsula. Regardless of the type of group, the itineraries, the religiousness and motives of the travelers described above, all travelers return again and again to the Holy Mountain. Some of them are impressed by the Christian Orthodox atmosphere, present in the churches through old icons, frescoes, mosaics, ancient manuscripts but also by the day-to-day routines of the monks' "authentic" primitive life, traditional lifestyle, still unspoiled by the ravages of the contemporary external world. Most Bulgarians feel attracted by the Bulgarian monastery because besides the holy intervention they can experience there, they are able to get in touch with the ancient material evidence of the legendary past of their people, i.e. to be in contact with Bulgarian architectural monuments, Bulgarian literature and cultural heritage beyond the Bulgarian borders.

Generalized, Bulgarian men's Athonite pilgrimage year consists of religious journeys combining liturgical holidays (with visitations of divine services), ritual performances (prayers, venerating icons, lighting of candles), voluntary activities (helping as a *harisanin* or in holiday preparations), tourist moments (hiking to peak Athos, buying of souvenirs, taking photos) and national commemoration being experienced in both sacred places and spaces beyond religious worship.

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Notes

- 1 More about the religiousness of people since the end of 20th century see Valtchinova 2007; Nazarska & Shapkalova 2009; Baeva 2012; Georgieva 2012; Karamihova 2013.
- 2 The phenomenological approach allows understanding of human experience (Casmir 1983), as the researcher attempts to provide a direct description of somebody's experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which could be also provided (Merleau-Ponty 1962: vii).
- 3 Of course, Bulgarian men from all over Bulgaria visit the Holy Mountain but it is difficult to find and analyze information for all groups travelling there.
- 4 https://www.standartnews.com/balgariya-obshtestvo/banskalii_berat_maslinite_na_aton-122502.html, last accessed on 15.04.2020.
- 5 St. George's Day celebrated in Bulgaria on 6th May is also a national holiday.
- 6 Sometimes when there are plenty of guests they eat "in shifts", i.e. after the first part of visitors is ready with the lunch, helpers must prepare the tables for the next part.
- 7 Normally in Bulgaria but also in Bulgarian Orthodox parishes abroad (in Germany, Cyprus) just one cross is thrown.
- 8 Along the road they repair old markings and put new ones (AIF I No 595, a. u. 4).
- 9 This place is famous among Bulgarians as there Saint Paisius wrote the "Slav-Bulgarian history" to awake the national consciousness of the captive Bulgarian people during the Ottoman empire. Because of its content, the book is perceived by Bulgarians as a very special object of the tangible Bulgarian cultural historic heritage.
- 10 According to liturgical texts these 22 monks and 4 laymen of Bulgarian or Slavic origin were burnt alive in the monastery tower during the devastating attacks on the monastery by Catalanian Crusaders in 1275. This heritage site is put in 1873 on the place of the tower in which they were burnt.
- 11 See <https://www.afon-balkani.org/>, last accessed on 15.04.2019.
- 12 See for example <http://www.svetogorie.com/159-На-поклонение-в-Света-гора-ден-първи>, <http://www.svetogorie.com/160-На-поклонение-в-Света-гора-ден-втори>, last accessed on 15.04.2020; <http://www.svetogorie.com/163-Поклоничество-в-Света-гора---ден-трети>, last accessed on 26.11.2019.
- 13 The patron day of St. Athanasios is 18th/5th July.
- 14 This monastery of the canonic brotherhood is visited for its patron's day on Ascension Day.
- 15 This hermitage belongs to the Grand Lavra and celebrates its feast day on 22nd/9th June, St. Dionysios and St. Metrophanes.
- 16 It obeys to the Grand Lavra too and celebrates its saints' day on 3rd October/20th September.

17 This hermitage celebrates its panegyric on the 27th/14th January. The name of this area (in the West-Southern part of the peninsula) comes from the *karouli* (Greek ‘pulleys’) which the hermits use to hang the basket where the passing monks, pilgrims or fishermen put some water and a piece of bread.

18 <http://www.svetogorie.com/159-На-поклонение-в-Света-гора-ден-първи>, last accessed on 15.04.2020.

19 <https://www.24chasa.bg/ojivlenie/article/5884476>, last accessed on 15.04.2020.

20 <https://www.24chasa.bg/ojivlenie/article/5884476>, last accessed on 15.04.2020.

21 Further hermitages and cells connected with the Bulgarian presence on the monastic peninsula are described in Matanova 2019.

Archives

AIF I = (Written) Archive of the National Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

FnAIF = Phono-archive of the National Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

a. u. = archive unit

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AIF I No 595, a. u. 1., male, hieromonk and abbot of German monastery “St. John of Rila”, Bulgaria.

AIF I No 595, a. u. 3., male, dentist.

AIF I No 595, a. u. 4., male, hieromonk at the Zographou monastery “St. George the Zographos”, Mount Athos.

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FEBRUARY 1ST IN IRELAND (IMBOLC AND/OR LÁ FHÉILE BRIDE): FROM CHRISTIAN SAINT TO PAGAN GODDESS

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Abstract: Like in many countries of Europe, the 1st of February (*Imbolc, the Brigid's day*) in Ireland marks the beginning of Spring and is connected with some fertility rites. In old rural Ireland the people spent time watching hedgehogs (to see one was a good weather sign), preparing and eating special food, making straw girdles and caps, putting red ribbons on their houses (Brat Bride 'Brigit's cloak'), making special Brigit's crosses and straw dolls, called Brideog, to visit a sacred spring which had a magic healing and anti-sterile power (wells and springs, worshiped in pagan Ireland, were prohibited by St. Patrick), and finally singing protective charms. In modern urban Ireland all these rites remind in the past, but the Brigid's day is not forgotten or abandoned. In this article, the author tries to outline three main 'tracks' of the old tradition: 1. Pseudo-folkloric (fake-lore): singing, dancing, making crosses, storytelling etc. 2. Pseudo (Vernacular)-Catholic: early mass and pilgrimages to the places connected with St. Brigit, especially – sacred wells. 3. "Neo-paganic": special dresses, red ribbons, ritual dancing, fires, divinations of the future, bath in the sacred water etc. (in the most part – performed by women). Collecting material for the classification, the

author outlined a special new direction of ‘shared spirituality’ representing presumably a new mode of collective behavior in modern urban societies.

Keywords: calendar rites, February 1st, Imbolc, Ireland, neo-paganism, protective charms, pseudo-folkloric tradition, St. Brigid

In present-day Ireland and Scotland the First February is connected with the name of St. Brigid of Kildare. She is one of three greatest saints of Early Irish Christianity, who lived in the 5th–6th centuries – St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, St. Columba, who introduced the Christianity to the Picts of Scotland, and St. Brigid. The feast of St. Columba, 9 June († 597), is somewhat abandoned among the general public in today’s Ireland, while St. Patrick’s day, on the contrary, now has become an official public holiday in Ireland, celebrated with parades, music, songs and dances. In addition to Ireland, this holiday is also celebrated in the USA and even in Russia. Now, it has become a very popular event but actually has little to do with the Irish saint himself, with his cult and his life. The beginning of this festive tradition dates back to the 17th century, and it is only in 1903 that the day of March 17 was formally declared to be a national festival in Ireland. As for St. Brigid’s Day, *Lá Fhéile Bríde*, in modern Ireland it is a well-known, very popular and important festival, but it is not so easy to reconstruct its origin.

Imbolc and Its Connections with Saint Brigid

Arguably, it is St. Brigid’s Day, also known as Imbolc, that may be the most archaic festive day within the traditional Irish calendar. It originated from calendrical rites of the Neolithic farmers, who “had to develop a calendar to suit their conditions, to determine the time to sow and the time to reap, the time to send cattle to summer pasture and the time to make all secure against the winter storms” (Danaher 1984: 22). Indeed, this brief sketch of the four crucial farming phases is the clue to the main four Goidelic festivals of the pre-Christian era: *Samhain* (on the night of November 1), *Imbolc* (February 1), *Beltaine* (May 1) and *Lughnasa* (August 1). Today, the festivals of *Beltaine* and *Lughnasa* remain within the domain of ethnography and folklore studies, while *Samhain*, better known under the name of *Halloween*, has become a “horror” festival of great popularity, perhaps, not unlike a functional equivalent of Medieval carnivals. However, none of them, save for *Imbolc*, is related to any

Christian saint (which seems to be quite natural). It is only *Imbolc*, or St. Brigid's Day, that is strongly associated with the Christian cult of St. Brigid of Kildare (the late 5th to early 6th century).

It seems all the more unusual, given that not only the exact date but even the year of St. Brigid's death is unknown (see – Ó Riain 2011: 125). Yet the tradition of commemorating her on February 1st is attested as early as the Middle Ages. Thus, the *Martyrology of Oengus (Féilire Óengusso)*, dating from the Early Middle Irish period (10th or 11th c.), but containing some archaic forms “which point to the Old-Irish period” (Stokes 1905: xxix), mentions February 1st as the day of St. Brigid:

<i>Mórait calaind Febrai</i>	They magnify February's calends,
<i>Fross martir már nglédenn,</i>	a shower of great, pure-coloured
<i>Brigir bán balc núalann,</i>	martyrs: Brigit the fair, strong,
<i>Cenn cáid caillech n-Érenn.</i>	praiseworthy, chaste head of Erin's nuns.

(Stokes 1905: 58)

However, the glosses to this fragment, written perhaps in the 10th or 11th century, specify that Brigid's symbolic number was eight:

Tri ochtmada Brigdi .i. a gein I n-octmad uathaid, a caille I n-ochtmad .x., a bás I n-ochtmad .xx.

Brigit's three eight, to wit, her birth on the eight (of the month), her veil on the eighteen, her death on the twenty-eight (Stokes 1905: 64, 65).

Presumably, February 1st was somewhat artificially “established” by the Church in order to supersede and supplant the pagan Imbolc rites, just as was the case with Samhain transformed into All Saints' Day: “In pre-Christian times it was undoubtedly also a folk festival, and the early missionaries probably turned the old pagan feast into one of religious significance” (O'Neill 1977: 98). Indeed, this idea has been already articulated by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, an authority on folk customs of Ireland: “St. Brigid's Feast, February 1, was originally an important prechristian festival, occurring as it did at the time of the start of agriculture work” (Ó Súilleabháin 1967: 66). This is likely true, given that even a superficial comparison with the traditional annual rites of European peoples confirms it. Thus, for instance, a widespread Balkan festival of St. Tryphon (Trifon Zarezan, also on February 1st) is believed to have originated with the Greek pagan cult of a fertility god called Sabazius, who was also identified with Dionysus (Megas 1958: 55–56).

In many cultures, February 1st has been seen as the beginning of spring – not so much as the day when the warmer season begins, as the day when daylight hours become visibly longer. It is the day when nature seems to awaken from the winter sleep, which, at the level of popular metaphor, is associated with animals' arousal from hibernation (think of the famous *Groundhog Day*). Thus, in Italy, where winter is believed to end on February 2nd (the day of Candelora), in the morning of that day, the first bear is expected to go out of its den, and if the weather is cloudy and warm, the bear heralds the end of the winter by roaring (Corso 1955). In Ireland, presently lacking bears, both of their functions (weather prediction and spring heralding) were performed by hedgehogs:

To see a hedgehog was a good weather sign, for the hedgehog comes out of the hole in which he spent the winter, looks about to judge the weather, and returns to his burrow of bad weather is going to continue. If he stays out, it means that he knows that mild weather is coming (Danaher 1972: 14).

The present-day Irish do indeed celebrate February 1st both as the first spring day when nature awakens from sleep and as the day of St. Brigid. There is no doubt about it, one cannot be sure that this was also the original day of the pagan Imbolc, apparently superseded by St. Brigid's Day already by the Middle Ages. This day represented one of the crucial points of the annual ritual cycle that was supported by the evidence from saga narratives. Thus, for instance, in the Old Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle-raid of Cuailnge*) we see a kind of 'formula' describing a fixed period of time:

*Ón lúan re **samain** sainriuth cossin cétaín iar n-imbulc níra chotail Cú Chulaind risin ré sin...* (TBC 1967: 59, 2159-60)

for from the Monday before **Samain** exactly until the Wednesday after the festival of spring (translation by the editor! – T.M.) Cú Chulainn had not slept in that time...

As the author of the Introduction in the *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore* rightly pointed out, for the pre-Christian tradition, the date of February 1st is a tentative reconstruction. Imbolc "marked midpoint between 1 November and 1 of May" and at the same time – must be placed "between the Winter solstices (21 December) and Spring equinoxes (21 March)" (Monaghan 2003: xiv). That is, the date of the pagan festival is, in a way, speculative, however, it is also supported by some evidence from later Medieval glosses.

See, for instance, an interlineal gloss in the saga fragment cited above, clearly a later interpolation: iar n-imbulc – iar fel Bride – *after the Day of Brigid*.

There is still less ground to imagine how exactly the Irish people would celebrate this day in the pre-Christian era. Unlike Samhain, opening the dark winter season, Imbolc is only rarely mentioned in them and even then, no description is given. The abundance of ethnographic data on the 1st of February rites in various parts of Ireland comes from much later time, not before the 18th century, while truly pre-Christian traditions related to this day can only be speculatively reconstructed through parallels with similar archaic pagan calendric rites known from other cultures. As, for instance, Graham Webster wrote:

Imbolc or Ómelg [was] celebrated on 1st February. It was based on the old pastoral lambing season and therefore had powerful fertility associations. Little is known about it, presumably as it was mainly practiced by the women and carried out in secret, away from profane male eyes (Webster 1988: 32).

Webster, in part, relied on the evidence for the Roman Lupercalia (celebrated in mid-February), but mostly drew his conclusions “by making a connection with the goddess Juno, one of whose many epithets is *februa*” (see Ó Catháin 1999: 243)

What is even more curious, there is no substantial evidence that the 1st February festival was related to the pagan goddess Brigit, the namesake of the Christian saint.

The 10th century *Glossary* composed by the king-bishop Cormac mac Cuilennáin has two different entries: *óimelc* (n 1000) and *Brigit* (n 150). The entry on *óimelc* (imbolc) is the following a short text:

Óimelc .i. ói-meilg .i. isi aimser andsin tic ass cáirach (Meyer 1913: 86).
óimelc – sheep milking, that is the time the sheep’s milk comes, milking.

In a work specifically regarding this term, Eric Hamp notes, ‘We are not told what the role of milking was in connection with the feast’ (Hamp 1979/80: 106). Hamp’s identification of *imbolc/óimelc* as ‘a word based on an old pastoral or husbandman’s term’ is further developed by S. Ó Catháin, who writes:

Food-production is, indeed, is a key element: the production of food, however, is not by nature a one-off kind of affair, but rather a systematic, continuous process, involving, certainly in the case of livestock, the

successful scheduling of reproduction of animals from year to year
(Ó Catháin 1999: 243).

Thus, according to the widely accepted interpretation of Cormac's gloss, the festival of Imbolc would basically open the sheep-milking season, which symbolically represented the beginning of a new farming season, linked with the onset of a new daylight year and the coming of spring. This is likely to be true. But how exactly could it have been related to a pagan goddess?

Saint Brigid and Pagan Celtic Goddess Brigit

Very little is known about Brigit as pagan deity. I suppose, all mentions of the Goddess Brigit that appear in Medieval sources can make a short list.

The first of these sources, Cormac's *Glossary*, lists "Brigit" as one of three sister-deities, each a patron of an important sphere:

Brigit .i. banfile ingen in Dagdae. Isí insin Brigit bé n-exe .i. bandea no adratis filid. Ar ba romór ⁊ ba roan a frithgnam. Ideo eum deam uocant poetarum. Cuius sorores errant Brigit bé legis ⁊ Brigit bé Goibne ingena in Dagda (Meyer 1913: 15)

Brigit, i.e. the poetess, daughter of Dagda. This is Brigit the female seer or woman of insight, i.e. the goddess whom poets used to worship, for her cult was very great and very splendid. It is for this reason that they call her (the goddess) of poets (poetarum) by this tide, and her sisters were Brigit, the woman of leechcraft and Brigit, the woman of smithcraft, i.e. daughters of Dagda

The Middle Irish tract *The Book of the Invasion of Ireland* also mentions Brigit, but her characteristics differ here:

Brigit banfili, ingen in Dagda, is aicci ro batar .i. Fea ⁊ Femen da dam Dile, diata Mag Fea ⁊ Mag Femen (LGE IV: 132)

Brigid the poetess, daughter of Dagda, she it is who had Fea and Femen, the two oxen of Díl, from whom are named Mag Fea and Mag Femen.

The saga *Battle of Mag Tuired*, a piece of pseudo-history relating to the conflict between the Tribe of the Goddess Danu and Fomorians, yields yet another bit of information about Brigid-Brig. She is again called the daughter of Dagda, but the story rather indicates her poetic inspiration and skill:

Tic Brich 7 caines a mac. Eghis artós, goilis fodeod. Conud andsin roclos gol 7 egem artos a n-Errinn. Is si didiu an Prich sin roairich feit do caismert a n-oidci. (Stokes 1891: 94, 96)

Then Brigh comes and bewailed her son. She shrieked at first, she cried at last. So that then for the first time crying and shrieking were heard in Erin. Now it is that Brigh who invented a whistle for signalling at night.

Except for some later glossaries, these three fragments present the only available information about the pre-Christian goddess. First, she was a daughter of the god Dagda; second, she had two oxen; and third, she had two sisters and she indeed was a poetess. This information is surely not sufficient for making conclusions on a pagan cult of the Celtic goddess. This evidence is unrelated to spring rituals and does not yield any clue allowing to link this character with St. Brigid of the Christian tradition.¹

Yet one unknown adds up to another unknown, creating a kind of myth, or, rather, mythologeme, permeating not the Medieval monastic tradition or folklore, but today's academic research.

As Brian Wright writes in his book *Brigit. Goddess, druidess and saint*:

*While there is no direct mention of any **fertility** attributes in the case of the goddess, the fact that she is celebrated at Imbolc, a festival connected with the end of winter and the birth of new life, suggests she did have a fertility role, and her possession of two oxen may be significant* (Wright 2009: 7).

At the same time, the renowned British archeologist and historian, Barry Cunliffe, in the book *The Ancient Celts*, proposed a similar idea:

*The next festival, Imbolc, which took place on 1 February, is less well known (comparing it with Samain, the 1 November). In all probability it was associated with the goddesses Brigit, a goddesses of **fertility**, learning and healing. In Christian mythology the Celtic Brigit became a saint: her festival falls on 1 February and is still celebrated widely in Ireland* (Cunliffe 1997: 189).

The given ‘formula’ with two unknowns has only one solution: the connection of the fertility function with February 1st and the fact that the pagan deity and a Christian saint bore the same name, Brigit, could automatically create an illusion of their identity.

Moreover, some motifs from early lives of St. Brigid, likely of pre-Christian origin and linked with some pagan deity, are automatically projected onto the figure of Brigit the Goddess. As Miranda Green points out in her book *Celtic Goddesses*:

Little is known in detail about the goddess Brigit. There is a danger of creating a picture of her pagan role from the information we have of Brigit as a saint, because certain elements of her life as a Christian holy woman appear to be pre-Christian in origin. An example of this is the saint’s magical association with fire, which has given rise to the deity being identified as a fire-goddess (Green 1995: 198).

Indeed, the motif of miraculous light mistaken for fire, absent in the scarce evidence of the pagan Brigit, is reiterated in many earlier lives of St. Brigid of Kildare.² Thus, for instance, the compiler of her early Irish life *Bethu Brigte* (c. 800) mentions, among her other early miracles, the miraculous appearance of light:

Lae n-and I suidiu luid Brocsech do bleogan ⁊ ni fácaib nech inna taig nisi ind noeb-ingin tantum ina cotlad. Co-naccatar ro-las a tech dia n-eis. Fa-reith in tuath. Anda leu nicon airsitis cli fri alaile. Fo-gabar a tech slan ⁊ ind ingen ina cotlad (Ó hAodha 1978:1, l. 2-5)

One day in that place Broicsech went to milk and she leaves nobody in her house except the holy girl who was asleep. They saw that the house had caught fire behind them. The people run to its aid, thinking that they would not find one house-post against another. The house is found intact and the girl asleep.

However, this motif is widespread and can be traced back to the biblical tradition (the apocryphal story of the birth of Moses). Doroty Bray in her *List of Motifs in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints* records the motif “house of saint appears on fire” or “divine light above saint” in connection with fifteen Irish saints (Bray 1992: 125)! Nevertheless, when it comes specifically to St. Brigid, this motif is

seen as originating from pagan cults. Lisa Lawrence, the author of a research work on *Pagan imagery in the Lives of Saint Brigit*, wrote:

For example, fire was certainly a powerful religious symbol among the pagan Irish, but it is also a key Christian symbol, signifying the presence of the Christian God and especially of the Holy Spirit. When two religious systems interact, a shared symbol can provide a bridge from one religious idea to another. (Lawrence 1996/1997: 40).

The theme of fire, linked both with a possible pagan deity personifying the coming of the longer daylight hours and with later apocryphal legends about St. Bridgid of Kildare, is a popular motif which gave rise to later symbolic depictions of this character (or, rather, these characters). However, this myth is not a modern invention, but goes back to an earlier time. As early as in the Medieval era, for instance, Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambriensis) in his tract *Topographia Hiberniae* (1188–89), in the section called *Mirabilia*, describes a strange phenomenon of the Monastery of Kildare:

As in the time of St. Brigit twenty nuns were here engaged in the Lord's warfare, she herself being the twentieth, after her glorious departure, nineteen have always formed the society, the number having never been increased. Each of them has the care of the fire for a single night in turn, and, on the evening before the twentieth night, the last nun, having heaped wood upon the fire, says, "Brigit, take charge of your own fire; for this night belongs to you."

She then leaves the fire, and in the morning it is found that the fire has not gone out, and that the usual quantity of fuel has been used. (Wright 1913:97).

Later, the motif of magic inextinguishable fire would become popular in folk and neo-pagan tradition related to St. Brigid's Day. And this is quite logical because Imbolc, an actually old pre-Christian festival, was dedicated and is still dedicated to the coming of warm weather and light. Yet these are not the only symbolic meanings of fire (and, one may add, light), since it is exactly the motif that presents a broad field for speculation, or, if we choose a different wording, for deeper interpretation of the symbolic essence of the festival that has been celebrated in Ireland on February 1st until now.

The 1st February in Folk Tradition: Lá Fhéile Bríde

But let us return to the evidence from folklore. According to the classic work by Kevin Danaher *The Year in Ireland* (1972), a number of the following activities, characteristic of St. Brigid's festival in traditional farming communities, can be tentatively identified.³

We could see which of them are actually connected with St. Brigid tradition, which elements represent innovations or, on the contrary, pseudo-archaization, and which have survived until the present day. So the activities on St. Brigid's Day are:

1. To find good omens for the weather of the future year: the sky must be blue, but a short rain was not unwelcome. "Rain in February is a good Summer".
2. To collect some sea-weeds and old grass 'blessed by St. Brigid' and to use it later to fertilize the crops.
3. To examine the stocks of meals in the house, to count all.
4. To clean the house.
5. To make special food, especially a cake called *bairín-breac*.
6. To make fresh butter.
7. To make the straw figure of Brigid *Brideóg*.
8. To place offerings on the windows as a part of *brideóg* play.
9. To make St. Brigid's crosses.
10. To make *Brat Bríde* and to put in above the door or gate, to make a girdle of Brigid.
11. To make a good fire in the fireplace.
12. To dance and to drink, singing traditional Irish protective 'Brigid' songs.

Items 1–6, in my opinion, need no special comment, because, on the one hand, they have parallels in other traditions, on the other hand, are not necessarily calendar-specific. These rituals seem to be aimed rather at purification of the house and reinforcement of family ties in general. The same applies to 11 and 12. There is very reason to associate these ritual activities with St. Brigid's life (among other things, she is known as a maker of beer and butter, and she could also transform water into milk and not only miraculously keep her livestock safe, but increase its numbers). Though it is a stretch, the theme of milk, in particular, and livestock, in general, can be linked with the above-cited mention of two oxen owned by Brigid of the Tribe of Goddess Danu (see the quote from *Battle of Mag Tuired*).

Items 6 and 7 seem totally unrelated to either St. Brigid or the pagan goddess. Yet they have a number of parallels in other cultures where “religion, folk custom and superstitions concerning agriculture were closely associated” (O’Neill 1977: 99). Naturally, the first parallel that comes to mind is the doll of Shrove (*Maslenitsa*) that symbolizes the expiring winter in many Slavic and Baltic regions. As, for instance, Žilvytis Šaknys writes on it,

Central and Eastern European agricultural folk traditions have many common features. The main rituals of the calendar festivals are no exception. For example, the essential Užgavėnės festival¹ rites in all the regions’ culture include processions of costumed village youths, parades with horse-pulled sledges, dragging a straw figure (Šaknys 2015: 108).

However, there are some differences. The Irish *Brideóg*, unlike the Russian *Maslenitsa*, is not burned, likely due to the fact that it has become associated not with the expiring winter, but with St. Brigid herself. After a ritual tour around the village and collecting treats (mainly sweets, but sometimes money), the participants of the procession celebrate the onset of spring, and the doll is seated at the communal table. She is then supposed to be kept until the next year, but actually, as a rule, the straw figure is not so durable and becomes unfit by the next festive season. So she is put in the basement to “safeguard” the house and replaced with a newly made doll. As Danaher remarks, in some parts of Ireland the functions of the straw doll are performed by the most good-looking and well-dressed girl of the village, sometimes – by a female child carried by everyone in turns (Danaher 1972: 24–31).

On the contrary, the tradition of making the so-called *Brat Bride* (“Brigid’s cloak”) seems to be of a local custom. A typical *Brat Bride* is a red silk ribbon, hung out at the porch or at the gate on the eve of February 1st. The legend has it that St. Brigid herself, who is walking around the earth on this night, will touch it, and the ribbon will become a remedy against many ailments, especially headache. According to Danaher:

The general belief was that the Saint, going about the country on the eve of her feast, would touch the brat and endow it with healing powers. Once thus touched it kept its virtue for ever, and many held that the older it was, the more potent it became (Danaher 1972: 32).

This motif apparently originates from numerous versions of St. Brigid's life, distinguishing her among other early Irish saints by her specific capacity for healing (see Davies 1989; Bray 1992: 125).

Finally, the making of Saint Brigid's Cross (Irish *Cros Bride*) is perhaps the most important part of the whole festival. A little geometrical shape made of straw varies in form across Ireland, sometimes having little to do with a conventional cross. Sharing some traits with the swastika, this shape certainly has its origins in pagan antiquity and bears solar symbolism. Without lingering on this complicated subject, I would only remark that, just as other symbols of St. Brigid's Day, the *Cros Bride* is:

1. Made a new every year and put on the gate or above the door, without removing the last-year cross;
2. Believed to increase its magical protective power over time;
3. Supposed to protect, in the first place, the family, the livestock and the household in general.

The making of St. Brigid's cross required special skills. The straw or the reeds had to be first soaked, then bent in certain ways and dried. With these prepared details then the cross itself would be assembled. Straw processing would begin by mid-January, often performed collectively by the family and their neighbours, which, on this occasion, bore special social and psychological functions. During this job, special incantations or protective charms had to be sung. For example:

Crios Bride mo chrios / Crios na gceithre gcros / Eirigh suas, a bhean an tigh, / Agus gaibh trí h-uair amach / An té rachas tré mo chrios / Go mba seacht fear a bheith sé Bliain ó inniu.

Brigit's girdle is my girdle / The girdle with the four crosses / Arise, woman of the house / And go out three times./ May whoever goes through my girdle / Be seven times better a year from now.

In other words, the 1st of February itself was not just an important point within the ritualized calendric cycle, but rather an agglomeration of protective structures induced and reinforced through the sacred presence of the goddess or the Christian saint. Put simply, unlike festivals such as the New Year's Day, St. Brigid's Day would actually last throughout the whole year, because sacred objects made on this day were not destroyed (like the Shrove doll or the New Year tree), but, on the contrary, kept with respect and would extend their protective power across time and space. This last observation is worthy of further analysis.

St. Brigid Day in Modern Ireland

All the elements of St. Brigid's Day festivity are rather relevant for the late 19th and early 20th century when most fieldwork was done, with the use of special questionnaires and direct observations. Which of them have survived into the early 21st century?

This is not, in fact, an easy question to answer, because the present-day attitudes towards traditional rituals (as much as towards the Irish language) vary significantly across Ireland. As, for example, Kate Fenell wrote:

The effect of losing our language is a subtle shift in our harmony with ourselves. It will not make headlines, but its survival is necessary for our fundamental feeling of belonging and our understanding of who we really are (Fenell 2004: 33).

The same is true for traditional ethnic rituals. Their revival is a matter of identity, which is especially relevant now as a response to migration waves flooding the island during the last twenty five years. Nevertheless, quite logically and predictably, only a limited recourse to a few isolated elements of calendric rituals is attested, and mainly in the so-called Gaeltacht – regions where spoken Irish survives. For instance, the tradition is preserved on the Aran Islands where community members make a straw doll called *Brideóg* and go from house to house so that St. Brigid could visit each family. On the way, charms or prayers are said (Fig. 1 and 2, photos from 2015).

Usually, the straw from this big doll is later used to make small 'Brigid Crosses' for each family. But this is hardly typical, and in the western, still largely agrarian, parts of the country St. Brigid's Day is losing its traditional traits and being superseded by the next-day church feast, Candlemas – Feast of Presentation of Jesus Christ and of Purification of Saint Mary, also regarded as the day of coming of light in popular Christian tradition.

At the same time, within the state program of Irish language revival, the festivals called *Éigse na Brideoge* (lit.: 'Learning on Bridgid's doll') are held in the Gaeltacht areas of Kerry and Galway in the beginning of February. The name of the symbolic straw doll is rather used for re-creating the pseudo-national spirit. The festivals themselves has little to do with the original 1st February celebration. Films about Ireland are shown, lecturers deliver talks on the region's history and geography, and indeed, numerous music bands play. In other words, here is where the issue of national identity merges with the tourist industry.



Figure 1. Traditional Brideg-doll from Aran Islands. From the individual blog and with kind permission of Una McDonagh (www.doolin2aranferries.com, last accessed on 02.12.2019).



Figure 2. Bridieg procession on InisOirr, Aran. Photo taken 30.01.2015. From the individual blog and by kind permission of Una McDonagh (www.doolin2aranferries.com, last accessed on 02.12.2019).

Yet, while in the western parts of Ireland the interest in the 1st February festival has decreased, the Anglicized urban culture shows in the last years a paradoxical spike in enthusiasm for it, as much as for the characters of St. Brigid and Brigit the pagan goddess.

In the introductory article of the Volume 60 of the *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, devoted to the Ritual Year, the authors propose a very relevant idea that –

Not only folklorists and ethnologists, but also archaeologists, linguists, sociologists and political scientists can contribute something to the study of the ritual year because the idea of connecting nature and culture seems to be present in all societies throughout all eras of history (Fournier, Sedakova 2015).

To the above-mentioned interdisciplinary fields I could add social psychology, which has contributed much to the explanation of the processes that take place in the present-day urbanized society in Ireland and perhaps beyond. Or, at least, has attempted to explain them. With regard to the ways of celebrating February 1st in today's Ireland, one thing at least is certain: its main social functions of reinforcing family unity and, in a broader sense, neighbourhood, along with creating collective protective mechanisms, has been largely lost. However, this does not mean that engagement with some of its aspects has been lost too. Rather, they have acquired new underlying meanings. Thus, seemingly ornamental attributes of St. Brigid's (or her pagan forerunner?), such as the cross, the ribbon and the doll, and, in a way, the special cakes made of wheat and oat flour, going beyond the "family circle", have become something like national identity symbols and at the same time cultural tourist attractions.

In the first place, it is St. Brigid's cross that has lost its local variability. Today, the predominantly popular version is the one from Donegal (Fig. 3) popularized presumably by its use as the emblem for RTÉ (Radio-Television-Érinn) from 1961. Ahead of St. Brigid's Day, crosses made of straw or even wires (along with souvenir dolls *brideóg*) are widely sold in touristic shops. However, it must be acknowledged that objects do not go beyond that.

As a preliminary attempt at classification of forms that celebration of St. Brigid's Day has taken in modern Ireland, I propose to distinguish the following several branches, the first of which may be called pseudo-folkloric or "fakeloric", presented as if it were really traditional and/or modified for tastes of modern (urban) society.



Figure 3. Saint Brigit Cross (photo by T. Mikhailova).

On this day, Dublin and other Irish cities host parties for children and their parents. The programme for these events includes singing “folk songs” dedicated to St. Brigid, both in English and in Irish, eating ritual cakes, playing folk music and invariably – making together St. Brigid’s cross from preforms made in advance of straw or even wires. Sometimes the Brigid doll, *Brideóg*, is also made, but never carried around the neighbouring households.

Another branch is what I would call pseudo-Christian, so being Christian at first sight, but in fact belonging to the “twilight zone” of folk superstitions (the term by Maartje Draak, Draak 1955: 9–12). The fact is, Ireland has a number of sacred springs with healing water, in Irish usually called – *Tobar Bride*. The most renowned and worshipped is the one near the Kildare monastery (Fig. 4). The cult of these holy wells dates back to pre-Christian times. St. Partick himself, as we know,

sought to ban worshipping them or to “convert” the wells by psalm-singing (see, for instance, Bord 2006: 107). Nevertheless, holy wells are still visited in our days, and those associated with St. Brigid are believed not just to have healing properties, but also cure sterility. When I visited St. Brigid’s Well in Kildare in November 2018, I had a chance to see a man and a woman, apparently a married couple, performing a rite of well-worshipping. Taking some water, they wetted their faces with it and then proceeded slowly along the path marked with five large boulders. At each boulder, they would pause and say something in low voice (Fig. 5). Such visits, originating with Irish paganism, but now reduced to popular superstition, are widely practiced (not solely in Ireland, of course), but their central idea is still addressing the goddess (or the Christian saint) individually. But the 1st February practice of collective visits, interpreted as pilgrimages, to such sacred springs, on the one hand, loses its connection with healing context. On the other hand, it flies in the face of the Christian idea that worshipping natural objects is wrong.



Figure 4. Saint Brigit holy well near Kildare (photo by T. Mikhailova, taken 04.11.2018).



Figure 5. A 'fertility ritual' near St. Brigit Well ((photo by T. Mikhailova, taken 04.11.2018).

However, it seems to me that these pilgrimages are taking on another function: they create a kind of intimacy between people who are normally far apart. This, to my opinion, is quite important. Just as the fakeloric parties described above, these events create the feeling of togetherness, cooperation, and, inevitably, psychological connections somewhat compensating for that feeling of home, family and neighbourhood that was a significant, although not necessarily obvious, part of ritual-performing in agrarian communities.

The third branch could be called pseudo-pagan.

The absence of factual information on the real pagan cult of Brigit the goddesses opens up the possibility to invent or 'reconstruct' pseudo-pagan cults that characterize Brigit as the Big mother-goddess.

As I have already noted, February 1st in Ireland is not a matter-of-fact day marking the border between temporal periods. This is a day when a whole

system of charms and other attributes expected to provide fertility of cereals and livestock, as well as general well-being of the community, is created. The same principle underlies the rites of the pagan Brigid worshippers who perform them throughout the whole year. But February 1st, Imbolc, is indeed the day that is the most emotionally and “extatically” loaded. Thus, for instance, the book by a very popular ‘specialist’ in pagan Celtic religion, Courtney Weber, paints the Imbolc rite as the moment of divination. Within a group of goddess-worshippers, a person is chosen, either female or male, who at the moment has the strongest feeling of ecstatic inspiration. This person is addressed as Brigit. After a sequence of rites that involve water, wax, a burning candle and earth, the “Brigit” makes predictions for the forthcoming year and fortune-telling for each individual (for details, see Weber 2015: 170 ff.). Curiously, the practices described in her book are found not in Ireland, but in the USA where they serve as means of consolidation for the descendants of Irish immigrants “having a healthy dose of Irish in DNA mix” (Weber 2015: 19) and those who share their views.

In Ireland itself, there are also several organizations posing as pagan and shamanic, for whom Imbolc is the day of unity with the goddess. The latter enters the body of a priestess in trance and provides prosperity for earth and humankind. To avoid further dwelling upon this subject, it will suffice to mention the group named *Slí an Chroí* (“the way of the heart”) or ‘Celtic Shamanism’, founded in 2004 by Karen Ward and John Cantwell. The group is quite popular, broadly advertising themselves on the Web and renowned for showy public rituals (the official website: <http://www.slianchroi.ie/gallery/htm>, last accessed on 02.12.2019).

The Light of Brigid and Collective Spirituality

The fourth, and last branch — somewhat close to neo-paganism — is what I would call alternative spirituality. This includes, for instance, a Kildare organization called *Solas Bride* (“the light of Brigid”), established in 1992 and located on the road of Tully near *Tobar Bride*.

This organization has a long history from the year 1807, when six nuns gathered in Tullow and became the first ‘Sisters of Brigid’. Surely, the history of this Centre deserves special investigation, but now I am focused on its social attitudes and positions: the centre is welcoming people from every religious

background, letting its door open for discussions on the issues of spirituality. They also share their common activities with neopagans who celebrate Imbolc/ Saint Brigid's day as well as the Brigidines. The Centre seems to represent a union or a combination of modern traditions and historical past. In 1993, it has revived the old tradition of the perpetual Brigid fire and is oriented in the hospitable aspects of the Irish saint. At the same time, their efforts are aimed at bringing together members of all religious denominations, as well as non-religious people. Their goal is re-creating collective spirituality through collective meditation, singing, dancing and communal prayers to the Supreme Being. There is no trance, divination or secrecy surrounding the community. On the contrary, the Centre is open for everyone (see the official website of the Centre: <http://solasbhride.ie/event/feile-bride-2019/>, last accessed on 04.09.2019).

What do they do, then, on St. Brigid's Day? Actually, nothing special: traditional cross-making, tea-drinking, with peculiar cakes and Irish songs. From the numerous photos of various events on the *Solas Bride* website, it seems that most of its members are elderly people, predominantly women, to whom – as one may cautiously infer – the community provides a kind of substitute for that feeling of family and neighbourhood traditionally reinforced on St. Brigid's Day in agrarian communities. This is a way of dealing with loneliness which has become the cost of the modern progress.

“Loneliness is now justifiably a social science topic in good currency!” (Perlman and Peplau 1981: 56), say Daniel Perlman and Letitia Peplau, researchers in social psychology, in the conclusion of their paper written back in 1981. This aspect of motivation of collective behavior, especially on the marked points of the annual cycle, seems to be of interest for both anthropology and ethnography.

Conclusion

Over recent decades, folklore studies as integral part of general ethnological studies has undergone much change, affecting not only the very object of research, but also its methods. Most notably, such important point as oral transmission lost its relevance due to the serious changes that took place within the whole system of communication as such. Profound changes are also observable with regard to the timescale of emergence and evolution of new spiritual systems that bring together many people, often physically isolated from each

other rather than belonging to ‘natural’ communities, such as family, neighbourhood etc. Deep-rooted archaic cosmological beliefs, reconstructed from ancient rituals, often give way to superficially ‘traditional’ behaviours. Against this background, the emergence of what could be called ‘shared spirituality’ is becoming especially significant, since it is the factor which increasingly serves as a natural substitute of the declining system of social relations and kinship. Blood affinity is being replaced by spiritual affinities, which, in a way, become a response to the challenge of loneliness, one of the critical problems of the modern urban society. However, new beliefs, superstitions and, even more notably, traditions tend to emerge on the basis of old and well-formed ideas, although being subject to considerable change. Considerable, but not unlimited. It is a crucial point to be remembered when one tries to assess the changes taking place in the area of calendar rites which, despite all their variation and astonishing openness and flexibility, are still predominantly linked to specific marked points of the ritual year.

Another stable component that can be identified is a limited set of worshipped, mythologized characters whose images can also vary, but whose names persist. Of course, this is not universally or ubiquitously the situation, so the most interesting cases are those in which the temporal locus and the character’s name persist for millennia, while the background layers are constantly changeable. This is exactly the case of the Irish figure of St. Bridgit and the day of February 1st.

Notes

1 It is worth noticing, however, that the specific motif of food cult, characteristic of the 1st February festival, is, in a way, reflected in St. Brigid’s lives: she is indeed said to have devoted much time to cooking, milking cows, raising calves, and also to have been able to transform river water into milk which even had healing properties. Yet there is still no reason to think she is linked to the pagan goddess in any way.

2 On St. Brigid of Kildare see: Charles-Edwards 2000: 428–430 et passim; Bray 1987; McCone 1982; Ritari 2009.

3 Indeed, in different parts of Ireland the elements listed below varied; besides, it is worth adding that the most curious and perhaps most archaic ways of celebrating St. Brigid's Day are attested in Scotland, where, for instance, S. Ó Catháin sees the features of the traditional 'bear feast' of Finno-Ugrian and Siberian tribes (Ó Catháin 1995: 45–46).

4 Lithuanian Shrovetide.

Abbreviations

LGE – *Lebor Gabála Éirenn. The Book of the Taking of Ireland*. Vol. IV. Ed. R. A. S. Macalister. London: Irish Texts Society, 1941.

TBC – *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Bool of Leinster*. Ed. Cecile O'Rahilly. Dublin: DIAS, 1967.

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TRADITIONAL AND NON- TRADITIONAL VALUES IN RUSSIA, BULGARIA AND SLOVAKIA: ETHNOLINGUISTIC, COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstract: The article embodies some results of a joint international research project on linguistic and ethnocultural dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values in the three countries of the Slavic world. First, the terminology in Russian, Bulgarian and Slovakian languages is analyzed, with the outcome that the term ‘value(s)’ as denoting an abstract notion is a recent development in Slavic languages. Second, the notions of the traditional and non-traditional values are characterized in a comparative way and the possible border (lexical, pragmatical, etc.) between them is marked. Thirdly, the dynamics of changes in the axiological hierarchy is investigated and the reasons for the changes of evaluation are defined with the examples by the development of several values (‘old age’, ‘friend’, etc.). Finally, axiological historical methodology is illustrated by the review of Russian-Bulgarian sources that give an opportunity to reflect on values. The study demonstrates its actuality as COVID-19 has spread all over the world, drastically changing the routines and preferences of people, correspondingly the hierarchy of values and its vocabulary. Language is at the center of this axiological study, being the main source of and engine for evaluation.

Keywords: axiology, dynamics of the values, ethnolinguistics, folklore, paraliturgical texts, Balkan region, Bulgarian, Russian, Slovak

Introduction

Axiology founded as a philosophic discipline during the last several decades has drastically broadened its borders and is now embracing many other humanitarian and social disciplines.¹ A group of 15 scholars from three Slavic countries unified their efforts in search for common axiological aspects in various academic fields from the point of view of linguists (ethnolinguists, textologists, historians of Slavic languages, specialists in semantics and dialects), folklorists, ethnographers and historians, working in our Russian-Bulgarian-Slovak joint research project “Linguistic and ethnocultural dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values in the Slavic world”.

In this article, we present some significant points of our research which consider the main axiological terminology and changes in its contemporary usage, specific characteristics of a value expressed in the texts (in its broad sense) as such, some means of investigating of axiology of various texts and the reasons for the modification of the hierarchy of the values. In 2020, in the times of this pandemic, these topics obtain greater actuality and value.

There are several academic fields exploited in this project. Ethnolinguistics as presented by Moscow (or Slavic) school² with its well developed set of methods and approaches towards the multifaceted data (language, folklore, ethnographic issues) is the leading discipline in this study and correspondingly the article. Evaluation of phenomena, subjects, actions, actors and properties, be it explicit or implicit, is a distinctive feature of the language worldview (Tolstaia 2015: 15–16). A number of ethnolinguistic publications on folk axiology have proved the efficacy of such cohesion of these two disciplines (Sedakova 2011; Bartmiński 2011, 2014; Kitanova 2015; Vinogradova 2016; Micheva 2016; Micheva-Pecheva 2013).

For our research the comparative investigation of values in European countries according to certain ethnolinguistic and sociolinguistic scholarly procedure which is carried out within the framework of EUROJOS, an international project under the supervision of E. Bartmiński (Lublin, Poland), the founder of The Lublin Ethnolinguistic School, is very significant.³ These studies have resulted in a series of publications including six volumes of “Axiological dictionary of the Slavs and their neighbors” (LAS 2015–2019) and we partly use this methodology, as well as the achievements of Polish linguistic axiology (Puzynina 1992; Adamowski & Wójcicka (eds.) 2015). The role of these investigations and publications is depicted in detail by Liudmila Fedorova (2018).

Another important scholarly methodology of this article is the combination of comparative and semiotic approaches. Comparison, exactly like evaluation, may be evident and covert, in many cases it serves as the foundation for assessment. This approach is valid for historical linguistic axiological investigations, for Slavic theological and other medieval manuscripts (Žeňuch 2019; Mircheva 2019), for folklore idioms (Kitanova 2015; Kirilova 2015) and other written and oral texts. In Old Slavic theological manuscripts, as scholars show, highly valued virtues can be described without any comparison and be presented like their opposites in condemnation of sin, while other manuscripts demonstrate “the good, the sacred Christian” openly opposing it to “the bad, pagan” (Mircheva 2019). As well, the value system of the Christian community represents a set of names associated with God, God’s government and glory. It is a specific linguistic means referring to the doxological dimension of thinking about God (Žeňuch & Šašerina 2019). The monastic life based on a strict set of values, such as vow of chastity of soul and body, modesty, obedience, fasting, praying, etc. (Wilšínská 2019).

Historical insights based on memoirs, diaries and other sources of meetings between two cultures and nations and their comparisons generate relevant ideas on the evaluation and help to compare the hierarchy of values (Gusev 2019a, 2019b).

The semiotic binary oppositions are a significant tool for any kind of axiological comparative (and not only) research (Frolova 2015). To discover the hidden values the researcher can start with an examination of an anti-value (the second part of the opposition), and this is exactly one of the strategies we apply to investigating folk medical, apocryphal texts as well as modern ethno-linguistic dictionaries. Linguistic methods are of high significance in this study, as they are in all spheres concerning the study of Slavic languages (lexicology and semantics, dialectal differences, borrowings, words combination, etc.). Taboos and euphemisms as the general principles for the denotation of ‘dangerous’ phenomena are also taken into account (Valentsova 2019; Žeňuchová 2019; Kitanova 2019).

For this study, the very opposition of ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional values’ needs to be clarified. We argue that there is no distinct border between these two categories, they often overlap, and their hierarchies depend a lot on current ideology, religion, economy, politics, fashion, etc. Drastic shifts and the dynamic development of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ values is caused by the changes in society as part of the whole and also individually, personally. This leads us to the key question – what is a value and how does it obtain its terminology which develops alongside the transformations of societies and languages.

Terminology

First and foremost the key terms *value/values* in the Russian, Bulgarian and Slovak languages have to be examined⁴. According to our hypothesis, the terms undergo considerable transformations in the course of historical change of a language and its society. The history of the lexical coverage of these notions in Slavic languages (Russian, Bulgarian *ценности*, Slovak *hodnoty* and *cennost*, Polish *wartości*⁵) shows different ways of compiling the national vocabularies – the usage of various Old Slavic roots, borrowing, etc. and as such is an interesting object for a historical and comparative linguistic study.

In Russian and Bulgarian languages, where the cultural and economic vocabularies are very similar, but still differ (partly because of many balkanisms in

Bulgarian language), the lexical designation of values coincides and correlates with what is “expensive” in material as well as “dear” in spiritual aspects. We compare its lexicographical designations in principal modern Russian and Bulgarian dictionaries. Due to the lack of space, we will give just a few random examples. The dictionary entry in a single-volume Russian dictionary (Post-Soviet edition) provides such an entry, **Ценность** 1. see *Ценный*; 2. Price, cost; 3. Property peculiar to something, importance, significance; 4. *usually in plural form* Item or phenomenon of value. *Safekeeping of valuables. Cultural values. Spiritual values. Material values* (Shvedova 2007: 1078). According to the Bulgarian language dictionary in one volume, published during socialist times, “value” has an exclusively material meaning **Ценност** is 1. A valuable item (but not money), treasure; 2. Price, cost (Andreychin 1973: 1091).

Dictionaries published in the 19th century do not present semantics of “importance” at all. For instance, the Bulgarian dictionary compiled by Naiden Gerov in the 19th century does not contain the substantive value (*ценност*), but records the verbs *ценя* (“to cost”, “bargain”) and the adjective *ценен* “valuable” which is given exclusively in its material meaning (Gerov 1895–1904, 5: 532). V. I. Dal’ interprets the Russian abstract substantive “value” by means of an adjective and also through the words “cost” and “expensiveness”. The adjective *ценный* is determined as “worth of much”, “what is put into price” (Dal’ 1955: 578). There is no abstract meaning of something like important, dear, meaningful.

By contrast with Russian, the Bulgarian language apart from *ценност* uses one other synonymous term to denote material and spiritual value, which is *стойност*. The respective Russian substantive *стоимость* only has a financial, material meaning. The Bulgarian word *стойност*, as well as *ценност*, is borrowed from economic vocabulary, but in some usages both terms are synonymous to “value” understood as importance, relevance. Interestingly enough, this meaning of *стойност* is presented in the dictionaries of socialist times. Compare the Bulgarian definition and respective example: **стойност** 1. *Fig. meaning.* importance, significance, price with and example: *Нравствената стойност на една постъпка се определя не от мотивите ѝ, а от съзнанието за последиците ѝ.* (“The moral value of a deed is determined by the recognition of its consequences, not the intentions” Dim. Dimov) (Andreychin 1973: 969). *Ценност* though, dominates in Bulgarian contemporary scholarly axiological discourse.

The Slovak language provides interesting materials for the comparison of semantics and functioning of the terms under investigation. The words derived from common Slavic **cěna* (as “treasure”, “value”) have given place to words derived from the Common Slavic root **god*, see more (Šivic-Dular 1999). Words *hodnota* and *cennost'* are not present in the multilingual dictionary compiled by Anton Bernolak (1825), but the verbs *cenit'* and adjectives of roots *cen-* and *hod-* are present with the designation of the monetary value of things and people. In the present-day Slovak language *hodnota* and *cennost'* are used frequently, often they are synonyms, however there are some verbal nuances of their use, pragmatics and semantics. *Hodnota* is used more as a term in axiological studies, while *cennost'* can be found predominantly in historical and cultural heritage contexts.

Thus, words denoting “value” as notions in Russian, Bulgarian, and Slovak languages of the 19th – early 20th centuries were used by no means in the same sense as they function in present-day discourse. Now they function as a term which designates its own block of phenomena and characteristics (see below about their usage).

In the list of values we analyze within the ethnolinguistic and historical framework of our project, there are mainly abstract, ideal, natural notions (“life”, “love”, “family”, “bravery”, “honor”, “health”, “old age”, “water”, “education”, etc.). In the language of patriarchal culture these notions will not bear the collective names of “values”. Talking with elders in our expeditions in rural areas of the three countries discussed here we will hardly hear “love”, “family”, “respect”, “honesty” in answers to our question “What are your values?”⁶ Informants may understand our question only in a material sense and as values will mention “a ring inherited from my mother” or perhaps a house, land or some other items and objects⁷.

Therefore, when we study traditional values during field work we use other lexicon, different idioms and constructions, for instance, “What is important for you?”, “What is significant, dear for you?” or “What is the main principle of family life, of upbringing children?” or “For what do you respect another person?” etc. To “extract” and formulate the traditional values we have to study the whole context, not just thorough direct questions, and all the linguistic means that people express what is dear to them. The vocabulary is of special importance here: synonyms and word-constructions assist in determining the key values. The adjective “valuable” in its second meaning is interpreted

as a figurative adjective meaning “having great merits, important, necessary”. These are precisely the definitions that are the key ones by the implication in conversations regarding values with the carriers of traditional culture.

Therefore, for us, “values” is an artificial working term if it is applied to a traditional, folk culture. We use it as a work concept in our project. Moreover, the term is artificial when we study medieval religious literature, and the authors of our project demonstrate that (Mircheva 2019; Tsiibranska-Kostova 2019; Žeňuch 2019).

Values in Present-Day Discourse

Compared to traditional life and speech patterns, the present-day discourse gives the researchers quite a different status of the term “values” and respective derivatives. Here we are dealing with something which is no more than an artificial working construction. People not only verbalize values and mention them frequently, but posit their preferences drawing up hierarchy. That refers to individual, personal values that often correlate with needs (compare with Maslow’s pyramid) as well as to public, state, corporate (in business language), school, company values.⁸

Correspondingly, the term “values” is eroded, its semantic and pragmatic volumes are inexplicit and vague, or hyperinflated (Gusev 2019b: 246). Now it has become just a “convenient word” for the designation of one’s position whatever it may be. “Values” has passed into a proxy-word, it can be a symbol of *weltanschauung*, a perception of the world or a code of opinions on everyday behavior. The frequency of the words’ use is quite high. Today “values” in Russian, Bulgarian and the Slovak languages is the umbrella synonym for words of partly similar or close meaning. Depending on context, the word “values” may be used for the designation of “views” “ideas” or “mental set” (in political or historical discourses), “virtue, laws (in religious discourse)”, “rules of life, beliefs” (in personal, private discourse), “intentions”, “resolutions”, “principles”, “messages” (in business) and some others.

We will illustrate this with examples from Russian discourse, which are typical for Bulgarian and Slovak, too. “Values” appear in the texts of various genres, in oral speech, in jokes, anecdotes and neo-aphorisms. In general, the blurred characteristics of values is underlined in any kind of discussion. For instance, people say: “You once said that your values (*whatever you may think*)

were rather simple: you were with those who wished good to my people, to Russians” (quotation is taken from interview by Anton Krasovski, m.spletnik.ru, 02.08.2019).

Values are mentioned in texts on many topics, with definite authorship as well as anonymous. We will give several very random examples of the usage. Here is a rather abstract piece of advice given to girls about cultivating romantic relations: “Choose people with values of your own level” (kubliflife.blogspot.com).

Charity foundations write about values: “The principal asset of our country is not oil, not natural gas, not gold, not wood and timber, and not even its il-limitable expanses. The primary asset is the people” (Taki delo, 28.07.2019). Values is a must to be mentioned in psychological blogs that are so popular nowadays, and there are multiple examples. We will adduce one prime example of a “theory of needs and values”: the author’s theory of *sinton*-approach in practical psychology developed by N.I. Kozlov and his colleagues (<https://www.psychologos.ru/articles/view/sinton>); the authors discriminate between three spheres of values: “Venture, business”, “Self-development” and “Life and relationships”. This model provides a typical example of new values emphasizing such values as “self-fulfillment”, “comfort”, “career”, “entertainment and leisure”. They are highlighted with a reference to the basic values of “home”, “family”, and “health”. Traditional values are presented in combination with non-traditional ones. For instance, “health” is connected with “glamour, beauty”; “harmonic development” and “home” are linked to “comfort” and “money”. It is exhibitivite that in this theory – as in modern discourse in general individuality – personalization, is dominated by “I” and “me”.¹⁰

The discussion of daily skills in the present-day epoch, the excessive use of gadgets in particular, is also integrated with the notion of “value”. “We have found that when participants cut off their smart phones due to various reasons, while it is a required coincidence of a strategy and personal values (and values of key colleagues and other important figures of a person’s life) to change habits successfully (m.vedomosti, 24.07.2019). (How one can get rid of digital dependence). By the way, a stable Internet connection is now one of the highest values (needs), which is interestingly discussed in the recent book by Krogerus and Tchäppeler (2019).

Values are the indispensable component of business strategy description. Compare: “My task is to make it so that all of the “Dodo Pizza” values are shared by all of the franchisees”, E. Panteeleva, HR-manager of a company, writes (www.

huntflow.ru, 17.07.2019). The section “Values and mission” is frequent on sites and in the printed materials of banks, firms, schools, colleges, and universities (Kuzevanova 2011). People at the highest state level speak of values (national values, valuable samples, value milestones), values are scribed in laws and instructions. Not infrequently the traditional values of Russia are contraposed to Western values exactly as “traditional” to “non-traditional”. “Sergei Naryshkin, the director of the External Intelligence Service thinks that under the pretext of a people’s emancipation, all over the world the process of aggressive erosion of traditional values takes place (RBC, 18.06.2019; <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/06/2019/5d890499a79479br37fe45d>).

Examples can be multiplied considerably. We will pitch upon the point that the notion of “values” is important for the characterization of generations, because here the dynamics of traditional and non-traditional values are reflected. “Generation X represents people born from 1964 through 1984. Their value is their uniqueness, it is important for them to be unlike anybody...” (Pravmir, 06.08.2019). Intergenerational conflicts of all times multiplied by the differences in religious or ideological views, are based on the opposition of values. Here is an example from Irina Sedakova’s experience from her field work in Bulgarian villages populated by Old Believers: in Bulgaria in the 1960s, the youth protested against rigid principles and the convictions of senior Old Believers, including bans on certain clothing, protests against hymnody and the observance of prayer rules, etc. Confessional and family values were challenged, young Old Believers accepted modern socialist then-life principles and were ready to behave like “everybody else”. However, people who denied the faith, the church and rites, came back to the Old Believers’ values as they became older and they came into conflict with the next young generation (Sedakova 2009). Many scientists write about the chronology and the generational contradistinction of old and new values (Ipanova 2005; Vasil’ev 2016).

The passages above allow us to pass on to the comparison of old and new values, and the reasons for their dynamics.

Old and New Values: A Shift in Attitudes

The very division of the values into traditional and non-traditional values is questionable.¹¹ Some values are traditional for a religious society, but they are not-traditional for atheistic people. In our project to clarify this opposition we

are dealing with the definitions of “old” and “new” values and we pay much attention to the language of axiological ideas. It appears that the border between traditional and non-traditional values lies partially in the use of vocabulary (compare the vocabulary and slang of older and younger generations) and reflects the discord between generations (Grenier 2007: 718). As any border, it is provisional and there are rather many situations when “old” and “new” axiological notions coincide, since the inventory of traditional values partially persists. However, the content of these notions and their contexts will differ, comparing the changes of notions of family, love, friendship, etc, in patriarchal and modern society.

For instance, the appeal “Do not look down at such a value as friendship” (Facebook, 13.08.2019) nowadays can be a reason for reflection on what friendship, a soul friend, and a bud are. It is a good example for the discussion of values dynamics. As we have already said, values in the Russian, Bulgarian and Slovak post-Socialist societies are articulated publicly; traditional values in modern refinement change their content and pragmatic properties considerably, they are described with different lexis. They are presented openly and informatively in quite another aspect angle (compare advertisement texts, Internet posts). As applied to a “friend”, then the virtual borrowed form of *friend* has found its place in the systems of the Russian and Bulgarian (but not the purist Slovakian!) languages, compare the Russian verbs *зафрендить*, *отфрендить*, (make a friend, cancel friendship) and substantives *френдонад* (fall of friends / being abandoned), *расфренд*, *френдзона* and others (cancellation of friendship, usually initiated unilaterally, zone for friend communication) and similar words in Bulgarian *френд/френдове*. Real and virtual friendships certainly have different contents and surmise different relationships and actions (compare “a meeting with a friend in real life – a walk to a cinema with a girlfriend and a “like” made on a social network in support of a virtual friend, whom the subscriber has never met with). Certain continuity of values can be seen, but friendship is transferred to a new space and new principles of closeness, communication and activity.

It is possible to speak of non-traditional values that, as we have seen, bring new lexis with them or rethought lexis, frequently borrowed and non-typical for the vocabulary of a traditional culture (compare Slavic borrowings “creativity”, “leadership”, “self-realization”, “carrier” and similar words). Values designated in traditional Slavic lexis are transformed considerably in the new world as well.

Articles published five or ten years ago provide materials for the study of values dynamics because the speed of social and technological changes has increased and this circumstance is reflected in the appraisal of notions, phenomena and properties (Sedakova (ed.) 2011). Thus, for instance, the transformation of the traditional value of “old age” is very sensible. In our time old age is drawn back, denied, people fight with it by various ways, declare possibilities of legendary longevity, etc, while in the traditional worldview growing up and the ageing of a human being are inescapable natural processes. We have studied values relying primarily on the methods of ethnolinguistics and using respective materials: lexis and phraseology, folklore pieces, ethnographic data. Ambivalent attitude to the value of old age is obvious, as it is typical for almost each value (Plotnikova 2015). On the one hand, in the traditional worldview, old age correlates with wisdom and experience and on the other with the loss of cognitive abilities, the decrease of physical strength, and with the decline of performability (a case of a axiological binary opposition). Due to such characteristics, the concept of old age receives exactly opposite appraisals, from the sacralization of old age (according to folklore legends, the Lord and saints walk around the earth in the appearance of old people) to its demonization (diseases and characters of the lowest mythology are often presented as old men and old women). The Russian *старцы* (elders) are correlated with the highest sacral values.

It is necessary to bring in sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic methods in order to appraise *old age* (and other values) in the modern stage. As it follows from advertisement texts, the media and Internet, from common dialogues, the value of old age as a synonym of knowledge and wisdom in recent years is called into question. Additionally, convenient sources of information acquisition have appeared due to technological progress. Search engines provide answers to questions rapidly, in a few seconds, the verb *погуглить* (“to google”) has entered the Russian language dictionary, compare “Nowadays old age has stopped being a rare treasure... There was a time when we had to grapple with thorny question when addressing elders. But now we address GOOGLE and if we have a problem with the computer we seek help from an adolescent, not from an elder” (Gavande 2019: 21). This is a dubious question though, because getting information and getting wise advice are different in their axiology, as argues the Irish philosopher, priest and poet John O’Donohue, who puts many positive suggestions in the appraisal of wisdom and experience as intrinsic merits of old age (O’Donohue 1997).

At the end of 2019, with the initial spread of COVID-19 and the spread of the coronavirus-induced pandemic all over the world; predominantly elderly people were attacked. The value of old age rose exponentially: grandfathers and grandmothers came into limelight; to save them from the pandemic by any means, became a national task and a top priority in many countries. This is another obstacle of changing assessment and values – the situation of a crisis, be it military, ideological, medical, etc.

Historical Dimensions in Axiology

Now we will turn up to the historical axiological methods and ideas. The historical approach towards the investigation of values cannot be compared with the modern study of the values in language, folklore and rituals; naturally because one cannot find informants who would be able to answer the questions. Historians must deal with just the available historical sources. Official documents in wide circulation do not help scholars, because they declare the wishful thinking which in reality is often not shared even by the authors of the documents themselves (compare the rhetoric of the Soviet party elite of the 1970–80s). The sources which allow us to learn the quantity, the price or the place of an object, in an apartment (lists of belongings, bequests, etc), give oblique grounds for conclusions of the attitude towards a value, as represented by an object. For example, beautifully decorated medieval books and books as such – in houses in Sofia in the 17th century, or on bookshelves in Soviet flats that were full with books which were never read – says a lot about the high value of education (Leontieva 2019).

Much more productive is the usage of personal sources, but in this case we have to take into account their specific features. This type of text is subjective to a certain extent, which is due to an array of factors. The author can be biased or restricted in what he has seen, he can also project causal facts onto unknown phenomena. In addition, in such personal writings there are some inner hidden problems. Auto-communicative sources (diaries) and those addressed to somebody (letters) do not provide valuable information for our investigation, because the authors usually chose and adopted their own feelings and data that was important for the specific addressee. The events the scholars need for their purposes are rarely depicted. On the other hand, these types of sources

are highly verifiable, because the author usually does not have any reasons to give false information.

The most approachable and largest quantitative sources are not addressed to a certain addressee (more frequently memoirs or travelogues), they are aimed at representing the author as an outstanding figure, the one who can interpret an event and draw our attention. That is why they modify the situation, conceal some details; on the other hand, they embellish the events for the readers. Still, these types of sources give scholars plenty of information on the manners, customs and values of the time and of the place. If the scholar knows the biography of the author and the context of the generation of the text, the veracity of the data is really high. It is even more productive to search in the text what, quoting M. Blok “the author allows us to understand without willing to”, i.e. turning our attention toward the details (Blok 1973: 37), not to the general subject. Meanwhile it is not easy to find in memoirs cases of a mention of customs, if they are not changed, and the author does not ponder about this.

Values are evident when two cultures meet and collide. For example, in the 1880–90s the attempts of Tsar Ferdinand soon after his visit to the subjects, his not knowing how to behave beforehand in his usual manner, demonstrated Bulgarian pragmatism and a neglect of conventionalities. As his teacher of the Bulgarian language D. Gachev recollected, “we, people of the time, could not get rid of our villagers’ materialism while evaluating the prince’s kindness”. Thus, somebody who got the award, and discovered that there were no gems in the medal, went out and cried: “Gentleman, just one beer! I will give it away! Who will treat me to a beer?” (Gachev 1983: 39).

Another example of how cultures meet are provided by Russian emigres in Bulgaria. The ladies who arrived from the cities did not hold back on wearing their dresses, which differed a lot with the garments of the local women, in spite of the fact that the dresses seemed dissolute to the Bulgarians. One emigrated lady recalled, that “occasionally a Bulgarian woman would grasp the dress of the Russian one, having raised it and seeing even more fancy underskirt than the very dress, cried out “Look, they came here to entice our husbands!” So the clothes, casual for the Russians roused the indignation of the Bulgarians (Matveeva 2003: 494). These historical moments though are exceptions, not rules; besides, they show the event statically and therefore they cannot provide a proper source base for the dynamics of values.

Basic traditional and non-traditional values are vividly seen when the representative of conservative views start to expose their attitudes towards various spheres and blame somebody for a departure from the canon. Here, we always have to keep in mind the fact, that “the zealots of the old times” usually embellish and even mythologize the real state of values, creating pastoral pictures.

Authors of memoirs rarely witness the drastic change of the old values and the victory of the new ones, i.e. a striking moment in the dynamics of values. Bulgarian sociologist V. Svintila, in his essays gives many interesting examples from his childhood. The migration from the villages to Sofia, the new bourgeois whom he called “the people without roots” had changed the manners of the citizen and the sight of the city. Before that “coffee without literary or political conversations was considered contemptible stuff”, but now, there appeared cafes where the favorite drink was sold “to go” or it was drunk without any respect (Svintila 2017: 21). But not all the memoirists are that careful in their writing. That’s why an important perspective provides the outside observer, who being in the society studied, finds the values alien and far from their cultural norms. As philologist and culturologist Jury Lotman argued, the norm for the native speaker is not “evident, but sometimes it is not noticeable”. To a foreigner though, the very norm of life, the “correct” behaviour seems strange and worth depicting” (Lotman 2002: 677). So the bearers of foreign values demonstrate to scholars the values of the society studied. For example it is difficult to find in the Bulgarian sources any notes on the virtues of Bulgarian women and the rejection of adultery by their society. The Russian perspective however, underlines these characteristics, beginning from the end of the 19th until the Second World War (Amfiteatrov 1901: 120–126; Matveeva 2003: 494; Karateev 2003: 201, 221; Slutskiy 2005: 56).

An image of “foreign, somebody else’s” is usually constructed in comparison with “native, our own”. The evidence communicated during the First World War by a Don Kazak woman on her sincere surprise of equality and politeness of all the societal layers in Bulgaria as compared to the strict hierarchy of Russian society (*Pis'ma krestian* 1914: 6).

It is important to remember though, that any text says a lot about the cultural context it has been created in. For example, the Russian travelers of the first half of the 19th century were very much surprised by the likeness of the Bulgarian and Russian languages. The idea of Slavic unity was just being shaped at that time, and the similarity of the sounds generated proudness of “the big Slavic

family”. For the period from the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 until the end of the First World War, a few such pleasant surprises were documented; since the idea of Slavism was well developed and was constantly mentioned, it turned ethnic affinity into a value, for the sake of which the Russians went to protect the Serbs in 1914. Later on, the suppression of this rhetoric as a reactionary force, ethnic component as a bourgeois remnant led to the fact that in 1944, Soviet soldiers entering Bulgaria were once again surprised at the proximity of the language (Gusev 2019a). “Slavism” as a value was alien to them, they were brought up in the spirit of “internationalism” and did not have any real knowledge of the southern and western Slavs.

Conclusion

The language (a word, an expression, an idiom, a text) is in the core of any axiological investigation. It generates, shapes, preserves and develops the system of values, it links with them and incorporates them into the national idea and cultural heritage. The linguistic means, the whole language structure assists in providing the detailed notion of a value and its place in the axiological hierarchy. Having studied the values in the theological, historical, folklore texts, dialectal and contemporary Internet discourse one cannot come to a different conclusion.

Meanwhile the language communicates some distinct system assets to the very value, which seem paradoxical. One notion obtains antonymic qualities depending on the context, as we have shown with the “old age” as a value. It can turn into its opposite, an anti-value; a virtue seen from one prospective in one sub-culture, generation, etc. can turn into a sin as regarded from another prospective, and vice versa. We see it while investigating the paraliturgical and hagiography texts (partly from the ascetical texts Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia and today’s Transcarpathian region of Ukraine), historic memoirs and diaries, etc. It is also relevant when the values of national, ideological, religious, economic systems as well as the local, personal preferences are compared. This provides an impulse to the dynamic change of axiological hierarchies, and language is the tool which is used in this transformation first and foremost. Depending on the system of views one notion can be seen as a value or an anti-value, it can get maximum relevance or turn into a marginal concept.

We finalize our article with the expression “Stay Healthy” known in many languages as a cliché to say “Goodbye”, or as a toast “To Your Health”, or as

a good wish, and used to circulate an automatic polite reply without allusion to its literate semantic. In the time of a pandemic, the spread of COVID-19 the value of health has gained its maximum relevance, and as such the language reflects it. Now wishing good health, we mean it and underscore its value.

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Notes

1 Axiology as a branch of philosophy has brought effective and useful ideas and methods into other disciplines. For history of axiology as a scholarly discipline see (Shokhin 1997).

2 The Moscow School of Ethnolinguistics was founded by Nikita Ilych Tolstoy back in the 1970s and after his death taken over by Svetlana M. Tolstaia and their disciples. On the principles of Moscow school on Ethnolinguistics see Tolstoi & Tolstaia 2013.

3 On the specific features of The Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics founded by E. Bartmiński see Tolstaia 2005.

4 For the Slovakian data we are grateful to Dr M. Valentsova. A linguistic comparative study of the terms for “values” in Slavic languages is being prepared and will be published.

5 See a special publication by Jadwiga Puzynina on the Polish axiological terminology (Puzynina 1992).

6 In recent years, the purity of an experiment cannot be attained because TV, radio and sometimes internet aggressively have infiltrated the rural areas of Russia, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. Informants most certainly hear considerations of “values” of state, entrepreneurial or of personal character and start to use them in their speech. Bulgarian and Russian Facebook give a modern usage of “values” for the traditional ones. For example, the page *Values of Petrich* (“Ценностите на Петрич”) is dedicated to the tangible and intangible heritage of a unique place in the South-West of Bulgaria https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100014182059674&__tn__=%2CdC-R-R&eid=AR

BbrtOz0dfN73fGqSnVL0TbG8tmleqMii vocaZs-v1fjnF2zWkSA0GXnkKC6sQHCDvP6DOPVhrqCfX-&hc_ref=ARRPc8bxlAFdP6I6KPjYUXLg9BH2dSCPSyTX1oQjdoYxrULKtTTtOeEsO5EfimFZd34&ref=nf.

7 An interesting case of amalgamation of both material and spiritual values analyzes A. Leontieva on the evaluation of sacred books in religious muslim society is presented in Leontieva 2019.

8 A considerable change of approach to values took place in the years after Perestroika. It was precisely the period, when, with the departure from ideology, the turn-up of religiosity, the possibility of free contacts with West, when a hierarchy of values, different from the hierarchy of the Socialist period, started to develop (Leontiev 1992, 1998; Lapin 1996; Zhuravliova 2006; Zemrach 2006; Schwartz 2012).

9 It is obvious that we are talking not about natural beauty in the traditional sense, but about the beauty attained as a result of the successful work in regards to one's appearance, with the application of "magic" cosmetics and surgery.

10 It should be noted that the Western lifestyle as presented in books and movies exerted a considerable impact on such a hierarchy of values. See Connors 2017.

11 In our project we do not touch upon such modern topics as gay relations and families, gender alluded problems, etc., though they are usually regarded as non-traditional values.

Abbreviation

LAS 2015–2019. *Leksykon aksjologiczny Słowian i ich sąsiadów* [Axiological Dictionary of the Slavs and their Neighbours]. Bartmiński, Jerzy et. al. (eds.). Tom 1–5. Lublin, 2015–2019 (T. 1 — Dom; T. 2 — Europa; T. 3 — Praca; T. 4 — Wolność; T. 5 — Honor).

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II

**Academic Studies
and Practical Issues**

MILESTONES IN BALTIC STUDIES IN MOSCOW¹

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Abstract: The article describes the history of research on Baltic languages in Moscow from the second half of the 19th century, when the Lithuanian language began to be taught at Moscow University. At different times, the Moscow State University, the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the “Baltrušaitis House” at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the Russian Federation, and the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences were the centers of research on Baltic studies in Moscow.

The article describes the main directions in development of Balto-Slavic studies in Moscow, gives the names of prominent scholars in this field and provides a bibliography of the major publications.

Keywords: Balto-Slavic studies, Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the Russian Federation, Institute of Slavic Studies, Lithuanian language, Moscow State University, Russian Academy of Sciences

First Period: Moscow University (1860s – 1950s)

Baltic studies in Moscow developed as a linguistic specialization during the second half of the 19th century. In different periods, the centers where the main scientific research was concentrated were various research and academic institutions. Moscow University was the first to launch these studies. For a long

time, the course of the Lithuanian language was taught in the framework of the comparative historical grammar of the Indo-European languages.

The basis for the development of Baltic studies in Moscow was the Department of Comparative Grammar of Indo-European Languages, opened in 1863. The department was commissioned by Pavel Ya. Petrov, he was a Sanskrit specialist, but did not specifically deal with the comparative grammar of Indo-European languages. In the comments on the history of the Greek and Latin languages, Petrov often delivered lectures on the Lithuanian language. One of the students who attended the lecture of P.Ya. Petrov, was Filipp F. Fortunatov, who showed great interest in comparative historical linguistics.

F.F. Fortunatov entered the university a year after the foundation of a new department (in 1864), studying linguistics independently. In Lithuanian studies, an important role also played the possibility of direct communication with native speakers within the university: there were many Lithuanian and Latvian students at the philological department of Moscow State University. One Lithuanian student, Andrius Botyrius, was a friend of Fortunatov and Vsevolod F. Miller (an Iranian expert and an Indo-Europeanist). After graduating from the university in 1871, Fortunatov and Miller came to Botyrius for summer vacations. One particular trip turned out to be decisive in the fate of Moscow Baltic studies. For about a month, Miller and Fortunatov lived in the village of their friend's father and recorded Lithuanian folk songs, which they later published (Miller & Fortunatov 1873). It was then that they became interested in dialectology: they were struck by the deviations of the local dialect from the literary language. The richness of folklore fascinated the researchers and they began to record songs, tales, and proverbs, with the exact observance of the peculiarities of the dialect. The observations made during a trip to Lithuania led Fortunatov to many theoretical conclusions: he was the first to consider language not as something monolithic, broken up into dialects, but as a primordial set of dialects, which was confirmed by later research. Many of Fortunatov's theoretical conclusions appeared precisely in contact with specific dialects of modern languages. These studies marked a new approach to the analysis of linguistic material: in the early 1870s, the transition from atomism in comparative historical linguistics to an attempt to synthesize begins, there was an interest in living language, dialect, folklore, and text as such. This approach was reflected in the nature of the research itself: Fortunatov's students said that each lesson he began with the denial of what he said yesterday, and

each time he proposed a new, stronger option than he had given at previous lectures. Fortunatov did not write a single book on the Baltic languages, but he made a great contribution to Baltic studies. He was interested in the most complex problems – accentology, intonation – we recall his law on intonation-dependent stress shift (made simultaneously with Saussure), he was the first in Russia to study the Prussian language.

F.F. Fortunatov was the head of the department of comparative grammar of Indo-European languages until his departure to St. Petersburg in 1902. All this time, among other courses, he taught Lithuanian as well. His merit lies not only in the fact that his activities laid the foundation for the development of Baltic studies in Moscow, but also in the fact that “he created a system of teaching linguistic disciplines at Moscow University” (Peterson 1946: 27), i.e. essentially created not only the Baltic, but also the linguistic school at Moscow. After Fortunatov was elected a full-time ordinary academician in the department of Russian language and literature, he was forced to move to St. Petersburg. Moving to St. Petersburg opened a new stage in the life of the academician. Petersburg life was more saturated with communication with the Lithuanians, and new interesting contacts awaited him, in particular, with a very competent Lithuanist of that time Kazimieras Jaunius.

The work initiated by F.F. Fortunatov, was continued by his followers. His students were subsequently famous scientists Aleksej A. Shakhmatov, Dmitrij N. Ushakov, Grigorij K. Ulyanov, Nikolaj N. Durnovo, Mikhail M. Pokrovsky, Viacheslav N. Shchepkin et al. Fortunatov’s students were interested in different areas of linguistics, but many of them showed echoes of Lithuanian language studies. For example, Grigorij O. Vinokur – a talented linguist, literary historian, folklorist, wrote a work on Lithuanian versification. According to Vladimir N. Toporov, if it had been published in the 1920s, it would have become the seminal analysis of the Lithuanian metric.

The main successor to F.F. Fortunatov at Moscow University became Viktor K. Porzhezinsky, who headed the department of Comparative Historical Linguistics after him. His main works, which are written in the history of Moscow Baltic studies, are two books on the Baltic verb (Porzhezinsky 1901; 1903). V.K. Porzhezinsky managed to organize a special linguistic department at Moscow University, which, however, was closed in 1913. This department, despite the short duration of its existence, played a large role in the development of Russian linguistics.

Among the first who studied at this department was Mikhail N. Peterson. Unfortunately, after the revolution and the end of the Civil War in 1921, Porzhezinsky was forced to leave for Poland, where he continued to teach comparative historical linguistics. After his departure, classes in the Lithuanian language at the university were only possible until 1925: all this time, he was privately taught by M.N. Peterson. The year 1925 marked the beginning of the “dark period” in the history of Moscow linguistics.

Soon, as a result of the “new trends” in linguistics, all classes at the faculty were canceled. In the 1930s, the faculty was dissolved, and the faculty of social studies appeared in its place. In protest M.N. Peterson went to the Institute of Meteorology. When in 1935 the Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History was organized, he moved to work there. Despite the sociological bias that dominated linguistics in those years, Peterson remained loyal to his scientific position, which was probably not easy. This is evidenced by an extract from the materials of one of the meetings held in 1948: “Professor M.N. Peterson continues to defend his formalistic views in the field of syntax, he did not abandon his politically harmful view of the need to introduce the main methodological principles of the Fortunatov school into Soviet linguistics” (Lomtev 1948: 39). Also in 1948, Peterson managed to publish an article dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the book of Martynas Mažvydas (Peterson 1948). This was the first mention of the name of Mažvydas and his book in Russian Baltic studies.

Second Period: Institute of Slavic Studies (1950s – 1990s)

The break in the lessons of the Lithuanian language at the university lasted until 1947. Since 1946, first-year students of the Faculty of Philology Tatiana V. Bulygina, Pavel A. Grinzer, Tatiana Ya. Elizarenkova, Viacheslav Vs. Ivanov, Vladimir N. Toporov, Sergej S. Tselnicker began to study Sanskrit with M.N. Peterson. Not all of these friends had the patience to finish these classes, but joint communication played an important role in their future scientific life. Then Sanskrit texts were studied, Peterson gave a comparatively historical commentary, mostly lexical, very often citing Lithuanian examples. He constantly referred to the opinion of Antoine Meillet that the modern Lithuanian language is at the level of its development at the same stage at which Latin was in the 3rd century. BC. – i.e. it is the oldest of modern Indo-European languages, which in the process of changing the grammatical system did not destroy, but

transformed, the ancient heritage. These facts aroused students' interest in the Lithuanian language, and at their request the following year Peterson began to teach a course in Lithuanian. However, only V.N. Toporov and T.Ya. Elizarenkova attended this course up to the end.

Again, as almost a century ago, in the case of F.F. Fortunatov, contacts with native speakers played a decisive role – after graduating from university, V.N. Toporov, T.Ya. Elizarenkova and T.V. Bulygina went to Lithuania for the summer and there met Kostas Korsakas, Director of the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature. In 1951, Toporov entered the graduate school of Moscow State University simultaneously with Vytautas Mažiulis, who later became a prominent Lithuanian scientist, author of the etymological dictionary of the Prussian language. Later, in 1954, Toporov met with Zigmas Zinkevičius, in 1955 with Algirdas Sabaliauskas, and these friendly, and later scientific contacts played a big role in his scientific work. Toporov repeatedly emphasized that communication with Lithuania and Lithuanians was always of great importance for him, that he constantly received great support from Lithuanian colleagues and friends.

We can say that from the moment when V.N. Toporov began his post-graduate studies, a new period opened in the history of Moscow Baltic studies. Samuil B. Bernstein, who became his scientific adviser, was very pleased that Toporov knew the Lithuanian language, and offered him a topic – Balto-Slavic language relations. This topic subsequently became one of the leading ones at the Institute of Slavic Studies, where Toporov came soon after graduating from postgraduate course. V.N. Toporov began his scientific career in Baltic studies with two works: the etymology of four Prussian words (Toporov 1958)² and a review of the state of Baltic studies in the post-war period (Toporov 1959).

The Institute of Slavic Studies (from 1968 to 1997 – Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies) was destined to become the second center of Baltic studies after Moscow University in Moscow. At the Fourth Congress of Slavists, which was held in 1958 in Moscow, the hypothesis of Viach. Vs. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov about the Balto-Slavic relations was identified as a new ethnogenetic problem (Ivanov & Toporov 1958). The report delivered at this congress for the first time raised the question of the need for a theoretical approach to the ancient relations of the Baltic and Slavic languages, and not just listing the similarities and differences, as has been done so far. The authors understood the ancient state not as a traditional proto-language, but as a spatio-temporal continuum

of dialects. Based on the identity of the models reconstructed for the most ancient Baltic and Slavic state, the authors came to the conclusion that it was worthwhile “to consider the model established for the Slavic as the result of the transformation of the model established for the oldest Baltic state” (Ivanov & Toporov 1958: 39). As one of the arguments, they cited primarily the exceptional dialectal fragmentation of the Baltic language region with the compactness of the territory and the weak differentiation of the Slavic region with its greater territorial extent. This pioneering work turned over previous ideas about the nature of Balto-Slavic relations and largely determined the nature of further research in this area.

Soon the topic of Balto-Slavic studies was singled out as a separate research area of the Institute. This happened at a conference on topical issues of Slavic studies, initiated by former V.N. Toporov’s scientific adviser S.B. Bernstein. In 1960, the Institute formed the sector of the structural typology of Slavic languages, and Baltic studies immediately took prominent place in it. Soon the sector was headed by Viach.Vs. Ivanov, who had come to the Institute in 1961. Ivanov, who, like his colleagues at the university, began his career in Baltic studies with native speakers’ personal contacts. Viach.Vs. Ivanov first came to Latvia in 1946, and in 1947 spent two months at the Writers’ Creative House in Dubulti. Then he began to learn the Latvian language, met Mirdza Kempe and started to translate poems by Latvian poets. In 1953, Ivanov again lived in Dubulti for a long time. He studied, in addition to Latvian, the Libyan language. He twice went to Jānis Endzelins in his estate “Naka”. It should be noted that V.N. Toporov began to study the Latvian language at the Riga seaside, where he first arrived with T.Ya. Elizarenkova in 1949³.

In the 1960s, articles on Baltic studies began to appear in various periodicals of the Institute, such as “Brief Communications of the Institute of Slavic Studies”, “Soviet Slavic Studies”, “Issues of Slavic Linguistics”, and “Scientific Notes of the Institute of Slavic Studies”. The topic of Balto-Slavic relations repeatedly arises during this period in articles by Vladimir A. Dybo (Dybo 1961; 1962), Viacheslav Vs. Ivanov (Ivanov 1958; 1964), Vladislav M. Illich-Svitych (Illich-Svitych 1961; 1962), Vladimir N. Toporov (Toporov 1958a; 1961; 1961a; 1961b; 1962).

In his article “On the Problem of Balto-Slavic Linguistic Relations” (Toporov 1961b) V.N. Toporov identified the main tasks of the Balto-Slavic problems: this is, first of all, identification of the peculiarities of dialectal fragmentation

of the Baltic language region and the predominant connections of individual dialectal areas with each other and with other Indo-European regions; revealing the nature of the Baltic dialects that once covered the territory of northern Belarus, Lithuania and partly Latvia from the west, south and east; the task of hydronymic stratification of the alleged Baltic territories; research in the field of Baltic lexical borrowings in Russian dialect vocabulary; the study of common motives in folklore, in particular ritual and religious beliefs; the study of typical isogloss outside areas for which the Baltic-speaking population can be assumed (Pannonia, Balkans, Adriatic); the study of the area at the junction of the Baltic and Slavic worlds, in which the features characteristic of the “language union” are manifested. For the first time, the study of the Balto-Slavic problem was presented as a comprehensive study. The outlined tasks, then only mapped down, became the starting point for the research of the Moscow Baltists – some were successfully implemented, others are in the process of being studied, some remained in the plans.

The first undertaking was the dialectological expeditions carried out since 1962. The staff of the Institute Margarita I. Lekomtseva, Lidija G. Nevskaya, Tamara M. Sudnik, Vladimir N. Toporov, Tatiana V. Tsivyan, Svetlana M. Shur (Tolstaya) participated in them together with employees of the dialectology sector of the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature in Vilnius. In 1964, the Conference “Problems of Linguistic and Ethnography and Areal Dialectology” was held at the Institute of Slavic Studies, at which a report was made by T.M. Sudnik, V.N. Toporov and S.M. Shur about the southern part of the Balto-Slavic language union (later the report was published as an article in “Soviet Slavic Studies” (Sudnik & Tolstaya & Toporov 1967)).

This approach to the areal Balto-Slavic contacts, based on the concept of a linguistic union, became the starting point for further research. For many years (mainly the 1960s and 1970s), a large volume of dialectological material was collected, then summarized in T.M. Sudnik and L.G. Nevskaya books (Sudnik 1975; Nevskaya 1977).

Thus, the first relevant direction in Moscow Baltic studies was the study of the Balto-Slavic area as a language union, and the basis of the research (as at the end of the last century for F.F. Fortunatov) was living dialect material. Many researchers began their acquaintance with folklore precisely from this material, and this subsequently determined another area of Moscow research in the field of Baltic studies.

At the same time, other directions in the study of the Balto-Slavic problems are outlined, which later became important milestones in the development of the Moscow Baltic studies: this is accentology (V. A. Dybo, V. M. Illich-Svitych); etymology (Viach.Vs. Ivanov, V.N. Toporov); linguogeography (Ruf' A. Ageeva, V.N. Toporov, Oleg N. Trubachev). Three major works that became classical in Balto-Slavic linguistics belong to the 1960s: (Toporov & Trubachev 1962; Illich-Svitych 1963; Ivanov & Toporov 1965). The latter laid the foundation for a series of semiotic studies in the field of Balto-Slavic antiquities.

The doctoral dissertation defended by Viach.Vs. Ivanov in 1979 was dedicated to the Baltic and Slavic verb (“Reflection of Two Series of Indo-European Verb Forms in the Baltic and Slavic”); later his monograph on the same subject was published (Ivanov 1981).

These studies soon became one of the central areas of Baltic studies at the Institute of Slavic Studies, replacing dialectological studies, the result of which was a comprehensive report by T.M. Sudnik and L.G. Nevskaya at the Congress of Slavists in 1978 (Nevskaya & Sudnik 1978). Similar works appeared in the future, however, in general, there was a reorientation into the sphere of spiritual culture and folklore texts.

The next important stage in the history of Moscow Baltic studies was the launch of a collection of “Balto-Slavic Studies”. At the first Balto-Slavic conference “Ethnolinguistic Balto-Slavic Contacts in the Present and in the Past” held in 1978, the question was raised for the first time about a periodical devoted to Balto-Slavic problems. At the same conference, a circle of future authors of the collection began to form. At first it was decided to publish a serial collection called Balto-Balkanica, in which the Baltic and Balkan issues would alternate as two main areas, but this decision was not approved by the directorate. After many troubles, only at the end of 1979 a resolution was adopted by the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences on the establishment of the annual “Balto-Slavic Studies”. This series edition was preceded by three collections: “Balto-Slavic Collection” (1972), “Balto-Slavic Studies” (1974), “Balto-Slavic Ethnic-Language Contacts” (1980).

The periodical collection “Balto-Slavic Studies” was launched in 1981. Each volume published was issued without the assurance that it was not the last, since the publication was always associated with many difficulties. However, thanks to the efforts of members of the editorial board with Viach.Vs. Ivanov, the editor-in-chief, and the huge work of the permanent secretary of the editions

T.M. Sudnik, who was in charge to prepare the manuscripts of all issues to be published, “Balto-Slavic Studies” appeared almost every year (until 1989⁴). Almost all issues were dedicated to various events: these were conference materials, memorable dates and anniversaries (such as the anniversary of Vilnius in 1983). The first issue outlines the tasks of the collection: comparative historical grammar of the Baltic and Slavic languages; research of contacts of the Baltic and Slavic languages and cultures in their present and past; comparative typological study of the Baltic and Slavic languages and cultures; study of the Indo-European basis of the Balto-Slavic problems; problems of ethnogenesis of the Balts and Slavs based on the material of language, toponymy and onomastics, spiritual and material culture (Ivanov 1981).

Studies at the junction of the Baltic and Slavic worlds seemed relevant not only as an internal problem of their ethnogenesis and development, but also as a basis for the study of many theoretical problems. Prominent scientists from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Germany took part in the collection. Many breakthrough ideas first saw the these editions, for example, an article by Z. Zinkevičius on the Yotvingian dictionary was published in the Balto-Slavic Studies earlier than in “Baltistica” in Lithuania (Zinkevichus 1984). Almost all the investigations of V.N. Toporov on establishing the boundaries of the settlement of ancient Balts in modern Slavic territories were published in this collection (Toporov 1982; 1988; 1989). These articles establish the Baltic character of almost 300 hydronyms belonging to the basins of the Moscow, Oka, Klyazma and Volga rivers, and thus resolve the issue of the Eastern border of the Baltic hydronymic range.

Direction of linguistic geography developed in the works of V.N. Toporov and other linguists, was most fully developed in collaboration with historians and archaeologists. Starting from the second Balto-Slavic conference, which was held in 1983 under the name “Balto-Slavic Ethnolinguistic Relations in the Historical and Areal Plan”, Balto-Slavic studies successfully combined linguistic and historical approaches. Historians and archaeologists (Vera I. Matuzova, Vladimir I. Kulakov, Jerzy Ochmański, Valentin V. Sedov) sought to take into account linguistic data in their works; linguists, in turn, tried to rely on new archaeological research. Such an interdisciplinary approach is perhaps a distinctive feature and, undoubtedly, one of the strengths of the Moscow Baltic school. Another important topic requiring an exclusively interdisciplinary approach, bringing together not only historians and linguists, but also cultural experts, is

the problem of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This topic has been repeatedly discussed in the works of Moscow Baltists, but so far, unfortunately, has not been developed as a separate area of comprehensive research.

However, in another area – spiritual culture, interaction with historians was very fruitful. In 1985, the conference “Balto-Slavic Ethnocultural and Archaeological Antiquities. Funeral Rite”, became the second in a series of conferences devoted to problems of the text (the first symposium on the structure of the text was held in 1979). The conference “Ethnolinguistics of the Text. The Semiotics of Small Forms of Folklore was held in 1988. These conferences preceded a series of collections that appeared already in the 1990s under the general title “Studies in the Field of Balto-Slavic Spiritual Culture” (Ivanov et al. (eds.) 1990; Nikolaeva (ed.) 1993; Nikolaeva (ed.) 1994–1999).

In addition to these conferences, two conferences should be noted, they symbolized attempts to go beyond the Balto-Slavic area, to include the problems of Balto-Slavic contacts in a wider context. This is a conference held in 1990 on the Baltic-Finnish areal problems “Uralo-Indo-Germanica” (its materials are published in “Balto-Slavic Studies-96”), and the already mentioned text structure symposium, under the title “Balcano-Balto-Slavica. Symposium on the Structure of the Text”. Baltic-Balkan problems are another promising topic that has been outlined in the works of scientists of the Institute, but has not yet received wide development. The works devoted to this subject were also published in the collection “Balto-Slavic Studies” (Sudnik & Tsivyan 1981; 1982; Tsivyan 1989). The last major multidisciplinary work was devoted to the notion of the path in the Baltic-Balkan perspective and was presented at the Slavic Congress in Krakow in 1998 (Nevskaya & Nikolaeva & Sedakova & Tsivyan 1998).

An important feature of the Balto-Slavic studies of this period is that Baltics and Balto-Slavic relations are widely understood – this is not only linguistics, synchronous, diachronic, comparative historical issues, but also specific features in the oral literature, folklore. Semiotic trend got a special attention in the activities of the department, and in the Baltic studies in particular. It allowed to combine different genres of folklore and later texts and to reconstruct the deepest meanings on their basis, which assisted innovative investigations in the field of spiritual culture of the Balts and Slavs and search for parallels with other traditions.

It should be noted that there was a center of Baltic studies that existed all this time in Moscow independently from the Institute of Slavic Studies. This center was part of the Institute of Linguistics, in which there were working T.V. Bulygina, who devoted many works to the problems of the grammar of the Lithuanian language (Bulygina 1970; 1977), and academician Yuriy S. Stepanov, who taught at the Moscow State University the course of the Lithuanian language in comparative historical coverage⁵. Many Lithuanian scholars who have long and fruitfully worked in Lithuanian institutes began their academic career with Lithuanian studies precisely in Moscow under the leadership of Yu.S. Stepanov. Yu.S. Stepanov's academic school was a solid theoretical foundation that allowed his students to continue their studies more productively. The theoretical basis of the problems of Lithuanian studies is presented in many works by Stepanov. The range of topics addressed in his works is very wide – this is the verb system of the Lithuanian language, accentology, syntax in comparative historical coverage. Stepanov formulated and investigated in detail many important theoretical problems of Lithuanian linguistics: the question of the nature of the stress shift (Stepanov 1972; 1997); correlation between the verb form in the Slavic languages and the diathesis in the Baltic (Stepanov 1976-1977; 1978) etc.

Velta E. Staltmane, who taught Latvian at the Society of Latvian Culture Fellows, later at MGIMO University, at the Diplomatic Academy, was an employee of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. T.V. Bulygina, V.N. Toporov, V.E. Staltmane and Antons Breidaks wrote the volume “Baltic Languages” in the series “Languages of the World” (Kibrik et al. (eds.) 2006). Unfortunately, the preparation of the volume has taken a long time, and in the process of writing it T.V. Bulygina, the author of the article on Lithuanian language, and A. Breidak, who prepared an article on Latgalian language, died. An article on the Lithuanian language was added by Olga V. Sineva, an article about Latgalian – by Lidija Leikuma. The volume was released only in 2006, after the death of his chief editor and author of the article on the Prussian language V.N. Toporov.

Third Period: Embassy of Lithuania (1990s –)

For a number of external reasons, relations between scientists from the two countries – Russia and Lithuania were lost, and, by the beginning of the 1990s, academic work in the field of Baltic studies lost its intensity: conferences ceased to be held, and the release of “Balto-Slavic Studies” was temporarily stopped (the collection was not published from 1989 to 1998). However, the Baltic issues continued to interest scientists of the Institute of Slavic Studies. From the end of the 1990s to the present, three dissertations on Baltic studies were defended in the typology and comparative linguistics department (which was headed by Tatiana M. Nikolaeva from 1990 to 2012): Maria V. Zavyalova (Zavyalova 2006) (supervisor – L.G. Nevskaya), Peter M. Arkadiev (Arkadiev 2006) (supervisors – V.N. Toporov and T.M. Nikolaeva), Kirill A. Kozhanov (Kozhanov 2015) (supervisor – P.M. Arkadiev).

However, the main activity in Baltic studies in Moscow has shifted to another center: thanks to the cooperation of scientists from the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (primarily V.N. Toporov) with the cultural attaché of the Lithuanian Embassy in Russia, Juozas Budraitis, the Embassy of Lithuania (“Baltrušaitis House”) has become a kind of Baltic center in Moscow for many years. The figure of the poet and diplomat Jurgis Baltrušaitis fits perfectly the role of a symbol of Russian-Lithuanian cultural ties. This house was also destined to become one of the centers uniting the two countries. It has actually always been a hotbed of Lithuanian culture in Moscow: as early as in 1989, at the very beginning of perestroika, there were created Lithuanian language courses at which Nikolaj A. Mikhailov taught, later he became a famous scholar in the field of Slavic and Baltic studies.

Since the designating of the cultural attaché J. Budraitis in 1995, this house has actually begun to function as a Lithuanian cultural center. With the help of J. Budraitis, the almost lost ties of Russian scholars with the Baltic states of other countries were revived – not only with Lithuania and Latvia, but also others. From 1998 to 2010, thanks to such cooperation between the Lithuanian Embassy and Russian scientists, 20 conferences were held. The conferences were attended by members of the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of World Culture of Moscow State University, the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences: for example, the literary

critic Nikolaj V. Kotrelev stood at the origins of a series of conferences devoted to the poetry of J. Baltrušaitis; historian Evgeniya L. Nazarova took a large part in organizing a series of conferences dedicated to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This activity began in 1998 with the first major conference dedicated to Martynas Mažvydas and the first Lithuanian printed book⁶. Later, the cycles of conferences were designated: “Readings of Jurgis Baltrušaitis”; “The Legacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania”; “Baltic Crossroads”. The geography of conference participants expanded: they arrived to Moscow not only from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, but also from Austria, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Poland, USA, Ukraine, France, Czech Republic, Estonia, and Japan. The broadest and most important problems of modern science were discussed. A distinctive feature of the conferences has always been interdisciplinarity: scientists from various countries engaged in different fields of science found a common language. After the main part of the conferences, “round tables” with interesting discussions were often organized. For example, in the framework of the conference “Ethnocultural and Linguistic Contacts on the Territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania”, a round-table discussion “Friends or Strangers? Lithuania in Russia and Russia in Lithuania. Multiculturalism in the Modern World” was held. In the framework of the conference “Lithuania of the Mindaugas Era and its Neighbors: Historical and Cultural Ties and Parallels”, a round table “The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Kievan Rus’: Who are the Heirs of these States – Lithuanians, Belarusians, Ukrainians or Russians?” was organized. The materials of many conferences were later published in the form of collections of articles, it is also a considerable accomplishment of J. Budraitis (Temchin (ed.) 2005; Budraitis et al. (eds.) 2007; Nazarova (ed.) 2007; Ivanov (ed.) 2010).

Unfortunately, after the departure of J. Budraitis, the tradition of holding conferences began to weaken. The cycle of commemorative conferences dedicated to V.N. Toporov, discontinued. From 2006 to 2009, four conferences from this cycle were held (Tsivyan et al. (eds.) 2010). From 2009 to 2012, there were no conferences in the Baltrušaitis House, but in 2011, together with Vilnius University and the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius, a conference on the memory of V.N. Toporov was organized (Judžentis et al. (eds.) 2014). From 2012 to 2018, thanks to the efforts of the cultural attaché Fausta Latėnas (2012), Aleksandras Šimelis (2013–2017) and Inga Vidugirytė-Pakerienė (2018–2020), seven conferences were held. A conference of 2018 shortly

after the death of Viach.Vs. Ivanov, was dedicated to the memory of Viach. Vs. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov. In the last year of Budraitis's residency in Moscow a significant event took place – on June 16, 2009, the Institute of Slavic Studies officially opened the Center for Balto-Slavic Studies, which de facto existed for almost 50 years. The head of the Center was Viach.Vs. Ivanov (after his death in 2017 – T.V. Tsivyvan). The center's first undertaking was the international conference “Modern Approaches to Baltic Linguistics”, organized in October 2009 (see conference materials: Arkadiev et al. (eds.) 2015).

In 2019, the conference “Balto-Slavic Territory through the Prism of Language and Literature” combined the “Baltrušaitis House” and the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The conference was dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Balto-Slavic Studies Center and the 90th anniversary of Viach.Vs. Ivanov. I would like to believe that this conference will continue the tradition of Baltic conferences, which was established in the 1970s at the Institute of Slavic Studies and continued in the 1990–2000s at the “Baltrušaitis House”.

In the last decade, the Baltic area has become more active in Moscow universities: in 2008, the Baltic Studies Center was opened at Moscow State University (supervisor O.V. Sineva), the Lithuanian language is taught at the Russian State Humanitarian University (teachers P.M. Arkadiev, Igor B. Tulchinsky).

* * *

So, we can distinguish the main directions of Moscow Baltic studies, identified in the last 60 years:

- 1) theoretical aspects of the grammar of the Lithuanian language (especially morphology, accentology, syntax) in the comparative historical and typological aspect;
- 2) dialectology, the study of phonetics and vocabulary of island dialects in the territory of Belarus and in the border territories of Lithuania; interaction of language systems; the study of the Balto-Slavic language union;
- 3) etymology, Lithuanian within the framework of Indo-European studies; attraction of the linguistic facts of the Lithuanian language for the reconstruction of the Pre-Slavic state and Indo-European models; comparative studies;
- 4) linguistic geography; the study of toponymy and the definition of ancient areas of resettlement of the Balts in the territories later settled by the Slavs;

5) research in the field of text structure; semiotic approach to the text; study of the Baltic spiritual culture according to folklore texts.

Other achievements of Baltic studies, which can be attributed to the high level of scientific discoveries deserve mentioning here:

- first of all, this is the well-grounded Viach.Vs. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov thesis regarding the origin of the Proto-Slavic language from the peripheral Baltic dialect;
- the designation of the boundaries of the present Slavic territories, which in ancient times were occupied by the Balts;
- formulation and detailed description of the complex phenomenon of the Balto-Slavic language union;
- reconstruction, on the fundamental of the Baltic and Slavic folklore material, of the basic Indo-European myth.

These achievements correspond to the main directions of the Moscow Baltic studies which emerged back in the 60s, and were an important basis for further investigation in the same areas and, possibly, the development of new research avenues.

As has been repeatedly emphasized above, an important aspect of the Moscow Baltic school is its interdisciplinarity. This wide scope manifested itself at all stages of its existence, and was notably and clearly expressed in the works of its main luminaries – Viach.Vs. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov, academicians with a unique encyclopedic scope of interests and knowledge. We hope that new generations of Moscow Baltists will further elaborate these theses through a rigorous approach to academic studies.

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Notes

1 This review does not pretend to be an exhaustive description of the issue, as well as to the completeness of the bibliography presented in the article.

2 Later, this topic resulted in a 5-volume dictionary of the Prussian language (A – L), which, unfortunately, was not completed (Toporov 1975–1990). In the archive of V.N. Toporov, after his death, we discovered a handwritten card index of the dictionary from the letter M to the end of the alphabet. An international group of scientists led by Viach. Vs. Ivanov took up the processing of this handwritten card index. The digitization and decryption of the cards was entrusted to specialists of the Lithuanian Language Institute in Vilnius. Currently, an electronic version of the card index is located at this institute.

3 For V.N. Toporov, a visit to Latvia and Lithuania in the post-war years was also an important experience regarding the formation of his political views: the situation in these places and his acquaintance with the peoples of these countries determined his deepest guilt towards Latvians and Lithuanians until the end of his life. He wrote to them: “Forgive us for all that we voluntarily or involuntarily, by our irresponsibility or by the will of the demonic forces in whose hands we were just a silent instrument, did to you; for injustice, lies, violence; for the fact that we were not able to take a historic chance to find a way to your heart and your mind, neither in the two centuries of your stay in the Russian Empire, nor in the last half century. You are a reproach to our conscience, but also our hope and a high example of genuine creative responsibility for the history of our people, for their language” (from an unpublished manuscript). This attitude has largely influenced the position of all the employees of the structural typology department, which to this day remains unchanged.

4 The publication of the collection was resumed in 1998. After 2001, Maria V. Zavyalova became resp. Secretary of the Editorial Board. Currently, the chief editor of the collection (after the death of Viach.Vs. Ivanov in 2017) is V.A. Dybo.

5 At different times, the teachers of the Lithuanian language course at Moscow State University were also Tatiana V. Bulygina, Irina N. Toporova, Marina G. Netsetskaya.

6 The presentation which V.N. Toporov prepared for this conference, was later published as a separate book (Toporov 2001).

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GJIROKASTRA FOLKLORE FESTIVAL AS THE MAIN RITUAL EVENT IN ALBANIAN CULTURAL LIFE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: The paper presents an overview and analysis of the Gjirokastra National Folklore Festival (NFFoGj), one of the most important events in the cultural life of Albania. Global transformations that have affected all aspects of life have inevitably brought changes to traditional culture, traditional values and relations with the outside world, including across the Balkans. The majority of program issues were inspired by a common European practice of holding mass folklore events and measures aimed at nurturing and preserving cultural heritage. It is deeply connected to the process of revitalisation of old ritual practices and folk costume and to the socialisation of people who have professional and semi-professional associations with ethnic culture. Having analysed the materials collected in the run-up to the festival and during the event as well as during field studies in the Western Balkans in 1992–2019, I can acknowledge revitalisation of many, if not all, elements of folk culture. In this case revitalisation does not mean following the tradition literally, but rather an attempt to preserve it while adopting a modern perspective and advances in technology. The essential part of this process is the attempt to breathe new life into the components of traditional culture, and adapt them to the here and now. The NFFoGj has also become

a major attempt to museificate the cultural heritage of the Albanians. Contests that have been held regularly over the past 70 years to reveal the best examples of folk art and support independent artists have encouraged interest in the roots of national culture and helped many generations not to forget what their predecessors valued. Thus, folk dance, music, songs and costume were reproduced – at times artificially – in various regions of the country to showcase the achievements of a locality (village, district, town, region) at the national festival as the main ritual cultural event.

Keywords: folklore festival, cultural life, Albanians, ritual event, revitalisation, museification, folklorisation, heritage

Introduction

The 21st century is marked by innovative processes in the sphere of economics, social relations, traditional culture, etc. in the Western Balkans. We can observe huge transformations of ritual code and popular clothes throughout the recent decades (Shkurti et al. 2004; Ceribašić 2005: 9–38; Stublla 2007; Abazi & Doja 2016: 163–178).

The majority of phenomena which have gained importance in every Balkan country in recent years was inspired by a common European practice of holding mass folklore events and measures aimed at nurturing and preserving cultural heritage. Global transformations that have affected all aspects of life have inevitably brought changes to traditional culture, traditional values and relations with the outside world (compare: Oinas 1979; Sedakova 2008: 44–55). The initiative to preserve cultural heritage by holding mass events and commissioning singers, musicians, dancers, makers of traditional clothes etc. originated in Germany, Switzerland, France, Sweden, former Yugoslavia and other countries after WWII, when economic recovery and industrial growth helped to secure welfare for the people (Forry 1986; Bauman 1992; Ronström 2001: 49–64; Ceribašić 2009: 241–266). In that particular economic and social setting, making ends meet was no longer the only concern, so people could afford to give some of their attention to reviving cultural life, which had been reduced or even disappearing rapidly in the turbulent war years of the first half of the 20th century. Considerable funding was poured into revitalising folk culture with modern information channels employed and plans set out to involve more and more individuals, governmental institutions and private funds in the events (Kapchan & Strong 1999: 239–253; Zebec 2002: 93–110).

One of the most important events in the cultural life of Albania is the Gjirokastra National Folklore Festival, which has been organized once every five years (the last one was held in 2015). It is deeply connected to the process of revitalisation of old ritual practices and folk costume and to the socialisation of people who have professional and semi-professional associations with ethnic culture. It is very popular in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. The festival of Gjirokastra is a feast of song, dance, traditional clothes and performance. We can currently distinguish several different motivations and versions of this event in the 20th and 21st centuries: from the honouring of the best singers, dancers, folklore groups and costume complexes by a professional jury to simply presenting gifts to the eldest artist in the village or in the country (Novik 2016: 280–283; Festivali Folklorik 2020). However, in all cases the tradition of ritually venerating traditions remains central.

This study is based on the field work I carried out in the Western Balkans in 1992–2019, as well as on the analysis of ethnographic, folklore and historic records housed in the archives of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies and the Institute of Linguistics and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Albania. The source for this paper were items of traditional culture (mostly clothing, footwear, musical instruments, sheet music) which are displayed or deposited in collections of National Museum (Tirana), Historical Museum (Shkodra), Ethnological Museum (Prishtina) and others (Novik 2015a; Novik 2015b). While researching the topic, I studied the works of Albanian scholars who have been looking at music and dance culture of Albanians, their traditional costume, festive and carnival culture, rites and ritual practices. I also made use of the theoretical works of cultural and social anthropologists who have explored Italian, German, Croatian, Greek, Bulgarian, Macedonian and other folklore festivals (Bauman 1992; Hadžihusejnović-Valašek 2008: 177–196; Anastasova 2011: 159–169).

The main methodological principles underlying the study are descriptive, typological and comparative approaches. Looking at the folklore festival as a ritual event in a particular socio-historical setting in the Western Balkans I treated the collective actions of actors involved in the festival (performers, judges, guests and residents of Gjirokastra) as a single text with its own distinct structure and a complex system, where each element carries a certain function.

The principal methods employed were structural and functional analysis. A historical approach allowed me to reveal the main strands of the genesis of the festival and the evolution of folk costume.

Historical Overview

The Gjirokastra Folklore Festival was set up by the socialist government of Albania in the first years following WWII as a display of amateur folklore ensembles and individual performers in folk genres. It was aimed to showcase achievements in preserving the musical, dance, song and artistic heritage of Albanians. Later, the festival started featuring ensembles and individual acts representing ethnic minorities, largely Greek and Slavic.

The first national festivals took place in 1946, 1949, 1952, 1957 and 1959 in Tirana, the capital of Albania. In 1959 Tirana hosted the National Festival of Song, Music and Dance, where a total of 400 of prizes and awards were given for performing arts, best dance etc. This was followed by a festival in Elbasan in 1966 and in Lezha in 1967. The First Gjirokastra National Folklore Festival took place on 8–16 October 1968 and featured amateur performers from all the regions of Albania.

It was then decided to hold the event every five years. Thus, subsequent festivals were organised in 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, the latter event marking the end of the socialist era festivals. Every next event exceeded the previous one in number of participants, nominations, media coverage etc. Thus, in 1973, 1370 performers made into the finals, while in 1978 53 000 artists auditioned, out of which 1560 made it to the stage of Gjirokastra (Festivali Folklorik 2020).

There was one occasion, though, when the festival was relocated to the town of Berat, the second urban centre of Albania, renowned for its traditional architecture and historic monuments and included on the UNESCO World Heritage List (alongside Gjirokastra) (Gjirokastra was inscribed in 2005, Berat in 2008). This was in 1995, after the fall of monism in the country (the period of communist rule (1944–1991), most of which took place during the years of the leadership of Enver Hoxha (1908–1985)). The change in the date of the festival (1995 instead of the 1993 as originally scheduled) was also partly because of revolutionary transformations in the country. However, in the following years, at the request of the majority of participants and organisers, the festival was returned to the original site, which was associated with its best moments, keeping the festival in Gjirokastrain all future iterations (Fig. 1).

Yet, despite the agreements, ideology interfered again with folk art. For example, the festival in 2008 was rescheduled to 2009 so that it would not coincide with the 100th anniversary of Enver Hoxha, the Albanian dictator

born in Gjirokastra. The last festival which took place in 2015 had also been rescheduled twice, first for fear of it coinciding with one of the dates associated with the former dictator, and then from autumn to spring simply because of better weather conditions. In 2020, the festival was supposed to take place in May. However, it has been rescheduled to autumn 2020 due to the devastating 6.4-magnitude earthquake that jolted Albania in November 2019 and the subsequent outbreak of COVID-19.



Figure 1. The participants of the festival. Gjirokastra. May 2015. Photograph by the author.

Details on Festival Organisation

According to the rules, in order to get a chance to perform on stage in front of thousands of people, artists (singers, dancers, musicians etc.) have to audition on a local level. The local jury includes leaders of amateur folklore ensembles, directors of cultural venues, university and art school professors, professional performers.

Members of the national jury visit the regions from the capital. They try to judge provincial artists objectively. Such double or often triple selection is meant to help the organisers pick the best of the best. Then the contestants are to perform on stage in Gjirokastra (Fig. 2). The best in their nominations make it to the finals. In order to win, apart from excellent vocal, music, dancing and artistic skills, the artist or the ensemble must demonstrate an original costume from the region of the performed a song or musical piece. At the final stage of the event the jury grants awards and prizes. Thus, the occasion involves thousands of people.



Figure 2. The performance of a folk group on the stage of the old castle. Gjirokastra. May 2015. Photograph by the author.

The run-up to the festival starts well in advance, normally it takes up all 5 years or more in between the occasions. This makes it the most significant and costly event within the ritual cycle of folklore celebrations in Albania. To perform on stage in Gjirokastra means to receive acclaim nationwide. During the festival and in the run-up to it, the artists are filmed by local and national television, the event gets coverage in the media including that of neighbouring countries where Albanians live.

In the recent years the festival has been frequented by the Albanian diaspora, who see their participation in the occasion as a matter of great prestige and importance. This means the geography of the festival continuously spreads to new countries, not only the Balkan ones, historically inhabited by Albanians, but also countries of recent migration (Germany, Switzerland, USA and others) (Novik 2015a: 10–12; Novik 2015b).

Before and Now: Accounts of the Participants

In the years before the democratic transition had taken off (since the early 1990s), the real, not simply declared, state patronage meant approval and concern for the preservation of folk art. Clearly, such approach correlated with ideological confrontation with the “enemies”: the West and the bourgeois views and values it represented, and the East with its reformed communist views (mostly former USSR and PRC) and so on, where there was “not the folk art” (and hence “harmful” art) that flourished (Mustaqi 1979; Haxhihasani 1985: 75–88).

Such intervention on part of the government was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it led to an unreasonable amount of ideology and politics around the festival (Panajoti & Kruta 1985: 89–108; Uçi 1985: 3–18), but on the other, the state supported folklore ensembles all over the country, including little villages in mountain regions; such financial backing secured a steady development of amateur ensembles, succession in arts and crafts and helped to keep traditional costume alive.

Current performers and guests are nostalgic about what the contest used to be like in the days of monism:

The government used to pay for everything. We arrived in groups, they would provide accommodation, feed and entertain us, we sang all through the festival: at morning rehearsals, on stage during the day and then continue till early morning with other participants. And now what? You arrive here on the day of your performance, come on stage in the evening and head home. No funds, they say. And where is that money gone? (Interlocuter – an Albanian man from Fier, 65, recorded in May 2015).

Such accounts are not only given by regular participants, but also by members of the jury coming from all Albanian-speaking parts of the Western Balkans who decided the artistic future of the performers.

We used to hang out 24 hours with the performers. Everybody was having such a great time. We looked forward to the event for 5 years and when we finally got together, we would sing all night long! Those were the days! (Interlocuter – an Albanian woman from Tirana, 65, member of the jury since 1968, recorded in May 2015).

Some criticism, however, can at times be totally unjustified:

What are these judges doing there? They are not even professional. [In 2015, the jury included the artistic director of the National Theatre of Opera and Ballet of Albania, a ballet dancer himself; a composer and professor of Music; an ethnographer specialising in traditional costume, a former director of the abovementioned institute etc. – A.N.]. What do they understand? These auditions should be judged by people like us, directors of clubs. It's us who the festival depends on. (Interlocuter – an Albanian woman from Shkodra, 54, recorded in May 2015).

Yet, despite certain criticism and nostalgia about the good old days when “everything was better”, including folklore festivals, almost all of the informants (over 100) see the festival as a major historic event for the country and all Balkan Albanians.

Gjirokastra as a Sacred Locus

According to oral history, the town dates back to antiquity. The locals will readily tell numerous legends, including the one about Princess Argjiro upon which a number of poetic and literary pieces are based. Archeological finds point to Bronze Age and Iron Age dwellings on the site. The foundation stones of the town citadel date back to the 3rd century AD (Riza 2004: 5–20). Historic records suggest that the town was originally populated by a Greek-speaking tribe of the Chaonians, which belonged to the Epirote group. Later, Gjirokastra and the surrounding areas became home to Albanians, Aromanians and Turks (Censuri i popullsisë dhe banesave 2011; Gjirokastra, Albania 2020).

Gjirokastra appears first in the historical record in the 14th century as Αργυρόκαστρο (Argyrokastro) – a city under Byzantine rule (Kiel 2010: 138). After the fall of Byzantium in 1453, it was then incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, ultimately becoming a part of the new independent Albania. During WWII Royal Greece, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany successively established administrative rule in the town. In 1944, Gjirokastra was liberated by Albanian partisan bands and a severe totalitarian regime was subsequently established for decades. With the democratic transformations of 1991, the previously imposed rules and regulations concerning city development were overthrown. Gjirokastra, now on the UNESCO list, could pursue an autonomous policy in cultural development and supporting ethnic minorities (above all – Greek) (UNESCO: World Heritage List; Novik 2015a).

Throughout its history Gjirokastra has been of special importance to Albania. Firstly, it was a guarded outpost in the south: the town marked the border between the Albanian and the Greek ethnic areas (being itself a cultural mix). Secondly, the ruling elite aimed to gain presence in the south of the Albanian area, which the neighbours had claims to, by erecting strong fortifications with the Castle of Gjirokastra serving as a certain symbol of military power. Furthermore, in the 20th century, the town became a birthplace to a number of prominent figures who influenced history, science, education and culture of the country and brought fame to Albania abroad (which is essential for Albanian mindset and attitude to the outside world) (Gjirokastra 2020). To name a few, these are communist leader Enver Hoxha (1908–1985), etymologist Eqrem Çabej (1908–1980) and writer Ismail Kadare (born 1936). Finally, the Festival

of Gjirokastra became a recognised brand and an organic part of the cultural life of Albanians, its ritual cycle.

The fact that the event takes place in the town of Gjirokastra, hailed by poets and writers and home to key events shaping Albanian history, only adds sacredness to what is happening on stage in the ancient castle.

We are really excited to perform in Gjirokastra. The town is so much associated with the history of this country. You've heard of Ali Pasha of Tepelena¹, haven't you? He personally took part in rebuilding the castle back in the 18th century to hold back the enemies. And now we walk on the stones that were brought here on this slope by his order. (Interlocutor – an Albanian man from Pogradec, 53, recorded in 2004).

Many participants talk about time connection between the past and the present, they appreciate such a touch of history.

Have you heard that legend? Well, actually not a legend, in fact, a real story. There was a time when many people would stand against the Turks. Some were just road bandits. So, one day the soldiers caught one of these robbers who was plotting something against the Turks. There was a brief trial as ordered from Istanbul after which he was beheaded in the castle. The head rolled across the square and, after it hit the stones, one eye leaked out. Under the Ottoman rules that head was supposed to be delivered to the capital so that the bosses could make sure the perpetrator had been executed and display their head in public. That's what the rules were. They sent a messenger with this head to Istanbul. He was to cool it down with ice and change bandages all the way to stop it from rotting. Mind you, it was a long way, not like now by plane! So, this messenger brought the head to Istanbul and when the bosses saw an eye was missing they decided that he hadn't taken proper care of it along the way. They were thinking of executing him too, but then a message came from Gjirokastra confirming that the head had been damaged during the execution and they let the soldier go. Those were the days!

You think that was long ago, in the times of some legendary sultans? Well, no. That was the early 20th century. There are still some people around who were kids then.



Figure 3. The Ethnographic Museum. Gjirokastra. August 2018. Photograph by the author.

History is all around. You walk here in the castle in your grandfather's costume and remember it wasn't long ago that heads rolled on these stones.
(Interlocutor – a Greek man from Dropull, 68, recorded in 1992).

It is not quite clear from this interview whether this is a memorate received through an urban legend or a story from a fiction book. Thus, Ismail Kadare describes this story from a century ago in his novel “Chronicle in Stone” (1971) (original name in Albanian “*Kronikë në gur*”). However, the writer says that this real story was passed on by word of mouth when he was growing up in the 1940s and it linked the modern history of the town with its Ottoman past (Kadare 2000).

The sacredness of the locus is enhanced by memorial places. That is not only the ancient castle with its bastions, but also distinct neighbourhoods (*Palorto, Pllaka, Manalat, Teqe, Dunavat, Varrosh, Cfaka* etc.), historic mansions with individual names that once belonged to city nobles (*Banesa e Zekatëve, Banesa Babameto, Shtëpia e Fane Roshit, Shtëpia e Gjulzidanit* etc.), an ancient bridge, taverns and coffeehouses (*Hani i Hadërenje, Hani i Kashaut, Kafene e Adem*

Beut, Kafene e Bame Shtrigut, Kafene e Karagjozate etc.), monuments (including one to two young maids who were hanged by occupants for taking part in the partisan movement), city cemeteries (Riza 2004; Riza 2011: 30–36; Hysa 2012: 305–310; Novik 2015a; Gjirokastra 2020). Of special importance among the sacred loci is the mansion where the future dictator Enver Hoxha was born over a century ago as well as the house which was the birthplace of Ismail Kadare (Velaj 2000: 19). The Hoxha House extended and rebuilt in socialist times has been turned nowadays into an ethnographic museum housing an excellent collection of items of traditional culture of the town dwellers (Fig. 3). The Kadare house was bought by a French admirer of the writer's talent and converted into a literary museum with a wealth of photo exhibits. Alongside the participants of the festival, the museums attract all Albanians living in Albania, the Balkans, as well as the diaspora and foreign guests who happen to visit Gjirokastra.

Our town is built completely of natural stone. We are a citadel of tradition. Damaging a stone, a sacred stone, a sacred mountain is a bigger crime than doing harm to a man. It's even worse that murder! Everyone here knows this. When monism came to an end we all knew where our borders were. Because we remembered that this piece of land before that stone belonged to my father and grandfather and that piece of land beyond that stone to the father of that man. We quickly and smoothly reclaimed our property. No conflicts, everybody knew where their stones were. (Interlocutor – an Albanian man from Gjirokastra district, 64, recorded in 1996).

Gjirokastra got its cult status largely due to the festival, which made it a pilgrimage place for admirers of folk music, dance, traditional costume and folk culture. The town became a stage for a ritual involving thousands of people. All interlocutors share the opinion that there is no other event on the Balkan peninsula which could match that scale.

Rural vs Urban and the Question of Preserving Folk Culture

The history of the 20th century suggests that the city (urban culture, urban stereotypes, urban standards of comfort and urban mentality) have gradually come to dominate most European and non-European countries with the traditional rural life (rural culture etc.) giving way, a process driven by rules of prestige.

Albania saw several formational changes within one century: it was a right-less outskirts of the Ottoman Empire with almost feudal ways, after that, an independent republic under the rule of the red bishop Fan Stilian Noli (1882–1965), then a monarchy naively relying on the capital of Italian oligarchs, then an occupation zone of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, then the domain of the communists who tried to build a classless society with the help of successively the USSR and the PRC or independently and finally a new democracy with a liberal economy determined to join the EU and other international organizations and institutions. Amidst the social and economic transformations the urban slowly but steadily superseded the rural. This could not be held back by the governments declaring the need to support villages and respect the labour and values of the peasants. The city advanced firmly bringing its achievements, manners and lifestyle.

For a long time the majority of Albanians lived in rural areas. Thus, according to INSTAT, up to 80% of Albanians lived in villages until the late 1980s – the time when democratic reforms took off (INSTAT 2020). After the fall of the totalitarian monist regime people were allowed to dwell where they wanted, not where were obliged to by law, so a considerable number of Albanians moved to big cities (mostly Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra) in search of work and better life. Others chose to go abroad (mostly to EU countries) and this migration continues to this day. The early 1990s marked breaking away from traditional life. At the same time nowadays only 53.4% of Albanians live in cities and towns (Demographics of Albania 2020).

Active state support helped to keep amateur folklore ensembles at a high level. They toured all over the country and consolidated thousands of people who loved folk music, songs, dance and culture. City dwellers were getting involved in the culture which was perceived as essentially rural, but which was still shared by all the nation, as in an agrarian state there was hardly anyone who had completely cut ties with the country. In fact, during the socialist years it was common for the government to send people from urban areas, i.e. school and university students, white collars etc., to the country to work in farming.

The song culture in cities was essentially rural (Dibra 2009a: 219–222; compare: Ceribašić 2003). Whether at celebrations and family gatherings or simply when getting together at home or in a café, people would often sing, solo or together. This is particularly common for weddings and other family celebrations. Without doubt, the actual wedding is a full-blown display and

contest of ritual songs, dance and oratory. In all cases, the rural is seen as traditional, genuine and true.

Dance is part and parcel of festival and carnival culture. Albania is a perfect example of extreme preservation (at times even conservation) and development of folk dance, which is typical for most Balkan countries (Ruka 2015). Any rural celebration, be it wedding (all confessions), circumcision (Muslims), baptism (Christians), engagement (all confessions), cannot happen without *valle* – a collective dance.

Folk Costume

Traditional clothing merits special attention in this study as it is often the most distinct marker of the regional identity of the participants and guests of the festival. This is why the majority of those taking part in the festival in Gjirokastra prefer to wear traditional clothes of their region not only for their performances on stage as part of the contest, but also while they are in town walking the streets, visiting fairs, having a meal in a café or restaurant.

Over 300 variants of traditional costume can be found in Albania, which may be grouped into 6 (or 5) main female and 5 male types (Gjergji 1988: 124–125, 145–146). Every region or often even every village has its own local kind of clothing with some settlements having several of them. During the years of the Festival the majority of local costume variants were presented in one form or another at the contest. Their authenticity, which is declared by the bearers of cultural tradition, needs to be discussed.

The issues related to folk costume require serious analysis. Let us consider clothing made of gorse (*Spartium junceum* L.) as a case in point. Thus, according to Andromaqi Gjergji, an Albanian ethnographer, and other scholars, in South Albania, in the village of Radhima (region of Vlora), textile was produced from gorse until the 1970s (Gjergji 1988). Members of amateur ensembles from the region insist on wearing clothes with marked elements made of gorse, as it was done in the old days. If an artistic family still has the costumes passed on from grandparents, they use them, and this is a matter of special pride for the delegates to the festival (Novik 2015a: 16–17). Those who don't own the right costumes try to sew them according to vintage patterns, photos, drawings, patterns or memories of old-timers using modern fabric, threads, gimps etc. for factory production. In this case we are not dealing with preserving the

tradition of clothes-making; rather it should be described as revitalisation of such a notion as folk costume. For instance, costumes from Vlora region were never decorated with beads and glitter: instead, the traditional costume featured *gajtan* ('gimp'). However, should the artists desire, craftsmen will decorate their costumes with beads and glitter, so that they could look catchier on stage. Thus, innovation interferes with tradition and after many years could well be perceived as tradition or even an archaic feature (!). A wealth of similar examples can be found all across the Balkans, not only during the festival in Gjirokastra. Going back to the use of gorse in the costumes from Vlora region, it must be mentioned that the technology of processing the plant is also being revived in order to revitalise the local variant of traditional costume.

The other side of preserving the ritual markedness of local types and variants of costume at the Festival of Gjirokastra is the maximal use of all sets of vintage clothes that are available to this day. Not in the least this is due to a pragmatic factor – a special prize for the “Costume” nomination and the general awareness of the fact that the judge responsible for costume has one of the leading voices in the jury (Festivali Folklorik 2020).

The easiest way to present the costume of your region is to use your grandmother's outfits and this is in fact what some regions do. In Myzeqe, Dropull, Shkodra, a significant amount of vintage clothes can be found in people's homes, where it is kept for festivals and ritual events. In some regions traditional clothes still serves as casual wear. For example, the women of Zadrima², Malësia e Madhe and other regions wear folk clothes to the village bazaar or travelling to the nearby town (Shkurti et al. 2004). It is either self-made or purchased from local craftswomen who use vintage patterns. A different situation can be found in the regions, such as Korça, Himara, the villages of Bosnians in Middle Albania and others, where technology and traditions of making and wearing historic clothing had been lost by the early 21st century. In this case every costume complex that can be found in a village or town becomes scarce and therefore particularly valued by the locals. Such a model costume can be borrowed by amateur artists or common villagers only in exceptional cases such as wedding or the actual Festival of Gjirokastra which is seen as the main national ritual event. These facts support the theory of museification of folk culture in modern conditions (look: Mrvaljević 2006: 6–10). What used to be perceived as casual and trivial receives the status of special and invaluable – on par with a museum item.



Figure 4. The participants of the festival.
Gjirokastra. May 2015. Photograph by the author.

Such a transformation of traditional costume into a museum item and even acquiring a sacred quality has been happening in Albania in the last 30 years (according to my field studies). This process takes various forms depending on how important folk clothes is to a particular region of the country (Fig. 4). Thus, in the abovementioned Zadrime region (quite backward economically, I must say) traditional costume is still relevant as everyday wear and here

we document artificial folklorisation of a natural reproduction of clothes. Conversely, in the *qark* ('county') of Tirana, the capital region, there is hardly any trace of folk clothing left. Hence, artists have to sew it or purchase it from tailors specialising in such trade. As a rule (and this is the case in most world capitals), the local council has enough funds to provide their performers with quality costumes and decent stage prop for the festival. This helps to nurture and develop arts and crafts involved in the making traditional clothes. It is not infrequent that driven by a sense of responsibility before clients, tailors and embroiderers use models housed in ethnographic, history and local history museums in addition to specimens from grandmothers' trunks typical for the region. These tend to be the best costume complexes made by the best masters of the time and having the most striking decorations and a compulsory set of symbols essential for folk culture. That gives us an observation of how specific variants of folk costume are being museified.

Nowadays the Festival of Gjirokastra serves the main catalyst for the state of Albanian folk costume. What the organisers of the contest, the jury and numerous media expect from the participants is not the real state of things, but rather a dressed up version involving a diverse range of local costume types, albeit largely made up or reinvented, but striking and making you believe in the myth of preserving traditions. One way or another, the folk costume at the festival is ritual clothes and it gives guaranteed access to collective ritual action.

The Festival as a Ritual Event

The ritual character of the festival has always been and still is determined not only by tradition and fairly archaic nature of Albanian society, but also by political agenda and ideological frames of the state. In the years of monism, the underlying ideology was that the festival should promote folk art as opposition to old bourgeois (inside the country) and new capitalist (abroad) ways (Mustaqi 1979; Panajoti & Kruta 1985: 89–108; Uçi 1985: 3–18). Performances of folk music, song and dance delivered by amateur artists were to replace collective ritual events that had been around for hundreds of years and had represented the spiritual culture of different regions of Albania: mummer carnivals, Orthodox and Catholic cross processions for Christmas and Easter, Muslim and Christian pilgrimage, pagan sacrifices on worship sites in mixed cults and other events pertaining to realm of the sacred (Fig. 5). During the political and social

transformations of the 1990s, the festival was meant to demonstrate the nation's departure from the communist dogma and a new perspective to art (Dizdari 2000; Dibra 2009b: 195–202; Ruka 2015; Abazi & Doja 2016: 163–178). The media positioned the festival not only as the most important cultural event of the country, but also as a major and compulsory ritual, the most traditional and beloved by the nation.

For the days of the festival (in 2015, for example, it lasted 7 days and 7 nights) Gjirokastra turns into one theatre stage, which lends it similarity with European

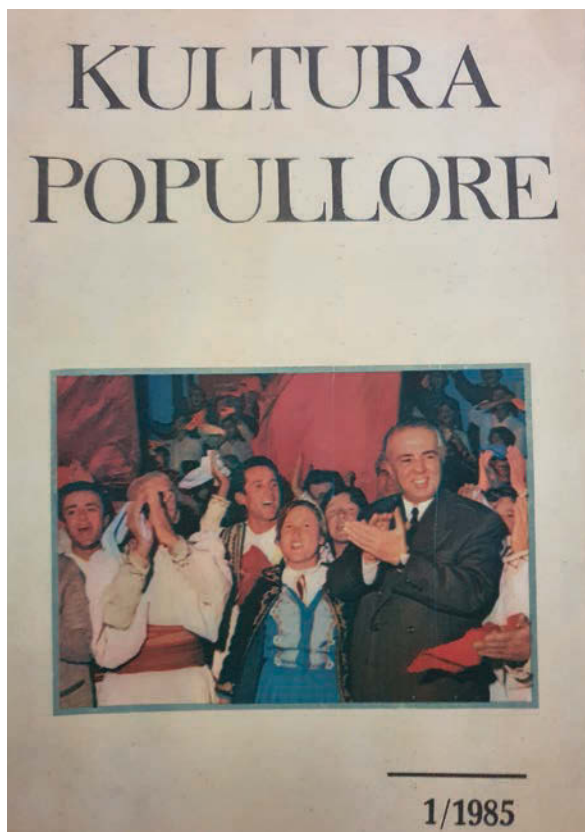


Figure 5. Enver Hoxha with a folk group. Magazine cover. *Kultura Popullore* (Folk culture), 1985, No. 1.

and South American cities that are home to carnivals. The festival remains a free manifestation of exploring the roots of one's ethnic culture and sticking to traditions unaffected by time and short-lived ideological agenda despite multiple attempts to use the event as a tribune for the authorities. Amateur artists, the jury, guests of the festival and local residents take part in the collective ritual which is not limited to the actual performances in the castle, but extends ritual space into the cozy streets of the old town, cafes, restaurants, town parks and recreational areas. Impromptu performances take place right in the streets with sounds of music competition heard from all places until early morning (Kasoruhu & Tole 2004; Novik 2015b: 10–12).

What most participants value the above all is this laid-back festive atmosphere. Sitting till dawn in a cozy restaurant after another contest day, bumping into rival performers and accepting a music or dancing challenge right in the middle of the street, willing to outshine everyone with an outfit retrieved from grandmother's trunk or tailor-made according some vintage patterns – these things are not just common practice, but also mark the event as a ritual one.

The Festival of Gjirokastra both marks and symbolizes the Albanian cultural code (Xhagolli 2009: 209–217). The ritual period which lasts from one festival to another is not one year, but five years (rarely more or less). However, it is the role of the event that is more important than time span – its participants often refer to time in terms of festival years instead of calendar years, “This was in year of Festival of Gjirokastra 1988” and so on (Novik 2015a: 21). Not infrequently, political and other events are overshadowed by something spectacular witnessed at the festival.

The ritual meaning of the Festival of Gjirokastra is evident: as a cheesy journalist cliché goes, artists “make a symbolic sacrifice to folk art” on the stage of the ancient castle. The audience gathers to appreciate the mastery of the performers, whereas the jury, who judge these skills, act as mere arbitrators who acknowledge the succession of tradition.

Conclusions

The Gjirokastra Folklore Festival is the biggest display of performers and amateur folklore ensembles which support and promote the preservation of traditional dance, music, song and costume in Albania and the Western Balkans. In 2004 and 2015, the number of participants (both main contestants and

supporting acts) reached 15 000. This has allowed the organisers to position it as the biggest (and hence the most important from their point of view) folklore event not only on the Balkan Peninsula, but in Europe.

The Festival of Gjirokastra is justly considered to be one of the oldest folklore festivals in Europe – that is if we include the post-war years from 1946 to 1968 when it got its current name and status. Traditional dance, music, song and costume are extremely relevant in the modern globalised society (see: Franklin 2001: 211–232).

The event was seen by Albanian leaders as an ideological tool aiming to serve domestic and foreign policy. A folklore festival was bound to get an ideological stamp as it was essentially created to position and promote the Albanian cultural code: Albanian values, achievements, way of thinking and aspirations (look: Xhagolli 2009: 209–217; Doja 2015: 44–75). That is why the involvement of the state has always been significant. In the first post-war decades, the communist leaders of the country were trying to give the appearance of backing traditional values specific to the Albanian society, which remained largely archaic and driven by ancient stereotypes and judgments. The Folklore Festival created the impression of preserving obvious values and achievements (and in many respects actually did that) of the multi-century-old Albanian culture, which people did not want to lose under any circumstances. The democratic transformations of the early 1990s completely shifted the political focus and orientation of the festival. The celebration of folk dance and music got to be used to promote pan-Albanian ideas of gathering and uniting lands historically populated by Albanians.

The Gjirokastra Folklore Festival remains the biggest celebration and manifestation of Albanian cultural heritage. Till this day songs, music and dance are an essential part of weddings, family celebrations and festive culture. While folk roots are being retained, all these arts are undergoing inevitable historic transformations: music gets new arrangements, dance incorporates new elements, song lyrics are alternated and costume is reinterpreted in terms of both elements and cut (optional) and fabric (almost certain with the development in technology).

Having analysed the materials collected in the run-up to the festival and during the event as well as during field studies in the Western Balkans in 1992–2019, I can acknowledge revitalisation of many, if not all, elements of folk culture. In this case revitalisation does not mean following the tradition

literally, but rather an attempt to preserve it while adopting a modern perspective and advances in technology.

The Gjirokastra Folklore Festival has also become a major attempt to museify the cultural heritage of the Albanian nation. Contests that have been held regularly over the past 70 years to reveal the best examples of folk art and support independent artists have encouraged interest in the roots of national culture and helped many generations not to forget what their predecessors valued. Thus, folk dance, music, songs and costume were reproduced – at times artificially – in various regions of the country to showcase the achievements of a locality (village, district, town, region) at the national festival. Since the main motto of the festival was preserving authentic features of Albanian culture (this is what the main prizes and awards were given for, bringing fame and recognition on a national level), the participants tried to copy precisely all the elements of traditional dances, songs music and local varieties of costume. In the natural course of things, the forms and elements of folk art would have definitely evolved in line with time, social and technological changes (compare: Lundberg et al. 2003). However, the artificial nurturing approach to everything that has to do with folk culture has led to the museification of its forms and elements, whereby they were fixed at a certain point in the records of collectors, amateurs and people of that culture. Such mummification, if you will, in balm prepared according to modern recipes has helped to carry over to these days a considerable part of folk culture, i.e. dance, music, songs, and local varieties of costume from most regions of Albania and the neighbouring countries.

For many generations of Albanians the event is an undisputed symbol of Albanian consolidation and the unity of Albanian ethnic culture. At the same time, the festival is promoted as an important social manifestation, which aims to affect the domestic and geopolitical situation thus increasing Albanian presence in the region.

Notes

1 Ali Pasha of Ioannina/Yannina/Janina or of Tepelena, or the Lion of Yannina (1740 – 24 January 1822) was an Ottoman Albanian ruler who served as pasha of a large part of western Rumelia, Ottoman Empire. He fought for independence from Istanbul (Elsie 2004: 40).

2 In 2015, by the way, in the “Costume” nomination at the festival, amateur artists from Zadrimea received a prize. They most often receive this award. Analysing this fact, I can argue that an important factor here is the preservation of traditional clothing in this area in everyday life.

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CHANGES IN ESTONIAN SCHOOL CALENDAR HOLIDAYS IN 1992–2018

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Abstract: The paper compares changes in the celebration of holidays in the period from 1992 to 2018. The data originate from large Estonian children's lore corpora from 1992, 2007, and 2018. The first collections are preserved at the Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum (ELM) in Tartu, Estonia, and the 2018 collection as well as the digitized data of the earlier campaigns are available in the digital archives EFITA – the Research Archives of the Department of Folkloristics of the ELM. The calendar corpus allows us to monitor changes in the structure and essence of folk/ethnographic/local traditions, feasts celebrated at home, church feasts, and public holidays at school. The authors indicate that endeavours to establish national public holidays to accompany traditional agrarian ones began in the early 20th century. During the 20th century, the system of holidays changed three times (1918, 1940, 1991) due to political changes: the establishment of an independent state in Estonia, the loss of independence and continuation as the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, and restoration of inde-

pendence in 1991. In addition to state, church, and folk holidays different ways to introduce novel international holidays (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween, Mother Tongue Day), and a search for new forms of celebration were also noteworthy during this period. As students, youngsters participate in the celebrations of their school as well as in the celebrations of public holidays, and at the same time they are involved in maintaining their family traditions.

Keywords: Estonia, international feasts, Mother Tongue Day, national holidays, school feasts

Introduction

The feeling of cohesion that arises at school and in the classroom is also expressed in common holidays, which give a group-uniting and creative start; also, a close dialogue is essential in this development.

However, it is most important that children are the future adults, they choose the holidays they prefer to celebrate and decide which traditions to follow and which not. This is especially true in a situation where multi-ethnic and multi-traditional holidays are added to the calendar. For example, the celebration of Valentine's Day at schools was initiated by teachers; the same applies to Mother's Day and some other holidays (Kõiva 2004; Vesik 2015). The period under study is long enough and enables us to generalize the changes related to holiday celebrations within this institution.

At the same time, the school calendar is also interesting for other aspects, such as a dialogue between teachers and students, in which the latter plays a significant role in shaping a holiday or a festival. In this respect, it is more than important to monitor the youth's calendar practices and the trends that emerge in them.

Unlike anthropology and sociology, folkloristics has long traditions in the studies of children's lore, especially as concerns individual genres, yet great differences can be detected by countries and domains. So far, very little attention has been paid to the school calendar, except within the framework of a study prepared by the SIEF Ritual Year Working Group (Gergova 2013; Hugoson 2013; Kõiva 2004; Vesik 2016), and the investigations of Estonian children's lore group (Kõiva 1995a, 1996, 2000, 2014; Kalmre 2003, 2010; Voolaid 2006). However, a wider interest has sprung up recently, especially with the emergence

of multicultural issues in several areas (Niemi *et al.* 2019). Although the number of studies has increased, it is still necessary to investigate the growing interest in economic and social issues, such as father-to-son business models, as well as cultural diversity or unequal opportunities for migrant children, or language and children (Riley & Paugh 2019).

One of the reasons for the lack of research interest may lie in its institutional nature, as less attention has generally been paid to this aspect when it comes to celebrating the ritual year. The reason may be that children live with their parents and depend on their funding; that is, they do not form a clear-cut self. American anthropologist Lawrence Hirschenfeld (2008, 2013; see also Hardmann 2001), who assumes the interdisciplinary approach, links the underrepresentation of children's topics with an interest in the adults' socio-cultural way of living: there is a clear stratification in the wealth and social relations and other circumstances among adults, while children represent a different self-organization.

Secondary, i.e. high school education has been normative until recently, but during the terms of office of the last few ministers of education there has been a strong pressure for the students to continue in vocational schools after the 9th grade. Reforms in recent years have also led to the re-integration of schools into larger ones (a similar campaign took place in the 1960s–1970s) and the pressure to close smaller rural schools, leading to the early migration of children to cities, living away from the family or commuting daily. The school reform, on the other hand, also speeds up the migration of parents to larger centres.

The schoolchildren's calendar is characterized by several special features: as students, children participate in the celebrations of their school as well as in the celebration of public holidays, and at the same time they are involved in maintaining their family traditions. School education covers 12 years, between the ages of 7 and 19, which have a decisive role in the life of an individual. The major ideas of the specific features of school celebrations are the following: maturing of the children and building the system of values; the feeling of cohesion in the school; the role of the institution and the pupils themselves in transforming the ritual year. During these years the child develops into a young adult, matures physically, and becomes a personality. As a person, they define their position in the classroom and at school, as well as in attitudes to the events taking place during the ritual year. Educational institutions have a major role to play in nurturing values (new or basic values), but/and they also emphasize remembering the past.

The degree of independence given to students varies by schools. However, from 1990 each school has a student representation who mediate students' stances; also, event organization is increasingly delegated to students. Earlier on, it was mainly limited to organizing Teachers' Day and partly also Christmas's party and graduation events. As to holiday celebrations, schools are given a free hand, and already in 2004 a connection could be detected between creative teachers and the diversity of events (Kõiva 2004). The increasing number of private schools has added to the variety. On the other hand, greater freedom has shifted the teacher as a personality to the responsibility position. Liberalization of the ways of celebration is manifested in the comments made by Kristiina Punga, our cooperation partner, history teacher, and one of the organizers of students' humanities conference HUNTS, regarding the collection results:

It seems to me as if the picture is getting more and more diverse. The beginning of the school year is a good example: there are schools that start on a Monday, no festive meeting is obligatory, and the end of the school year is even more different – as class record books are electronic, no manual reports are given. EFITA, F01-021-006-0002

It is significant that Russian schools in Estonia celebrate the same holidays as Estonian ones,¹ including folk calendar holidays, yet this is a topic for a further research. Church holidays are celebrated according to Lutheran traditions, although congregations are rather small in all confessions in Estonia. This signifies, above all, historical continuity, as Estonia has been a Lutheran country since the beginning of the 16th century. On the other hand, Orthodox, Catholic, and other holidays are also allowed to be celebrated. The article discusses how two factors – changes in political systems and global trends – affect the celebration and feast transmission in the Estonian school community. A synthetic view of the current and recent trends in the Estonian school calendar and of the transmission of traditions are presented, based on both statistical and qualitative information derived from recent collections, studies, and surveys.

Data and Their Limitations

From 1920 to 1944, schoolchildren were engaged in conducting surveys across the country, and the role of students was either to capture the knowledge of

older people or to write down their own folklore circulating among children. For instance, a large-scale campaign of gathering calendar traditions was associated with M. J. Eisen's interest in spring holidays (Easter) and Christmas customs; he used the responses to gain a deeper insight into areas where adult responses were sparse (cf Eisen 1931). Oskar Loorits was interested in the relationships between mythological creatures and children's bogies, which initiated him to launch a massive-scale collection campaign concerned with children's bogies, involving all Estonian schools; he used the results in his scholarly work (Loorits 1949).

The goal of the grand collection of children's lore, attempted in 1992, was to get as diverse an overview of children's lore and customs as possible at that time and to find the causes, directions, and areas of the rapid change. It was not an order or a project financed by someone, but an inevitability perceived by folklorists from different institutions, a necessity to examine the state of the old patterns and to find the current ones. The first collection competition was organized in cooperation with Ulla Lipponen, folklorist from the Finnish Literature Society² (about the results see Kõiva 1995b; Hiimäe 2002; Kalmre 1995).

In order to get a longitudinal overview, the survey was repeated in 2007. The survey resulted in the first-ever description of several phenomena, including a novel view on fears, pet-related themes, nicknames (cf. the survey by Voolaid 2007). Regarding the calendar, the aim was to record holidays throughout the year, to collect data on the name-day tradition, to record birthday traditions, and to document student holidays. Two answering methods were used: either on paper to be posted individually or as a member of a class (in case the whole class participated) or by using the online forms.

In 2018, the process of collecting the school and children's lore took place mostly by using online forms, and only a few schools and a few students sent written answers on paper. The selection of schools also changed to a certain extent – extensive urbanization was considered, and therefore more schools in Tallinn and Tartu were included in the pool; some rural schools had been closed down or had been converted from secondary to basic schools.

In terms of numbers, in 1992 the participation was as follows: 1,797 students submitted 27,000 pages of answers, and folklorists in several regions additionally recorded data (in Narva, Tartu, Valga, Ahja, and Kõrveküla, Kõiva 1995a; statistics in Kalmre 1995). In 2007 the respective figures were 2,800 students and 15,000 pages (Voolaid 2007), and in 2018 approx. 3,700 students answered mostly online (Hiimäe 2019).

The collected data have some limitations. As the questions were open-ended and there were no prelisted choices, the students enumerated memorable holidays rather than described them in more detail. The answers were also limited by the number of themes asked (in this case the calendar was located relatively at the end of the survey: 1992 – 9th place, 2007 – 5th place, 2018 – 5th place. When filling in a long survey, considerable answering fatigue occurs towards the end and answers become shorter. The placement of the questions in the survey correlates with the number and quality of the answers; therefore, the answers to the first and second blocks of questions were more in-depth.

For example, the 2018 survey is characterized by the following numerical values:

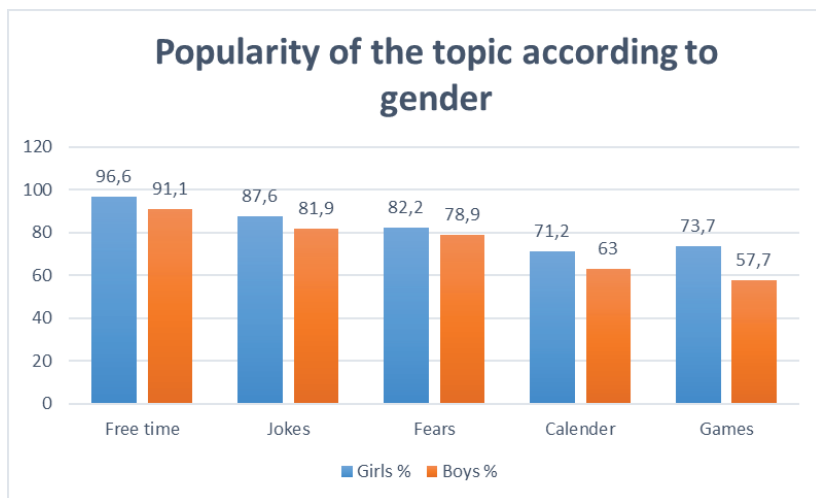


Figure 1. Popularity of topics according to gender.

Age-specific differences are also quite visible: the children we interviewed were 4th to 12th-grade students, i.e., between the ages of ten and eighteen–nineteen years of age, and, correspondingly, they had a different role in holidays. The best respondents were 6th to 9th-grade students with good observations and fluent self-expression.

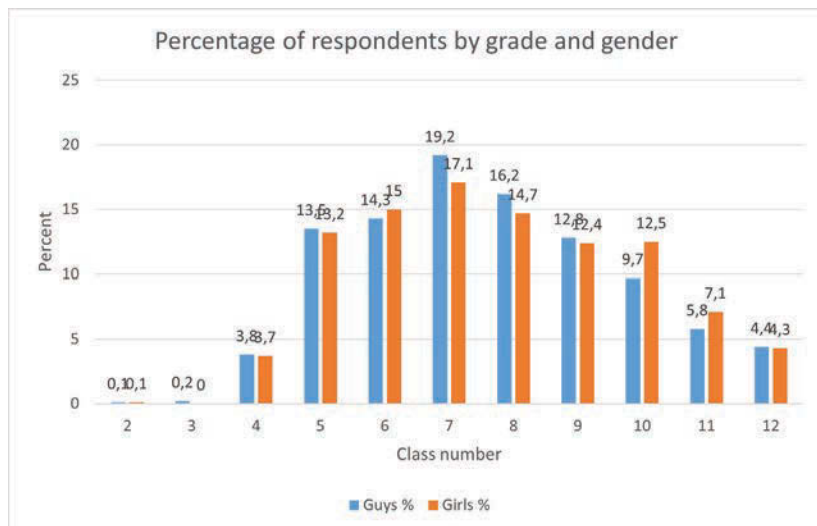


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents by grade and gender.

In the 1960s, the problems of authenticity and relevance arose acutely: closeness to publications was considered as a not folkloric phenomenon and attitude to the mixed forms of dissemination was negative.³ Children's writings were also considered with reservations: this attitude might have been caused by the model of an irresponsible child. The authors of this article opine that answers proceed from the skills of the person who asks them as well as children's stances and represent their viewpoints. The most recent sociological polls indicate that children's estimations can differ from adults' models and represent independent models; yet, they cannot be regarded as inadequate (Reinomägi 2020).

General Trends

Public holidays, including those celebrated at school, have changed three times in the 20th century: in 1918, 1945, and 1991. As the national holiday system develops over the years, the final version of public holidays had been established

in Estonia by 1937 (the Republic of Estonia was established in 1918, which indicates that the formation of the calendar system was a longer process). In 1940–1990, Estonia (under the name of the Estonian SSR) was part of the USSR, the public feasts were reorganized several times during the post-war period (about feasts see Kõiva 2014; Kreegipuu 2011: 70). Also, during re-established independence, the system of state and national holidays was reformed in 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2009. This indicates that the stabilization of the holiday cycle has been a long and dynamic process. As in the early 1990s the holiday system was still taking shape, the questions in the first survey were concerned with new holidays, such as Valentine's Day, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, as well as with students' own initiative in organizing holidays.

It should be noted as a peculiarity that in the period 1990–2004 schools were relatively free in their choices of celebrations. Among the permanent holidays were: 1 September (now Wisdom Day), Teachers' Day (International Teachers' Day), student initiation ceremony (hazing), Father's Day, St Martin's Day (and St. Catherine's Day), Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother Tongue Day, Shrove-tide, Easter, Independence Day, St. George's Day, Mother's Day, the Last School Bell, one-hundred-days ball, and graduation celebration. Dozens of holidays in different schools were characteristic of a particular school (medieval-style May Day at Leie School, St. Lucia's Day and Kingdom Day at Noarootsi Upper Secondary School). To sum up, school-specific starting and ending celebrations, the most well-known church and folk holidays (Christmas, Easter) dominated (Kõiva 2004; Vesik 2016).

In 2007, about a third of the respondents answered questions about calendar holidays (968 students from the total of 2,800), and 62 percent of them were girls. The answers show that there are more calendar holidays among the most popular events than entertaining events and dance parties. The most popular were Christmas celebrations, Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, St George's Day, St. Martin's Day, St. Catherine's Day, and Ribbon Bow Day. The rest of the holidays enjoyed less popularity.

The results of the 2018 survey were as follows. The most popular were Christmas (incl. Advent), Friend's Day or Valentine's Day, St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day (the last two feature masking and visiting homes, asking for gifts), yet the rising position of Halloween, also related to masking, is noticeable. Shrove Tuesday has surprisingly lost its status as a favourite.

Changes in Estonian School Calendar Holidays in 1992–2018

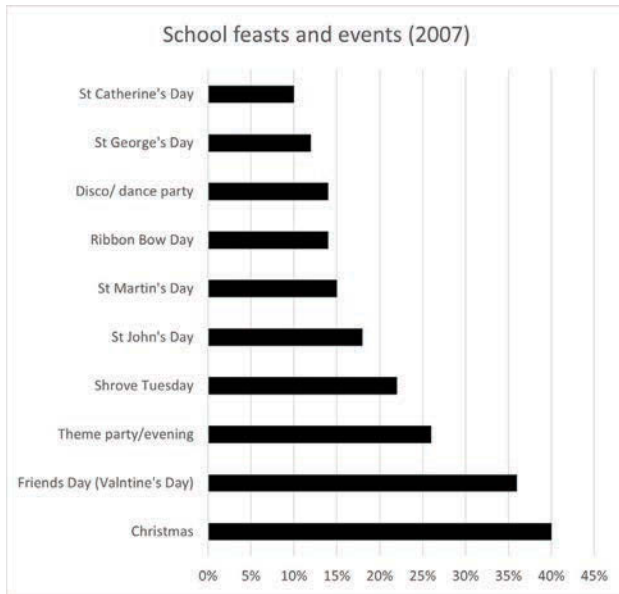


Figure 3. The most popular events during the 2007/2008 schoolyear.

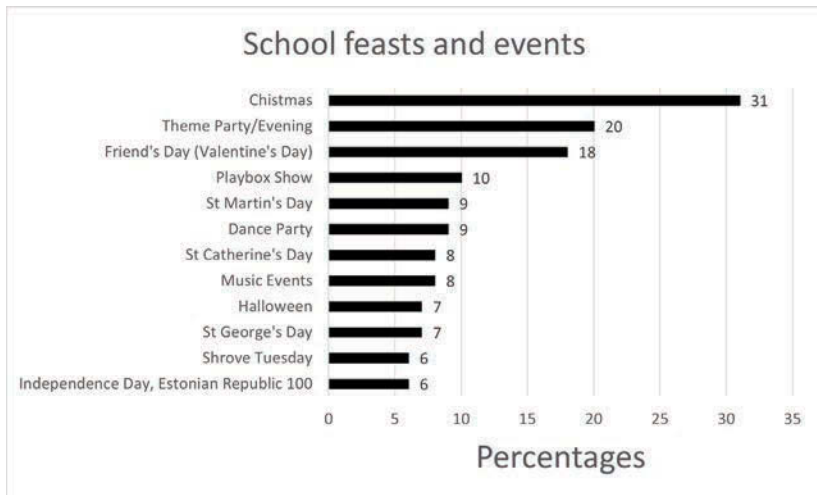


Figure 4. The most popular events during the 2018/2019 schoolyear.

Style parties (and evenings), playbox shows, music and song events, dance-related events (disco, ball), fashion shows and talent evenings, carnival and sports events were mentioned among school holidays and events, as well as imitations of the popular TV show “Your Face Sounds Familiar” (“Stars in Their Eyes” in the UK).

Below is an overview of the role of school in organizing events during the school year:

Our school celebrates anniversaries a lot. On St. Michael's Day, there is St. Michael's Fair, for which all those willing can make something at home and then sell it at the school fair. All students and teachers can buy what they want at the fair that day and so children can make money. On All Souls Day, people behave quieter than usual and light candles. On Martinmas, the younger students disguise themselves in different costumes and then come to the door of our class and sing: “Let the Martinmas mummers in...”. We let them in, listen to the verses they have learned, and answer riddles that we don't usually know, but that is exactly their goal. Then we would give them candy and they would leave us with good wishes, for example, good grades, etc.

At Christmas, we have a festive Christmas concert, which is also attended by Santa Claus, with large bags of gifts. On Valentine's Day, everyone is friendly, and valentines (cards) are made for each other. We celebrate Shrovetide at school or go somewhere to ski or have a sled ride.

On Women's Day, flowers are given to girls and there are various activities for both girls and boys.

As part of Mother Tongue Day, we have a song and poetry competition called Leie Song and Poetry Bird, in which all those willing can take part by reading a poem or singing a song.

On April Fool's Day, we just play pranks.

On Mother's Day, we also have a concert, and, in addition, an exhibition of student handicraft completed during the year, which can be seen by not only mothers but also by all other interested people.

On St. George's Day, students are divided into teams in advance for a race, and members of each team take turns to complete a part of the course of the race. Of course, each team also has a torch, which is passed on like a baton. The winning team is the one who is the first to reach

*the finish line with a burning torch, and the traditional prize is a cake.
I believe that everyone at our school is happy to take part in all the events.*
ID 3,587, 9th grade

Church Holidays

The celebration of church holidays at school was a complicated topic due to the establishment of Soviet power just before the Second World War. The progress of the reform is most adequately reflected in the then diaries and reminiscences. School was a special instrument in the dissemination of the new ideology and in 1940 all church holidays were deleted from the calendar, except for Christmas. The reason might have been the Estonian name *jõulud* (Yuletide), which probably misled the reformers. Immediately after 1945 Christmas also disappeared from the list of the public holidays (Kreegipuu 2011: 81). However, church holidays were still celebrated at people's homes during the Soviet period, and some of them were celebrated at schools shortly before Stalin's death in 1953 as old pre-Christian holidays: New Year's Eve (Est. *näärid*), St. Martin's Day (*mardipäev*), St. Catherine's Day (*kadripäev*), St. John's Day (*jaanipäev*), St. George's Day (*jüripäev*). As the Lutheran tradition does not celebrate saints' days, popular messages and celebration customs remained in the foreground. In the past centuries, for example, St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day were holidays related to livestock and grain farming, and were known for masking customs, except for the Orthodox south-eastern Estonia inhabited by Setos. St. George's Day marked the beginning of livestock herding as well as preventive magic; yet it was also associated with Estonians' uprising against the Livonian Order on 23 April 1343, as the message was compatible with the new ideology.

Christmas was also associated with the old holiday cycle, which began with St. Thomas' Day and ended with the Epiphany (Tedre 1969: 76). Although the Christmas cycle was not officially restored, disguises such as Christmas geese, Christmas bucks and other traditional elements of customs in western Estonia and on the islands were part of the school's cultural tradition and local features.

When we explored the school festivals, the biggest changes (in the years 1992–2018) we expected to detect were in connection with the anniversaries of the church calendar, the celebration of which was now free and legal and did not depend on the goodwill of the headmaster or teachers.

Public religious holidays include Good Friday, Easter Sunday, the first day of Pentecost, Christmas Eve, and the first and second day of Christmas. However, we discovered that there have been no major changes in this area in the past 30 years, apart from school choirs' Christmas concerts in churches. But let us turn to our expert again:

Pre-Christmas festivities are also mostly joyful. For a long time, many schools had common church services, yet this tradition seems to be fading gradually. Parties are organized in schools or by classes, and more and more often presents are not given anymore. EFITA, F01-021-006-0002

This is also confirmed by the data of the 2007 school lore campaign: some classes donate the money collected for presents to animal protection societies or charity organizations.⁴

Students demonstrated the warmest feelings towards Christmas parties, because they also appreciate the opportunity to create a witty show and have a great time. They like Christmas as one of the holidays which are most reasonable to celebrate at school by age groups, as each of them has their age-appropriate customs, traditions, and jokes.

The Catholic schools in northern and southern Estonia have sought to add Catholic anniversaries, as, for example, St Lucia's Day in Tartu and Tallinn.⁵ If we add to the 2018 survey results, for example, the results of a student survey published in the newsletter "Prophet" of the Tartu Catholic Education Centre, students preferred as performers for their Christmas party either the academic brass band *Popsid* from the University of Tartu or the university alumni. Things considered important were the election of the ball king and queen, joint and round dances, conjuring tricks, and Father Christmas; also activities involving all the students were emphasized, as well as bringing, for example, animals (alpacas, reindeer, lamas) to the ball room (Vaher 2019).

In the middle of the 19th century, Orthodox congregations emerged in connection with religious conversion. The Estonian independent Orthodox Church was established during the Republic of Estonia in 1918; it was subordinated to Constantinople in 1923, and switched over to the new calendar in 1920s, whereas the churches subordinated to Moscow continued to use the old calendar (in more detail see Papatomas & Palli & Matthias 2002). Of greatest success have been Orthodox holidays, which were celebrated locally throughout the Soviet era, including St. George's Day (May 6) in Värskä and St. Paraskeva's Day

(July 20) in Saatse, south-eastern Estonia, when people travel back from all over Estonia to celebrate. Orthodox regional holidays have kept their significance; they are important festivals because people originating from that region come together for that day. After visiting church and joining the procession, Orthodox families lay food on the graves of their dead and have a meal there. In the evening people have *kirmas(k)* – a celebration with traditional folk songs and dances. There are no celebrations at the local school, yet the school encourages joining one's family for the festivities.

I live in Setomaa; we celebrate St. Paraskeva's Day (the day of remembering the dead). We (my parents, other relatives, and I) gathered around the grave of our relative in Saatse village. We were eating together and walking in procession around the church. ID 373, Värskä, 8th grade

In other areas, village or parish days with a package of cultural events (dances, songs, a fair of local food and handicrafts) are common, yet they have looser connections with the school calendar.

Visiting relatives during holidays has been a continuing problem since many people have moved to the city or started work in other places. There are, as it were, two possibilities – to try to visit all relatives during the holidays, or to decide where to go for which holiday.

One way or another, there are two central holidays – Christmas and Midsummer Day, when the family reunion is most important, as is making a Midsummer bonfire if possible. It is in the case of these two holidays that human warmth and mutual care are most manifest, and people cherish the customs of their own family, which are similar to general customs but have a special undertone in each household.

State Holidays

Some Baltic researchers (Vaiškunas 2013; Šaknys 2015; Mardosa 2016; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018; Kõiva 2014) have demonstrated what happened to the church and state holiday cycle introduced in the period from 1929 to 1944 and during the Soviet era, and how holidays were re-established in 1990 and later on. In Estonia, the following anniversaries started to be celebrated in connection with gaining independence: Independence Day, the Treaty of Tartu,⁶ and

Victory Day.⁷ The first step taken by the new political power was to replace the anniversaries of statehood and history in the calendar with Soviet holidays: the anniversary of the October Revolution (7 November, celebrated in the USSR from 1927 until 1990), and the Constitution Day (5 December, celebrated from 1924, changed in 1937; in Estonia in 1947–1990). After the Second World War, Victory Day (anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War) was added, which was a day off.⁸ Beginning in the 1990s, Europe Day marking peace and unity in Europe is celebrated on 9 May, yet it is an ordinary working day.

The Tartu Peace Treaty is an ordinary working day (but valued highly in society), which have a fixed structure.

The Tartu Peace Treaty was signed between Estonia and Soviet Russia in Tartu on 2 February 1920, and it ended the Estonian War of Independence and determined the eastern border of Estonia as Soviet Russia recognized the independence of the Estonian state. In Tartu, the celebration sticks to a fairly solid structure. The day starts at 10 am with a commemorative event for Tartu secondary schools, which takes place at Jaan Poska Gymnasium in Vanemuise Street. The welcome speech of the Mayor of Tartu is followed by a speech by a representative of the military, and a performance by a brass orchestra and a folk-dance group. At the same time, the representatives of the city council lay wreaths at the War of Independence Memorial in St. Paul's Cemetery, at the war hero Kuperjanov's grave in Raadi Cemetery, as well as at the Monument to the Liberators of southern Estonia and the Kalevipoeg⁹ Monument in Tartu.

Later on a ceremony to commemorate the Tartu Peace Treaty begins at the Kalevipoeg Statue of Liberty in Tartu, where the Mayor of Tartu, the head of the Estonian National Defence College, the Chairman of the Tartu City Council, and a representative of the student corporation *Fraternitas Liviensis* alumni speaks. This concludes an important part of the public celebration. After that, those interested in history are welcome to the Tartu City Museum, which introduces a display about Tartu and the War of Independence, the fate of Tartu during the War of Independence, the occupation of Tartu and its liberation from the Bol'shevik (Red) Army, the progress of peace negotiations, and other topics.

The anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty is celebrated at schools in different ways, and it is one of the ways to honour local veterans of the War of Independence and recall history.

As several Estonian towns, including Pärnu, played an important role in the proclamation of the Republic of Estonia, the commemoration ceremonies

are more solemn than usual in those places. For example, some events take place in Pärnu Alevi Cemetery, and the anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty is celebrated at Sindi School. Some people celebrate the day with a more festive meal at home.

Independence Days – 24 February, 20 August

While 24 February is celebrated nationally and at home, the celebration of 20 August – Independence Restoration Day – is less rooted. On 23 February 1918, the Manifesto to All Peoples of Estonia, read out publicly in Pärnu, declared Estonia an independent and democratic republic. On 24 February, the manifesto was printed in Tallinn. On 8 May 1990, on the last day of its existence, the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR declared the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic invalid and the Republic of Estonia was re-established.

The expert-teacher comments:

I tend to think that the anniversary of the republic is celebrated at schools; no ceremonial meetings are obligatory, yet they are held at many schools; it is discussed at history classes, the schoolhouse is decorated, and often speech contests or sports events are organized. The situation has obviously changed because now school holidays are also in February. On the one hand, it is a great possibility to link the end of the half-term with festivities; on the other hand – 24 February used to be the only day off in the past, and therefore could even deserve more attention. EFITA, F01-021-006-0002

24 February is usually celebrated with fireworks, concerts, parades, and parties as an Estonian national day. As it is a public holiday and a day off, it is possible to join public concerts, enjoy a stroll with the family in the city or spend time watching TV and eating a festive meal (cf. Lithuanian traditions in Mardosa 2016: 120–121). Many families watch the president's reception on TV to see the attendees' glamorous costumes and comment on the party, which is traditionally called a 'penguins' parade'. As a counterbalance to the celebration of the *creme-de-la-creme* of society, a procession with torches through historic Tallinn has become a customary event; it is joined by young and old, in a common celebration of the birth of the republic.

The independence and re-independence of the Republic of Estonia – we celebrate them, it means that we have festive meal, board games, watching the parade and the reception, watching patriotic films, decorating the home. ID 2408 Tartu, 8th grade

Reinvented and New

Mother's Day (the second Sunday in May, introduced in the United States in 1908; in Estonia its meaning was conveyed with some local adaptations in the 1920s) is a good example of holidays that began to be celebrated during the Republic of Estonia and were reintroduced in the 1990s. In the 1920s–1930s, a plan for the promotion of the celebration of Mother's Day, and sample plans for celebration by schools were developed by Women's Home Defence societies and other organizations. Mother's Day was successfully confirmed as one of the most important national holidays; it was introduced at schools and its celebration at home was strongly inspired (Õunapuu 2001; Kõiva 2014). The 2018 answers reflect that celebrating Mother's Day at school is a norm and it is also celebrated at home, in the family circle.

The **International Women's Day** (8 March), however, has made an interesting resurgence. It disappeared from the list of public holidays and holidays in general in 1990, but has become more and more remembered in the family circle and also celebrated at the school; its celebration is not officially regulated, and in a sense Mother's Day and Women's Day have changed places. State media has also started to mention Women's Day again.

Father's Day (the second Sunday in November; Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden also celebrate it on this day) is being launched with the full force of the media, and some progress has been made at schools: competitions and celebrations are organized with fathers, surprises and gifts are recommended for them. Father's Day at school is mainly celebrated with competitions, and fathers are invited to participate. The creation of a more festive atmosphere at home is also encouraged in every way.

Mother Tongue Day (March 14) is among the newest holidays that were introduced in the 1990s, and it is celebrated at schools. The only Estonian national holiday related to written and oral language was established on the

birthday of the poet Kristjan Jaak Peterson (1801–1822) in 1996. Meinhard Laks, a schoolteacher and linguist from Sonda, north-eastern Estonia, was one of those who initiated such a special language day. After several attempts, the holiday was approved by the Parliament. The forerunners of Mother Tongue Day were the Language and Folklore Days organized as a joint event of schools and the Mother Tongue Society. This was a unique opportunity for students to meet famous linguists, but also literary scholars, folklorists, and writers. Since 1999, Mother Tongue Day has been a national holiday, celebrated by schools and cultural organizations throughout Estonia. In addition to guest presentations, thematic days are important as they give students an opportunity to present their research work and poetry, and one of the aims is to motivate students' performances and create a better connection with the language. The equivalent of Mother Tongue Day is the International Mother Language Day proclaimed by UNESCO in 1999 to be observed on 21 February.

Mother Tongue Day – a festive event / concert where students can read their own poetry, for example. ID 1369, 9th grade

Valentine's Day and **Halloween** spread in the ritual year as early as the 1980s. L. Vesik points out in her research (2016) that the main aim of Valentine's Day celebration is not love but rather the strengthening of friendships. The temporary post boxes with friendship messages and the special atmosphere make the holiday interesting for most children, though we have also found those who are against this day and say they hate it. Halloween is more known as a partying event, but it is popular because it entails joy and fun:

Then, on Valentine's Day, everyone gets a half of the paper heart with a number at the school entrance, and the task is to find a heart with the same number. Anyone who finds their match from the whole school will get a gift.

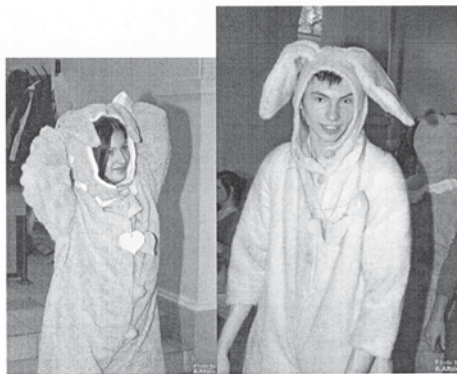
During Halloween, we are allowed to come to school in scary clothes, and then there are competitions organized by the student council. ID 991, 8th grade

A. Kirjelda eelmisel ja sel aastal koolis tähistatud tähtpäevi (nt mardipäev, jüripäev). Millistel üritustel ja tähtpäevadel osaletakse koolis meelsasti?

Valentinpäeva (Sõbrapäeva) tähistatakse meil iga aasta. Sel aastal oli kõik väga hästi organiseeritud. Trepil ootasid inimesi punaste südametega õpilased, kes rüpasid neid südameid teistele kaela. Igaile südamele oli kirjutatud mingi nimi. Päeva jooksul sai sõpradega enda ja teiste nimede üle naerda. Toimus ka kalliteenus, mis kujutas endast seda, et võisid 2 krooni eest tellida kellelegi koolist kalli ühe valentinpäeva „maskoti“ poolt, ehk siis loomakostüümis ringi jooksvalt korraldajalt. Toimus ka loterii ja sõbralikumaa õpetaja valimine. Riietuslood oli punane ja valge, mida ka paljud järgisid. Üldiselt väga positiivne ja tore päev!



Pildid André Altjõe poolt.



Pildidel on näha treppide ees inimesi südameid jagamas ning maskotte loomakostüümides.

Meie koolis korraldatakse ka spordipäevaid. Neid tavaliselt üks veerandi kohta, kus siis pühendatakse terve päev spordile. Tüüpilised tegevused spordipäeval on klassidevaheline jalgpallivõistlus, orienteerumine, pikamaajooks jne. Eelmise aasta oli meil üks spordipäev

Figures 5 & 6. Friend's Day (St. Valentin's Day) in Tallinn English College in 2007. Photographs by André Altjõe.

Joy and fun

April Fool's Day – 1 April – is a permanent component of the school calendar, which is celebrated by playing pranks both by adults and by children at school, with jokes aimed at fellow students and, if possible, also at teachers. Most students find the day to be fun and this is definitely the reason why the celebration of 1 April has persisted (about jokes and proverbs see Voolaid 2020; Kõiva 2004).

Improvisational events vary considerably, with schools showing great initiative. Entertaining elements intertwine with the opportunity to be with peers in slightly uncomfortable conditions; for example, staying overnight in sleeping bags in the school hall. This little excitement is indirectly reminiscent of hiking and camping. There are also some other ways to make the school life more interesting, such as karaoke, balls, concerts, performances, quizzes, etc. Here are some examples of fun activities at school:

I enjoy participating in Playback shows, where one general topic is given, and every class has to do it (I perform a lot outside of school). ID 119, 9th grade

When talking about holidays, it is impossible not to mention a unique event at our school called “Dark night party”. It takes place once a year and gives a chance to stay at school overnight. If you want to take part in a disco, karaoke, games, horror movies, then you have to make a playback. To stay at the dark night party requires performing from you. This party is one of the best events at our school. ID 3480, 9th grade

Changes in 1992–2018

Today, calendar holidays are proposed and established by various secular headquarters; several international organizations (UN, UNESCO), initiative groups, etc., have the power to declare international or global anniversaries, days, feasts. Thus, the year-round cycle is covered with important days of remembrance and dedication, and the role of the school is to help navigate in all this abundance.

The socialization of schoolchildren takes place across a wide range of culturally salient settings, including home, school, fan and hobby groups, and in many more places and environments, where they learn and experience the essence of culture. There are several differences in the material from 1992 to 2018: on the one hand, the decision-making power of the students increased; on the other hand, there were so many events that many respondents manifested no desire to take part in non-compulsory events at school.

Jan Assmann has drawn attention to feasts and rituals, which – through their repetition – ensure the reproduction of cultural identity (Assman 2011: 27 ff.). Ritual recurrence, writes Assmann, provides coherence to a group in space and time.

The feasts of the ritual year in school are associated with several influences:

- a) National anniversaries, victory and remembrance days, celebration of the founding/first mention of the state are of major importance;
- b) The second basic structure is presented as a link between church feasts and family traditions (Easter, Pentecost, Christmas/Yuletide). It includes universal, local holidays and holy days, church name days, in Christian Orthodox regions also St. Paraskeva's Day and St. George's Day;
- c) Celebration of kinship and tribal relations, as Mother's Day, Father's Day, St. John's Day;
- d) Anniversaries of corporations and professions: International Teacher's Day, Wisdom Day (1 September);
- e) Celebrations conveying humane values: the Earth Day, tree planting, etc.

Undoubtedly, statehood exerts the biggest influence on the national calendar, which fixes big anniversaries and, in some cases, smaller occasions. Despite the short period, it is possible to see restoration models: as the statehood continued, the holidays of the previous republic were restored (24 February – Independence Day, 24 June – Victory Day, 2 February – anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty). The new anniversaries related to the birth of the national state were added: 20 August – Independence Restoration Day, and 23 April – Veterans' Day (was added on St. George's Day in 2013). With some delay, 1 May was added as a spring holiday (Spring Day) instead of the International Workers' Day (or Labour Day), which had been celebrated throughout the 20th century; currently these are not marked in the school calendar.



Figure 7. St. John's Day in Märja. Old customs live in city. Photograph by Piret Voolaid 2018.

From the older calendar holidays, part of schools celebrate St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day; also, on the initiative of schools, All Souls Day, Shrovetide, St. Michael's Day, and St. George's Day. During the Soviet period the latter became known as the Torch Run and as such belongs to the national narrative as a day of remembrance of the 1343 uprising. On St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day small groups of mummers move around, although urban conditions do not particularly favour it. The expert estimate helps to explain why several holidays popular in 2007 have today disappeared in the responses of schoolchildren:

Easter is maybe marked somehow in basic schools; I haven't heard of any particular event related to it. As it is a moving holiday, it has not found a place in the school calendar. And I must admit that although Christmas tradition persisted throughout the Soviet period, several past generations have been estranged from Easter. EFITA, F01-021-006-0002

Estonian school celebrations are not strained by religious or national confrontations. In Orthodox regions keeping to the old calendar system, people continued celebrating their more important holidays, and these became symbols of local identity, which were adapted to the city culture or when moving farther away from the home community (Kõiva 2006). The survey indicates that some holidays are continued on an informal basis; for example, the return of Women's Day after a period of its denial.

Also, the mass deportation days on 25 March (1941) and 14 June¹⁰ (1949) are commemorated by a group of people, mostly the victims and their relatives. As institutionally the complicated and humanely difficult periods in history are not publicly discussed, leaving the explanations to volunteers and teachers, this situation results in misunderstandings and constitutes a source for further tension.

Paying attention to history or cultural history events depends on the teachers' initiative. There are definitely schools in which something is done in connection with the March deportation (in our school, for example, in the history circle); the June deportation remains within the summer holidays. At some point, schools were ordered to do something to mark the Holocaust Day, yet it found strong resistance and the ministry sent no more directives. EFITA, F01-021-006-0002

The same applies to taking flowers to the monument of the Second World War at the military cemetery in Tallinn on 9 May. Those who do it are small groups of Russian schoolchildren, who wear military uniforms with St. George's ribbon; sometimes they go with families. These celebrations have not resulted in conflicts, yet they refer to neglected problems and ignoring of human memory and sufferings. As there is no local alternative to celebrating the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, celebration models from Russia are taken over in the capital city, but also in Russian villages in eastern Estonia (about tendencies in Russia see in more detail in Titkov 2019: 206 ff., in Estonia in Loit *et al.* 2020: 310–314).

When analysing schools' websites after the survey, it could be seen that teachers as personalities and preservers of school traditions were responsible for not only most important remembrance days and a number of church holidays, but also for the traditional holidays in the folk calendar, which in high school disappear from the list of events celebrated at school also in the remote areas.

This places great responsibility on the shoulders of nursery and primary school teachers as well as families. However, there are also examples of continuing celebrations if need be. A good example is 8 March, which is becoming more and more visible in the private and public space.

Students' responses reveal information about the old tradition – Easter, Pentecost, Yuletide, Midsummer Eve. Masking on St. Martin's and St. Catherine's Day has been preserved, and masking traditions on the islands around New Year have been revived, although a major part of them are celebrated outside of school.

The data show that students value family holidays more than school holidays. According to the data of 2018, the most appreciated was Midsummer Eve (June 23), which was considered the best holiday by 50 percent of the respondents, followed by Christmas (44 percent of the respondents), which ranked higher than personal birthday. Some of the most mentioned holidays included New Year's Eve (11 percent) and Easter.

With my family we celebrate Christmas, Easter, the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, Midsummer Eve.

On Midsummer Eve we gather with relatives to have a great time together. Since we live in different parts of Estonia, it is nice to meet during holidays. Children play together and I usually supervise them, since I have done a course in animation. Sometimes adults also play games, but mostly on their own and so it is. We also prepare food together and after eating we still sit together at a large family table. We always take lots of great photos to remember this day. ID 2408, 8th grade

Midsummer Eve. We have a large family. Usually on Midsummer Eve we go to the countryside, to my grandmother, where many relatives gather. There we grill, go swimming and to sauna, look for fireflies. We also dance at every party. Most of them are classical dances, such as waltz and polka. But folk dances and social dances are also planned. We also do family games and competitions. ID 1369, 9th grade

The 2018 survey demonstrated educational mobility – attending a city school from the countryside, as some city schools have a higher reputation. The closure of some local schools led children from smaller places to join schools away

from home, based on competition – the beginning of a kind of chain migration; at the same time, children from a certain region prefer to go to the same city school. For example, the 2018 survey revealed the movement of children from Põlva (south-eastern Estonia) to Hugo Treffner Gymnasium in Tartu. Migration led to the movement of different knowledge, attitudes, worldviews, and values, and stimulated student activity. Several topics within the 2018 survey demonstrated that students have considerable experience of the way of life in a village or a small town, where they return for the weekend, and to which they mediate different customs and traditions from the urban space.

Children's active contribution to holidays varies with age, and their observations are largely age-appropriate. Within the family, children are not allowed to attend some events where they are not expected or where they are restricted participants – they have their own games and activities; for example, at weddings and Christmas celebrations, whereas they have much more responsibility on Mother's Day.

At the same time, the school calendar has impressive aspects, such as the dialogue between teachers and students. During recent decades students have been given a significant role in designing feasts or festivals. Part of the school calendar is organized by students, such as Teacher's Day, Ribbon Bow Day (*tutipäev*), students' initiation ceremony (hazing), April Fool's Day, Valentine's Day, St. Martin's and St. Catherine's Day, Christmas party, and school balls.

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Notes

1 In 1992 and 2007, students were encouraged to give their answers in dialect, yet there were few respondents. Russian-language students' folklore was collected in 1993 and 2008 (only the pilot project); in 2018 students from Russian-language schools were asked to answer along with Estonians, but they were allowed to give answers in Russian. Russian school folklore campaigns deserve a separate investigation and are not discussed in this article.

2 The leading group included Mare Kõiva, Anu Vissel, Astrid Tuisk, Eda Kalmre, and Ants Johanson. To analyse the data, Arvo Krikmann, Mall Hiiemäe, Karin Ribenis, Kadri Peebo-Tamm, Pille Kippar, Art Leete, Mare Kalda, Kadi Sarv, Eda Tagamets, Marju Kõivupuu, Maarja Villandi, and Sirle Pent joined the group. Part of the team members (e.g. Tagamets) were still university students and Maarja Villandi, one of the best collectors a high schooler. A year later Russian children's folklore collection continued (Kõiva & Vissel 1993). The initial collection work was based on the experience of Leea Virtanen, the Finnish scholar (Virtanen 1970). However, the methodology, selection of schools, communication, preparations for the analysis of the material and research, as well as finding sponsors for the prizes for children remained the task of our team.

3 The recognized written forms were hand-written memory rhyme albums, songbooks, incantations; unfortunately, notebooks containing legends and anecdotes were left aside due to the applied criteria. The problems of authenticity were raised by the research group of short forms and they were formulated by A. Krikmann.

4 It was even more visible in 2018 (cf. Kõiva 2020).

5 There are about 5,000 Catholics in Estonia and a few Catholic schools, which have an about 20-years' tradition. These schools have a good reputation and media representation, and strong church orientation (Kõiva 2016; EFITA, F01-021-006-0003). Orthodoxy spread during the conversion movement in the 1840s. The last decades of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries was the period of strong Russification, which changed the attitude towards Orthodox Church. The initial religious conversion movement was related to the hope for economic mitigation, and it has also been interpreted as a protest movement against Baltic Germans' superiority in church. A more vehement conversion took place in the periphery and in southern Estonia, and this particular spread persisted also later on.

6 The anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty has been a national holiday only since 2009, although it is a highly significant event in terms of the establishment of the state. As was mentioned above, these celebrations are especially well rooted in Tartu and

also in a few other cities, where schools organize festive meetings and all-city quizzes; however, there are also schools in which this day is only remembered in history classes.

7 Victory Day marks the Battle of Võnnu (Cēsis). The holiday has been celebrated since 1934 and marks the victory of Estonia in this battle against the Baltische Landeswehr on 23 June 1919.

8 9 May is a national holiday and a day off in all the former republics of the Soviet Union, except for the Baltic states.

9 Kalevipoeg is a monument to the War of Independence, which was dedicated to the soldiers who lost their lives in this war. In 1950, the monument was taken down by the Soviet authorities. Kalevipoeg is the main character in the Estonian national epic. In 1952, a monument to F. R. Kreutzwald, the author of the epic *Kalevipoeg*, was erected at the same location. The monument of Kalevipoeg was restored in 2002. Throughout the Soviet period people recalled the monument of Kalevipoeg as an important symbol of independence.

10 The biggest deportations took place on 25 March 1941, during 1945, on 14 June 1949.

Sources

EFITA – Scientific archives of the Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum, collection KP2018 (School lore 2018).

Skriptoorium – Digital tool of the Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum, digital data of the 1992 and 2007 school lore collections.

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III

Anniversaries

IRINA SEDAKOVA 65. A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE LIFE-GIVING WORD

Irina Sedakova is one of the brightest names among the representatives of the modern Moscow Ethnolinguistics School. She is a Balkanist, Slavist, educator, publicist, translator and publisher. The researcher is a distinguished specialist in the field of ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics and folkloristics. She is an author of nearly 400 works published in 32 countries. The area of her scientific interests is extremely large, covering both the traditional culture and the most recent problems of modernity (the language of the media, Internet and advertising, semiotics of the Moscow protest actions). She attracts a wide interest among both scholars and inquisitive readers working in the various fields of humanities. She is not only a researcher, but also an “activist” of the word – an organizer of international scientific events related to the study of language and culture.

A scientist of Irina Sedakova's level hardly needs to be presented, but we will still briefly mention some aspects of her scientific biography.

Irina Sedakova graduated from the Moscow State University in 1978 with a degree in “Slavic Languages”. This is where she met teachers like Associate Professor



Nadezhda Kotova and the Professors Miroslav Yanakiev and Todov Boyadzhiev. These scholars become an example and benchmark for her, and therefore she retains a deep gratitude towards them. Thus, after N. Kotova's death, she published the monumental work by her teacher, handed over to her as a manuscript (N.V. Kotova. "The Language of Albanians in the Ukraine in the middle of XXth century". M., 2017 – in Russian).

In 1984 she defended her candidate dissertation at the same university, dedicated on the "Vocabulary and symbolism of Bulgarian Christmas – New-year rituals" under the supervision of the academician Nikita Ilich Tolstoy. In 2007 she defended her doctoral thesis at the Institute of Slavic Studies – RAS on the topic "Lingua-cultural bases of the Bulgarian traditional childbirth's text". Between 1983 and 1991 she taught Bulgarian language in the Department of Slavic Philology at the Moscow. From 1991 until present she works at the Institute of Slavic Studies at RA State University, while between 2010 and 2015 she was teaching ethnolinguistics and intercultural communications at the Russian State University of Humanities as well. Irina Sedakova has, moreover, held lecture courses abroad: at the University of Exeter in the UK between 1994 and 1996 and at Sassari University (Sardinia, Italy) in November 2010, she also gave talks in Germany, Japan, Belgium, etc.

At present Irina Aleksandrovna Sedakova holds the degree DrSc in Philology, she is a leading researcher, Head of the Department of Typology and Comparative Language Studies and BALCANICA center for lingua-cultural studies at the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Furthermore, Irina Sedakova is one of the most active participants in the process of internationalization of science and getting the researchers who share common interests together. This ambitious and demanding work consists of the creation and organization of significant scientific events, important for the cohesion of the global research field. She is the co-chair of the Working Group "The Ritual Year" at SIEF (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore), Scientific Secretary of the Russian Committee at the International Association for the Study of the South-East European Countries (AIESEE), Chairman of the Organizing Committee of regularly held international meetings "Balkan Studies" (Balkanskie chtenia), and Editor-in-Chief of the eponymous series at the Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS. Thanks to this activity, a number of scientists from the Balkan and Baltic countries (among whom is the author of these lines) are involved in a representative academic space expanding the

horizon of research, discussions and joint publications. As a result, we have above 30 collections based on wide international cooperation, achieved due to her active editorial involvement.

Irina Sedakova's research activity is impressive. It builds on field studies in Bulgaria and other Balkan and Slavic countries as well as participation in the preparation and issuance of fundamental projects such as "Maly dialektologicheskii atlas Balkanskih yazykov" (Small Dialectal Atlas of Balkan Languages (MDABYA), Andrey N. Sobolev's project); "Slavic Antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary" (Vol. 1–5, 1995–2012, under the general editorship of N.I. Tolstoy, where she is among the authors), and an author, compiler and editor of a number of collections, published by the Institute of Slavic Studies.

The basis for this multilateral activity is her research on the Balkan Languages and Ethnocultural Union, understood as a structural, typological and mental proximity/identity of a number of linguistic and cultural facts in the diverse linguistically and culturally Balkans. The specific linguistic and ethnocultural Balkan symbiosis (the so-called Balkanisms) is inherent not only in the traditional, but also in the modern culture of the peoples of South-Eastern Europe (see, for example, I. Sedakova's research on the post-socialist Slavic-Balkan language union). The Balkanisms are a consequence of historical circumstances – the similar past and geographical proximity of the Balkan peoples determine the peculiarity and dynamics of the linguistic and cultural processes for centuries. They foreground, moreover, the existence of common cultural (folk-cultural) terms, phraseologisms, verbal formulas and clichés, i.e. linguistic facts reflecting common mythological concepts, rituality, beliefs, etc., a common (linguistic and cultural) model of the world (according to the terminology of T.V. Tsivyan).

One of the most important studies of Irina Sedakova, summarizing her scientific ideas, is her monograph "Balkanskii motiv v yazyke i kul'ture bolgar. Rodinnyi tekst" (*Balkan Patterns in the Language and Culture of the Bulgarians. Childbirth Text*), Moscow 2007, also published in Bulgarian in 2013. The book explores the birth texts, based on the concept of the "fate" and the interrelationships between a term and its meaning and cultural allusions. Her methodological approach is based on the study of the ethnolinguistical connotations, the linguistic realization (vocabulary and phraseology), beliefs, rituals and magic acts. In this way, these phenomena are seen as a cultural text (following V.N. Toporov). A cultural text is a semiotic phenomenon, manifested

at different systematic levels in the structure of culture – lexical, idiomatic, folklore, ethnographic, etc. Focused on the Bulgarian traditional culture (including original fieldwork materials), the book includes wide Balkan comparative materials, historical references (antique, Paleo-Balkan, Ottoman, Byzantine, Turkish, etc.) reflecting the common topoi (linguistic and ethnocultural) and their formation in the Balkan cultures.

In the recent years I. Sedakova is investigating the values (axiology) in the Slavic lingual cultures and concepts such as “family”, “old age”, “love”, etc. in the context of the importance and dynamics of their development in the framework of “tradition – modernity” binary. Irina Sedakova continues to attract new authors from different Slavic countries to cooperation and to her investigation of the discussed topic in particular, aiming to achieve maximal precision and completeness of research.

In the framework of this short review it seems impossible to outline the entire diversity of research, activities and academic achievements of Irina Sedakova. Perhaps the most important for me is to recommend that the readers get acquainted with her creative work, because it stimulates new thoughts and research ideas. Finally, I pass on my sincere wishes to Irina for health, happiness and success, both professionally and personally!

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Ekaterina Anastasova

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LITHUANIAN ETHNOLOGIST ANGELĖ VYŠNIAUSKAITĖ 100

The 100th anniversary of a famous Lithuanian ethnologist – professor Angelė Vyšniauskaitė (15.05.1919 – 09.07.2006) was widely celebrated by the Lithuanian academic community. On this occasion, a seminar was organized at the Lithuanian Institute of History on May 15, 2019 – her 100th birthday. During this seminar, the scientific and pedagogical activities of the jubilee were remembered, as well as the history of Lithuanian ethnology.

Vyšniauskaitė worked at the Lithuanian Institute of History for 45 years (1948–1993). The ethnologist was the first head of the Ethnography Department (from 1996 – Ethnology, from 2006 Ethnology and Anthropology Departments) at the Institute of History (from 1990 – Lithuanian Institute of History). The forerunner of the Ethnology Department was the Department of Archaeology and Ethnography, which was founded in 1952 and run by archeologist assoc. prof. dr. Pranas Kulikauskas. In 1962 a part of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnography was transformed into the Ethnography Department. At the time it was headed by prof. habil. dr. Angelė Vyšniauskaitė.



The professor's scientific legacy consists of a large number of works of various kinds – 11 monographs and more than 700 scientific publications. Her work is characterized by a variety of scientific interests, but perhaps the focus has been on research of family and flax cultivation and their customs. In 1955 in Moscow, she defended her candidate's (now doctoral) dissertation "The Life of a Lithuanian Collective Farmers Family". Much space was devoted to the family in this work. This gave rise to further research of the Lithuanian family. In 1964, Vyšniauskaitė edited and together with her colleagues published the publication "Patterns of Lithuanian Ethnography" (Vyšniauskaitė 1964). She wrote the chapters of this book devoted to the traditions of the family, its household and customs, community and calendar customs (about a third of the total text of the work). The publication was also noticed by foreign scholars, which resulted in a number of positive reviews. This book is associated with the birth of ethnology as science in Lithuania. It is still widely quoted and does not lose its value till our days. In 1965, her study "The Lithuanian Collective Farmers Family" was published in USA in the 4th volume of "Soviet Anthropology and Archeology" (Vyšniauskaitė 1965). The book "Lithuanian Family Traditions" was published in 1967. It was the first book in Lithuania dedicated to the customs of the life cycle (Vyšniauskaitė 1967). The author continued her research of family customs by publishing works in the book series "From the Cultural History of the Lithuanians" and in separate publications dedicated to rural culture in Lithuanian regions.

In 1981 the study "Weddings in the Village of Suvalkija" was published in the book "Modern Village of Suvalkija. The Culture and Household of Lithuanian Socialist Village" (Vyšniauskaitė 1981: 100–155), in 1985 another study "Weddings in Žemaitija" – in the book "Modern Village of Žemaitija. Culture and Household of Lithuanian Socialist Village" (Vyšniauskaitė 1985: 122–189). In 1995, A. Vyšniauskaitė together with two authors (Petras Kalnius and Rasa Paukštytė) published a monograph on family research "The Lithuanian Family and Customs". A large part of this book was written by A. Vyšniauskaitė (Vyšniauskaitė & Kalnius & Paukštytė 1995). 2008 the second edition of this book was published posthumously (Vyšniauskaitė & Kalnius & Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2008). Her last major work also deals with wedding customs. In 2007, also after her death, her last study, "Weddings", was published in the book "Traditions". The book was dedicated to the cultural heritage of Northern Lithuania (Vyšniauskaitė 2007: 81–105).

Another area of scientific interests chosen by the researcher is Lithuanian flax cultivation research. The first study, "Lithuanian Peasant Flax Cultivation, was a scientifically mature work (Vyšniauskaitė 1977: 7–138). The study "Lithuanian Flax Cultivation Traditions" (Vyšniauskaitė 1983: 99–179) is not inferior in value. The international recognition of flax research was determined by the "Historical-Ethnographical Atlas of the Baltic Countries. Agriculture" (Istoriko-etnografinis atlas Pribaltiki. Žemledėliavė, 1985), which was well evaluated by the European ethnological community. A. Vyšniauskaitė was the main author of the section on flax cultivation and a member of the editorial board. On this subject in 1993 the habilitated doctoral dissertation was defended ("Lithuanian Flax Cultivation in the First Half of the 18th–20th Centuries: Inventory and Customs").

The ethnologist wrote quite significant works on other topics as well. After the restoration of independence, the study of calendar customs "Our Years and Celebrations" (Vyšniauskaitė 1993), had a great significance for Lithuanian society. In addition to traditional calendar holidays, it also analyzed public holidays. Undoubtedly, a historiographical work "Lithuanians in the Historical Sources of the 9th–Mid-19th C." will be included into the history of Lithuanian ethnology, too (Vyšniauskaitė 1994). In popularizing Lithuanian ethnic culture, the professor's book "Lithuanian House", published in 1999, boasts its informativeness and persuasiveness. This book covers all daily and festive life, beliefs and customs and rituals taking place in Lithuanian homes.

Thus, the way of life of an ethnologist is not only scientific, but also pedagogical activities. As much as several generations of ethnologists can call her their teacher. Under her supervision, doctoral dissertations were defended by Izidorius Butkevičius (1956), Antanas Daniliauskas (1965), Irena Regina Merkienė (1966), Marija Mastonyte-Miliuvienė (1967), Vitalis Morkūnas (1968), Giedrė Tallat-Kelpšaitė-Niunkienė (1968), Janina Morkūnienė (1972), Rasa Paukštytė (1997), Rasa Račiūnaitė (1997). The professor was also an opponent of many doctoral dissertations and a member of dissertation commissions. Professor A. Vyšniauskaitė dedicated a lot of inexhaustible energy and love to the promotion of ethnology at Vytautas Magnus University. The professor's activity was important both in developing the science of ethnology in Lithuania and in promoting and nurturing ethnic culture. In 1997 Professor Angelė Vyšniauskaitė was awarded the Order of Gediminas of the 4th degree, in 1998 she was awarded the prestigious national Jonas Basanavičius Prize.



Seminar 15.05.2019 at the Lithuanian Institute of History.
Photograph by Žilvytis Šaknys 2019.



Petras Kalnius and Rasa Paukštytė during the seminar 15.05.2019.
Photograph by Žilvytis Šaknys 2019.

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IV

News and Reviews

EMERGENCY-PERIOD CORONA LORE IN THE SPHERE OF INTEREST OF THE RESEARCHERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOLKLORISTICS OF THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM¹

On 12 March 2020, the Government of the Republic of Estonia announced emergency situation in Estonia until 1 May and imposed special measures to hinder the spread of COVID-19. Although public gatherings had already been banned, the international conference under the heading “Between individual and collective trauma”, with Liisi Laineste, senior research fellow of the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum (ELM), as the main organizer, continued with presentations also on 13 March. Conference participants from St. Petersburg were the last ones to cross the border at the Narva border checkpoint in a coach. Truth to tell, the coach did not cross the border anymore; the passengers had to switch to another one on the Russian side.

Soon enough the state of Estonia had been put on lockdown and information about unlocking it was postponed into the vague and tremulous future. The world in lockdown had to face a new reality with new touchstones. The Estonian Literary Museum also shut its doors to visitors until the end of the emergency situation on 17 May, and most of the researchers went to isolation in home offices.

Contemporary folklore has attracted constant academic interest of the Department of Folkloristics (the working group of contemporary culture and media studies of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies works under the leadership of the researchers of this department), so research focus was quickly shifted towards the topical corona virus and issues related to it. Researchers started to collect corona folklore and crisis lore that spread on the internet and through participant media, and to analyse it proceeding from their research topics and viewpoints. The new research grant application submitted to the Estonian Research Council in April focused, among other issues, on different

natural, economic, political, and cultural crises and disasters as well as mechanisms and models for managing them, so various directions were included. A crisis or a catastrophe may bring about a renewal, yet definitely a search for adaptation tactics. More often than not, such a situation gives an impetus to a turning point required for a new development direction or economic rise, yet crises doubtlessly bring to the fore social bottlenecks, psychological and other social shortcomings, and ideals and living standards are often far from being compatible (cf. Hart 2006; Post 2015). We have to admit that so far pandemics have been either territorial or taken place long ago, so we still lack global comparisons in the topic of One World.

Corona lore was part of our sphere of interests already earlier. Archivist-referent Maris Kuperjanov started collecting internet lore already in January, when the new corona virus devastated the city of Wuhan in China. On 25 February, at the seminar of the working group of contemporary culture and media studies of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Maris Kuperjanov made a thorough presentation on the responses to the coverage of the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in (social) media. She also published several articles on the corona lore (Kuperjanov 2020a; Kuperjanov 2020b; Kuperjanov 2020c), which give an overview of the initial period of the outbreak of the new coronavirus as well as public reactions to the virus-related news in media commentaries and social media environments. Although at the time the pandemic was still in its initial phase and the knowledge about virus SARS-CoV-2 and the disease COVID-19 caused by it was increasing and still does on a daily basis, the increasing flow of information and the rapid escalation of the situation provided a fertile basis for the spread of thematic folklore already from the moment the virus was detected. It was possible to observe the spread of jokes and internet memes, misinformation due to human errors or lack of knowledge, malignant fake news, conspiracy theories and other narratives, which often accompany epidemics and may even be more harmful for the society than the disease itself. Folklorists were quick to ascertain that several motifs and storylines were already long known and universal and emerged as similar situations arose both in Estonia and in the rest of the world (Kõiva 2020).

The vernacularity of the crisis or all kinds of popular or grassroots reactions to it constituted a wider perspective (about vernacular religion see Primiano 1995). It is namely crisis folklore that reflects and demonstrates the complexity inherent in modern society, so folklore became a kind of communication

means for the crisis period, which expressed different emotions related to the coronavirus, for example, fear of the so-called unknown. Vernacular web – a concept elaborated by folklorist and media researcher Robert Glenn Howard (2008) to explain grassroots networks that surround certain web pages – became a significant keyword in internet folklore studies. Reet Hiimäe, senior research fellow of the Department of Folkloristics, compared the vernacular tactics of the 21st-century corona crisis with the past and mythical events, for example, plague lore (see Hiimäe 2020a; 2020b). When collecting and scientifically analysing the collected material, the practical aim of the studies of corona lore was formulated: to create comparative models from vernacular reactions to crisis situations, which would help to shape a set of strategies for reacting to crises in the future.

The research focus of the Department of Folkloristics in the corona crisis proceeded from four wider subtopics intertwined with one another:

- 1) Folk medicine, e.g. disease narratives and healing practices;
- 2) Folk narratives, e.g. contemporary legends, fake news, rumours, and conspiracy theories;
- 3) Folk religion, incl. beliefs, relation to the supernatural, magic;
- 4) Folk humour, incl. all kinds of forms of humour, e.g. memes, linguistic jokes.

A wider umbrella keyword was managing the crisis in all spheres of life: how to cope with the ordinary necessary everyday procedures in the new situation; for instance, teleworking and distance learning, shopping for groceries or medical help. The emergency situation gave rise to repeated hashtags, such as #loveyoufromafar, #distance, #noplayingwithlives, #emergencysituation, #keepdistance, #isolation, #quarantine, #wearamask, #corona, #crisis, #emergefromthecrisis, #pandemic, #washmyhands, #restinestonia, #stayhome, #staywell, #wecancope, #stopcorona, #orderhome, #supportlocals.

The bulk of the material was recorded from the comments in the main news portals and media publications (e.g. *Delfi*, *Postimees*, *Päevaleht*, *Õhtuleht*), and from the newsfeed of social media networks, such as Facebook and VKontakte. Senior research fellow Eda Kalmre recorded and analysed various conspiracy theories and fake news (e.g. Kalmre 2020), following their progress and fight against them in the social media in official and unofficial (e.g. Propastop FB) channels. The material shared by (national)-conservative Facebook friends (conspiracy theories, beliefs, fake news) constituted a special sphere of interest.

The crisis intensified the formerly more hidden hostile attitude towards the minorities, and the open opposition between liberal and conservative views became more manifest.

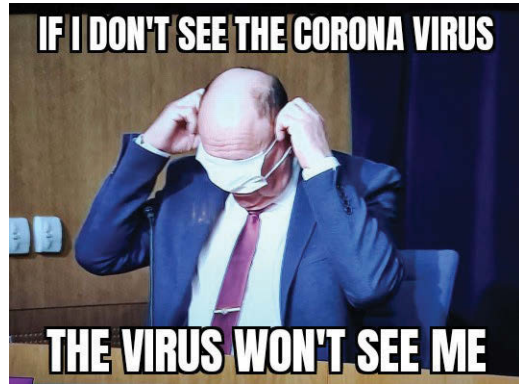
Researchers joined several international networks. For instance, voluminous meme material was collected through the collection module of the Belief Narrative Network (Mare Kõiva, Mare Kalda, Eda Kalmre), which starts research lectures in the autumn.

More concrete joint researches with specified material collection were defined; for example, in April 2020 Reet Hiimäe recorded all the stories related to alternative medicine (incl. folk medicine) in the newspapers *Postimees* and *Õhtuleht* and magazine *Naisteleht* (44 screenshots). Based on this material, a comparative joint article on the representations of alternative medicine in the media will be published in collaboration with Terhi Utriainen, Professor of Religion at the University of Turku, who recorded thematic stories in three Finnish media publications in the same period.

Researchers followed the posts of several social media groups. Senior research fellow Eda Kalmre constantly observed the reactions of different interest groups, for example, the members of the mainly female group *Käsitöö* (Handicraft; with nearly 40,000 members), to corona quarantine. Senior research fellow Piret Voolaid observed the construction of fan culture under the conditions of field game deficiency during the corona crisis on the basis of the activity of the Premium League 2019 four best football clubs – Flora, Levadia, Nõmme Kalju, and Paide Linnameeskond – in the social media. FC Flora FB-community had about 15,000 followers as of 17 May 2020 (end of the emergency situation), FCI-1 Levadia had 7,000 followers, Nõmme Kalju FC – 17,600, and Paide Linnameeskond – 5,300. The pandemic put people's values to the test and brought forth a number of stereotypic understandings. Internet memes in different languages also dealt with values and ways of thinking that needed re-estimation in the crisis (<https://meeldib.com/hispaania-bioloog/>).

Sport and fan cultures were highly meaningful in the corona crisis in Estonia, as the official report of the Health Board confirmed that in Saaremaa, the county most devastated by the coronavirus, the virus was literally spread through cheer fan horns. Culturally, it is intriguing that earlier on fan horns constituted a serious discussion object in fan culture and the corona crisis revived this discussion. Now football fans created a counter-opinion: “If you want to support a team, do it by singing as Estonians always do. If you do not want to sing, then clap your hands.”

The meme mocking the Estonian Minister of the Interior, downplaying the risk of coronavirus.



Anastasiya Fiadotava developed the comparative sports folklore direction in the pandemic situation, dwelling upon football and fanship in Belorussia, where, unlike in the rest of the world, football competitions, including championship games, still continued. While football games were discontinued practically all over the world, research focused on the FK Slutsk Worldwide Facebook page, created for the Slutsk football club (Belorussia) on the initiative of the Australian fans on 23 March 2020. The group of more than 7,000 members regularly shares memes (308 memes collected so far) and jokes, but also discusses the issues of football and corona pandemic, keeping up the community's spirit and supporting the team.

Mare Kõiva was deeply interested in celebrating (religious) holidays in a crisis situation, which results in a corresponding overview about Estonia at the Ritual Year working group 2021 research panel (Helsinki, June).

Most of the holidays in Estonia were celebrated virtually, yet those interested were able to participate in holiday celebrations and rituals that were filmed and posted on YouTube or Facebook. Sketes were closed down in Estonia due to emergency situation, but it was possible to watch recordings of holiday celebrations from the past years on TV and on the web. Individual adaptation patterns resulted in different solutions. Those interested participated in international choirs, listened to or watched on the internet liturgies from previous years, etc. The important holidays during this period were celebrated in the family circle. It is also clear that the emergency situation made people in several countries celebrate only with the family and close relatives, and revived several customs involving the elderly also in bigger cities. However, we also

had some unexpected actions initiating discussions; for example, Archbishop Urmas Viilma's appeal to ring church bells to make the government allow ordinary services.

Video recordings of the leaders of different spiritual movements in nature or in a holy place (Selena Fox's rituals, etc.) could be watched on YouTube and on Facebook. Some movements' YouTube posts were deleted as unsuitable, even if the message was anti-magic, considering different races and genders, and brought forth the disadvantages of capitalism, emphasising the need to pay attention to those without benefits. So only poignant questions remained: "Isn't it sad that the common people and the poor are currently grovelling in the mud? In essence, a disease that was spread by the rich as they flew around the world will now kill millions of the poor."

Against this background it is clear that restrictions differ by countries. Situation in Estonia cannot be compared to conflicts between the Orthodox Church and the police actions in Russia, not to mention fanatic religious groups' convictions about the effect of the godly powers of a temple/church, church wine, icons, etc., and massive cases of infection over there. Research results obtained in folkloristics, psychology, crisis anthropology, and the new media contribute to the analysis of the collected data (e.g. Zappavigna 2012; Brahman & Wagg 2014, etc.).

Data from many countries reflect the relationship between pets and the environment in the corona period. With this topic in view, Mare Kõiva has also collected these data herself, yet so far they have been related to the connections and awareness of protest movements and environmental topics through events and calendar holidays (e.g. St. Georges' Day, the Earth Day and an article co-authored with Andres Kuperjanov, "Ancient lights"). However, focus has been, besides social media groups, on following comment activities and forums; for example, Eesti Metsa Kaitseks (Estonian Forest Protection), etc., which are a quick way to different humour forms, novel linguistic forms, values, pastiches, etc.

One of the research complexes was related to the issues of medical anthropology. Mare Kõiva has participated in the seminars of the international medical anthropology networks as much as possible. The study of epidemics is one of the oldest topics, which also covers the development of medicine and hygiene, in most cases from the Middle Ages to the present day (Vasold 1999). Today's situation is remarkable due to the diversity of recording techniques and the

increasing attention to the way of life and mindset of an ordinary person. Topics intertwine in this all-embracing crisis, which is true especially today, as different groups have become active and they have had similar standpoints – end-of-the-world announcements and mystifications of climatic changes resemble, for example, explanations for diseases and religious viewpoints (COVID-19 is God's punishment, the disease has been caused by one's own behaviour or is due to people's enormous impact on the whole planet, Armageddon is about to arrive). Similar viewpoints were also expressed by those disseminating fake news as well as some others.

No doubt the dynamics of attitudes during the pandemic was and is interesting in health care, politics, and also on the level of scholarship, as we witnessed quick changes in views already during a month. However, people's real attitudes towards medicine (is it reliable; can doctors be trusted) and medicines (whose recommendations to follow) are also eloquent: how similar are older methods to newer ones, what are opinions about mortality and replacement vaccines, and what is regarded as a miracle medicine. This is closely linked to diet beliefs as well as the emergence of extreme viewpoints (anti-vaccine, vegans, MMS, advocates of drugs, etc.). Against this background the revival of old beliefs can be expected; for example, disseminating cholera by estate owners or suspicions that substances added to potable water affect people's health and mentality (adding chlorine prevents people from getting ill; the opposite – the authorities poison the drinking water). The same attitudes were topical during the past cholera outbreaks; also, there are beliefs from the past that additives make you impotent or calm down (cf. beliefs about the diet in the Soviet Army – inhibits sexuality and makes you obedient). In several countries people voiced the opinion that the authorities were willing to get rid of the elderly; also, it was often opined that the pandemic was caused by pharmaceutical companies interested in increasing their profits – what they failed to do with SARS and EBOLA, they managed now. An article co-authored with Elena Boganeva about controversial opinions and especially Doomsday messages has been planned (as the virus outbreak started somewhat later in Belorussia, a change of topic is also possible).

Mare Kõiva's most recent research has been related to the issues of charity medicine and assisted suicides (Kõiva & Kuperjanov 2019); this sphere included much remarkable, and it is definitely one of the topics to be continued. Amidst several panic waves, TV broadcasted a series under the heading *Iseolemine* (Self-being), which introduced stories about managing serious diseases and

about the wish to be part of society. Donations to food banks were discussed, and sponsoring of rare diseases continued, yet it became increasingly clear that it was not only those with diseases that needed help, but the risk group was wide and folklorists were supposed to reach all of them in their analyses. Also, folkloristics, among other sciences or even before them, has to direct attention to the models and mechanisms of making scapegoats, for which today's situation is rich in material.

One of the most significant research topics was the reuse of folklore or return of seminal texts and core topics into circulation during the pandemic. Some genres, for example proverbs, were used profusely in the crisis communication both at official and grassroots levels (see Voolaid 2020a). Reet Hiiemäe recorded lore and behavioural motifs occurring in the case of historic epidemics (e.g. the plague). The material served as a basis for overviews of the topic (Hiiemäe 2020a; 2020b). Senior research fellow Mare Kalda's special attention was attracted by a meme flow with international images, which was adapted to Estonian conditions and had texts in Estonian. Such units have as visual characters and favourite objects – as it often happens in memes – characters and situations from popular culture, which are linked to quarantine, obtaining toilet paper, personality features, emotions, and other similar aspects. From popular culture we can see house-elf Dobby, Beavis and Butthead, Drake, and two monkey dolls. As an example of the creation of place connections, we can mention the reaction to an international trend, according to which crowded places become places of untouched nature, where miraculous creatures reappear (e.g. a pair of dolphins at Taevaskoda in south-eastern Estonia). Several local folklore expressions of the international corona crisis were recorded and interpreted, which were initiated by occasional topical events during the period; for example, Piret Voolaid (2020b) introduced a case related to bears who wandered in the streets of Tallinn in May 2020, which pointed to relationships between people and animals and town and nature.

Research fellow Nikolay Anisimov carried out a joint research with his Udmurt colleague Galina Glukhova, "COVID-19 and Udmurt traditional culture", with an aim to analyse media posts in Udmurtia, oral messages and observations of how people celebrated different holidays and performed rituals in isolation and quarantine. The study discusses the peculiarities of organising traditional ceremonies, people's adaptation and reactions to the crisis situation. Special attention is paid to song lyrics dedicated to the topics of coronavirus and isolation as the Udmurts' reaction to the global virus outbreak.



One of the main topics at the web meetings of the Department of Folkloristics of the ELM in the emergency situation was the collection of corona lore and its initial analysis. Above: Teams, March 2020; below: Teams, April 2020.

Humour related to coronavirus, including internet memes, became a separate field of studies. On the first days of the emergency situation, Piret Voolaid and Anastasiya Fiadotava joined the international project of corona folklore and -humour research, “Humour during the global corona crisis”. The leading partners of the cooperation project are Giselinde Kuipers (Leuven Catholic University) and Mark Boukes (Amsterdam University); the project involves

researchers from more than 30 countries. By means of a questionnaire translated into different languages (<https://edu.nl/kp8xe>) people were asked to send jokes and memes spreading among internet users. The global collection will be made available to all the project parties for comparative studies already in the autumn of 2020.

In addition to this, the meme collection of the scientific archive EFITA of the Department of Folkloristics increased by more than 2,000 meme units. Apart from that, materials related to concrete contexts created as a result of certain actions were added; for example, Variku Basic School in Tartu organised a meme competition for schoolchildren in April 2020, under the heading “Minu distantõpe” (My distance studies), which gathered 540 memes in all. In May the collected material was handed over to our humour researchers by Eele Avalo, the activity leader of Variku School, and it will be preserved at the Estonian Literary Museum.

This paper is just a brief overview of what kind of lore was collected during the corona crisis and from which research directions the collection proceeds. A more thorough analysis with conclusions relevant for society is forthcoming. A number of novel traditions were initiated during the emergency situation. The Department of Folkloristics, together with the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, started a series of video lectures on 1 April to introduce the research results to the public. Home videos on very different subjects can be found on our homepage at <http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/loeng/>, and the department’s YouTube channel FoMeedia (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPEHx7jSdjSaMMm9Dtj0sqA>). On 18 August 2020, the first international corona conference organised by the Department of Folkloristics of the ELM under the heading “COVID-19: Management strategies and communication models. I” took place, and the video recordings of the presentations can be found at <http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2020/covid.htm>.

Mare Kõiva, Piret Voolaid

Note

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CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY STUDIES IN LATVIA AND EASTERN EUROPE: DISCUSSING PRACTICES AND METHODS

In the last academic year, two international scientific conferences were held in Riga, focusing on the anthropological dimension in the field of social sciences.

Baltic International Academy (Riga, Latvia) in cooperation with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sofia, Bulgaria), the Ural Federal University (Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation), the University of Oradea (Oradea, Romania) and the International Festival of Visual Anthropology *Mediating Camera* (Moscow, Russian Federation) organised an international scientific conference *Social and Political Anthropology: Modern Scientific Approaches to Research*¹ (Riga, 18–19 October, 2019).

Researchers from Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and Russia took part in the conference and discussed methodological aspects in the field of social and political anthropology drawing attention to certain phenomena, for example, xenophobia in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of the refugee crisis (the paper by Romanian researcher Dr. Edina Lilla Meszaros) or discursive practices in the inter-ethnic communication in Latvia (the paper by Latvian researcher Dr. Vladislav Volkov). One section of the conference was dedicated to the interdisciplinary approach in the study of cultural heritage and cultural practices. The papers for the section were offered by the specialists of various fields, whose research interests concerned the intersections of cultural identity, cultural heritage and cultural practices. Among the speakers, there was Bulgarian anthropologist Dr. Ekaterina Anastasova, who presented her research on the transformations of the sacred space in Bulgaria and in the Baltics at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as Russian historian Dr. Elena Danilko, the initiator and the director of the only festival of anthropology in Russia *Mediating Camera*, offering an overview of the research tradition in the visual

anthropology. Latvian scholars dedicated their presentations on the issues of documentation and interpretation of the “complicated past”. Historian Dr. Inese Runce examined the position of the Catholic Church in Latvia occupied by the Nazis (1941–1944), whereas philosopher Dr. Solveiga Krūmiņa-Koņkova shared her reflections on the opportunities to use criminal cases initiated by the Soviet security services as an example of historical sources and discursive practice. Cultural sociologist Dr. Nadežda Pazuhina examined the photo archives of Latvian Old Believers as a specific practice of documentation and self-representation. The conference programme can be found here: <https://bsa.edu.lv/en/1197/>.

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia and the Institute of Latvian History of the University of Latvia in cooperation with the Social and Political Critique Centre & Philosophy Department, Vytautas Magnus University and the Institute of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Zielona Góra organized scientific conference *Anthropology of political, social and cultural memory: practices in Central and Eastern Europe* (Riga, 13–14 March, 2020)². The event took place within the framework of project *Interaction between the individual, the society and the state in process of the history of Latvia: conflicting values and formation of shared values during historical turning points* under the National Research Programme *Latvian Heritage and Future Challenges for the Country's Sustainability*.

On the first day of the conference, session *Legacy of the Interwar Period in the Republic of Latvia and its Preservation During the Occupation* was focused on the historical evidence in terms of how the change of values took place in the circumstances of the occupation regimes of the mid-20th century – both Soviet and the Nazis, how and what means were used to preserve the interwar legacy. Historian Dr. Daina Bleiere described the Soviet education policy in a comprehensive way with regard to the ideological interpretation of Latvia's interwar period in the school curricula, whereas ethnologist Dr. Anete Karlsonē analysed the transformations of Latvian folk costume in the framework of Soviet ideological context comparing the understanding of “folkness” and its political representation during the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis. Historian Dr. Inese Runce turned to the analysis of a diary of the outstanding figure of the Latvian Catholic Church – Cardinal Julijans Vaivods revealing the tension between the individually subjective retrospection and the imprint of the political discourse.

The presenters of the second day of the conference from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Russia discussed the outcomes of the current studies that were related to the perception and commemorative practices of the shared past, as well as the reciprocity of the political practices and cultural memory and the conceptualisation of the individual and collective memory (and commemoration). Several papers were dedicated to the national, regional and cultural identity building processes from the perspective of social and political anthropology. Czech historian Dr. Zdenko Maršálek examined the transformations of collective identity of Silesian population in the context of political events and ideological impacts, whereas Latvian historian Dr. Mārtiņš Mintauris analysed the ideas on Latvian national identity at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries under the influence of social and economic modernisation processes. Furthermore, Polish historian Aleksei Rogozin characterised the specific identity of the inhabitants living in Warsaw and Riga suburbs, as well as urban cultural practices. He was followed by reflections on the memorial and commemorative practices and their discursive manifestations. Latvian philosopher Dr. Igors Šuvajevs described the practice of forgetting in culture providing an opportunity to stage various versions of the past facilitating or restricting the “remembering” in the public space. The theme of traumatic memories was continued by Russian philosopher Dr. Ludmila Artamoshkina, whereas the presence of latent and non-rationalised past in biographical stories was examined by Latvian cultural sociologist Dr. Nadežda Pazuhina. The discursive manifestations of the identity were investigated by Latvian sociologist Dr. Vladislavs Volkovs. The global pandemic situation added another anthropological dimension to the conference requiring adaptation to the new situation and thinking of new formats of academic communication. These are the challenges that we all still need to take into account in our everyday lives. The conference programme and theses are available here: <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/50099>.

Nadežda Pazuhina

Notes

1 October 18–19, 2019 (Riga, Latvia) Social and Political Anthropology: Modern Scientific Approaches to Research Conference organizers: Baltic International Academy

News and Reviews

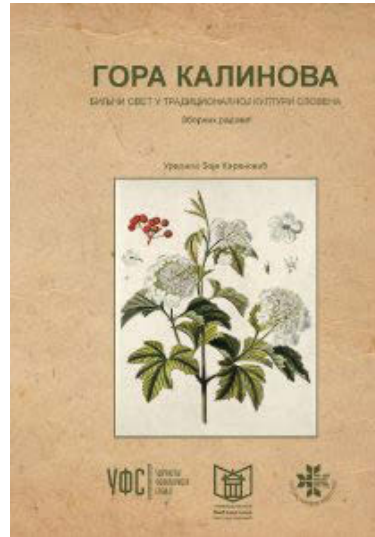
(Riga, Latvia), Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sofia, Bulgaria), Ural Federal University (Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation), University of Oradea (Oradea, Romania), International Festival of Visual Anthropology “Mediating Camera” (Moscow, Russian Federation).

2 Anthropology of political, social and cultural memory: practices in Central and Eastern Europe. Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia; Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia; Social and Political Critique Centre & Philosophy department, Vytautas Magnus University; Institute of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Zielona Góra.

Nadežda Pazuhina, Dr. Art, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia, Assistant Professor at the Baltic International Academy (Riga). Research fields: history and culture of the Orthodox Old Believers, Russian Orthodox Church and Ecumenism Movement in the Baltic States, history of Russian minority in Latvia, theoretical approaches to studying religion and culture.

THE HILL OF WILD PRIVETS: FLORA IN THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF SLAVS

Гора калинова. Билъни свет у традиционалној култури словена. Зборник радова. Уредила Зоја Карановић. Београд: Удружење фолклориста Србије, Универзитетска библиотека “Светозар Марковић”; Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos instituto / Belgrade: Serbian Folklore Association, Svetozar Marković University Library; Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos institutas, 2019, 416 pp.



The publication entitled “The Hill of Wild Privets: Flora in the Traditional Culture of Slavs” is a thematic anthology of works edited by Zoja Karanović. This is the fifth consecutive book authored or co-authored by this writer, which deals with the world of flora in the culture of Serbs and Slavs. The book is published by the Serbian Folklore Association, the University Library in Belgrade, and the Lithuanian Language Institute in Vilnius. This publication features twenty essays and three addenda which deal with human perception of the world of flora in the traditions of the abovementioned peoples from different points of view.

The authors of the published writings are eminent researchers from seven countries – Serbia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, the USA, and Ukraine. Inna Shved and Tatiana Volodina hail from Belarus, P. Petrov is from Bulgaria,

S. Tempchinas comes from Lithuania, while M. Babalyk, A. Ippolitova, K. Sharafadina, and V. Domanskij are from Russia. Authors from Serbia include: A. Vukmanović, Z. Koranović, S. Miloradović, R. Radić, T. Rakić, S. Samardžija, M. Stefanović and G. Štasni, while Ukraine is represented by N. Aksenova, I. Stavickaya, T. Shevchuk and L. Burkovskaya. Sophie Hodorowicz Knab's contribution comes from the USA. The essays were written in Serbian, Russian, and English.

The authors of this anthology deal with various subjects regarding the relationship the traditional man has towards the world of flora and his interaction with the material and symbolic dimensions of that world. Although it is often difficult to draw a sharp distinction between them, it is at least possible, to a certain degree, to classify them according to the theme and research subject.

Several essays represented within the anthology include individual plants and their place in Slavic traditions. Amongst them is the study entitled “Сосна в традиционной картине мира Белорусов” (The pine in the traditional worldview of Belarusians) by I. Shved, which presents the pine tree along with its diverse symbolic meanings. It shows there are many folklore stereotypes connected to it, such as those regarding the pine's appearance, origin, localization, the understanding of the tree as a locus, object of action, etc. As with other trees, the features and characteristics of the pine (both real and attributed) motivate its semiotic status and influence the formation of the symbolic appearance in the traditional image of the world of Belarusians and other Slavs. In the essay “Роза (rose, роза) в украинском обрядовом фольклоре” (Rose in the Ukrainian ritual folklore) by T. Shevchuk, the author examines the ethnocultural characteristics of this phytonym in ritualistic folklore – in incantations for stopping bleedings and healing *erysipela* (рожа), a skin disease, as well as in Christmas, spring, St. John's Day, and wedding songs. The author also shows that in Ukrainian culture certain features of the rose are connected with folkloric Christian images and the birth of the Virgin Mary from its flower. I. Stavitskaya, in the essay “Сон-трава в украинской этноботанике” (The dream-plant in Ukrainian ethnobotany) analyses this plant from the buttercup family, examining the motivational aspect of its name and function in traditional culture based on its appearance, since the buttercup's petals close up at night and the flower bows down, as if to sleep. This is connected with the legend that this plant is the first to bloom because she was expelled from her country by her stepmother. Whilst she is waiting

for her friends, she bows: *печально склоняет голову и дремлет, как сирота* ('sadly bows her head and slumbers like an orphan'). A prophetic power is also attributed to this plant, and the author illustrates this with impressive examples from folklore.

The usage of plants and their functions in rituals is examined in the essay entitled "The forgotten plants and herbs in the marriage customs of Poland" by S. Hodorowicz Knab. The author demonstrates how the world of flora as a whole occupied an important role in Polish culture, especially in rituals of passage, and primarily at weddings, where plants which were believed to symbolize virginity and fidelity were used, as were those with supposed healing, magic and aphrodisiac properties. In different situations and stages of a wedding an important role was played, for instance, by rosemary, the snake plant, wild privet, common mullein, lavender, cornflower, lovage, myrtle, rue.

In the essay "Кроз зелену гору ружмарина: пролазак кроз биљну гору" (Through green rosemary: Passing through the herbal mountains), A. Vukmanović examines different plant attributions which appear within the locus of hills in Serbian lyrical folk songs, and notes their functionality in the process of shaping that space. The author shows that through phytonymic "mediators" in traditional culture it is possible to structure the world, since in the songs hills that are associated with flowers, shrubs, and climber plants are surmountable to the heroes of the songs that are passing through them, whereas the hills which feature trees in their names are impassable areas. Z. Karanović also deals with the ways in which the world of flora functions in folk poetry in her essay "Тамодольен у цардине ја посејах боб и диње" (Down there in garden, I sowed beans and melons), which focuses on the introductory verses of lyrical folk songs featuring different kinds of plants. In her study "Глогов колац и тиква без корена. Биљни свет у Вуковој збирци пословица" (A hawthorn stake and a rootless gourd: Herbal world in Vuk's collection of proverbs) the author S. Samardzija deals with the symbolism of plants in folklore, pointing out how proverbs through floral symbolism reflect various spheres of man's life in the past. In sayings, for example, associations with the undergrowth are activated when the expression is directed towards tasks such as growing and harvesting fruits, according to the space in which plants grow or are cultivated, or used for food and drink.

Another segment of folklore, child's play, is represented in the essay entitled "Веgetативный код в традиционных играх Украинцев" (Vegetative code in

traditional games of Ukrainians) by N. Aksenova. The author draws attention to the presence of a plant code in various children's games that are connected with, for instance, flax, poppy, millet, horseradish, radish. According to the author, these games played an important role during the growing up period and in understanding the idea of plant growth and maturation.

In addition to studying the world of flora through folklore, the authors in this anthology also examined old manuscripts and textual records, beginning with texts from the Byzantine era setting out the medicinal properties of the rose. A study by P. Радић entitled “Ружа као лек (из византијског медицинског трактата)” (*Ружа као лек (from the Byzantine medical tract)*) deals with the rose and shows that this plant has been used in medicine and cosmetics since ancient times. The work also lists a large number of recipes for medicines which contained as an ingredient the rose, its flowers, syrup, and oil that were made by special procedures. Some essays also detail interesting views on the negative meanings certain plants carry, such as hops and tobacco, which were looked at from the angle of Christian tradition and its values. One such essay was submitted by M. Stefanović, under the heading “Веровања о дувану и беседа Вићентија Ракића о штетности дувана” (Beliefs about tobacco and a lecture of Vicentij Rakich about the harm of tobacco), while another example is “Растения хмель и табак в поздних старообрядческих сочинениях” (The plants of hops and tobacco in the late writings of Old Believers) by M. Babalyk. These essays show that hops and tobacco were presented as works of the devil. The article entitled “Плакун в русских рукописных травниках XVII–начала XX в” (*Purple loosestrife in Russian handwritten herbalists from the 17th to the beginning of the 20th century*) by A. Ippolitova can also be added to this group of essays. It deals with the textological analysis of the purple loosestrife plant in manuscript collections. Here the author, by examining the available variants of this phytonym, demonstrates how the records are transformed not just in folklore traditions, but in manuscript tradition as well.

Three authors featured in this anthology examine the functions and meanings of the floral world in the Slavic tradition through analysing works of written literature. They isolate the botanical images in the works of famous authors and offer interpretations of them. The first essay, “Симболика биља у дубровачким цингарескама” (Symbolism of plants from Dubrovnik) by T. Rakić, examines the ways plants are named and their symbolic meanings in carnival songs from Dubrovnik. The author notes that the developed floral

iconography in these forms reflects folk beliefs in the magical and healing abilities of plants. Two essays, “Стратегии использования этноботанических ресурсов в записках охотника И. С. Тургенева” (Strategies for the use of ethnobotanical resources in the notes of hunter I.S. Turgenev) by K. Sharafadin, and “Семантика дендронимов в лирике Сергея Есенина” (The semantics of dendronyms in the lyrics of Sergei Yesenin) by V. Domanski deal with the functions of phytonyms encountered in the works of these famous writers. A detailed overview is given of the ethnobotanical and folkloric elements which they mention, as are their expert interpretations, which enrich the previously mentioned works with new meanings.

An etymological analysis of naming is provided in the essay entitled “Лит. žiedas, лтш. zieds ‘цветок’, *прусск. seydis ‘стена’ и южнослав *zидь ‘стена’: о флористических истоках балто-славянского строительного термина” (Lit. žiedas, Lat. *zieds* ‘flower’, Old-Prussian. *seydis* ‘wall’ and South Slavic *zидь ‘the wall’: About the floral origins of the Balto-Slavic construction terms) by S. Temchin, in which the author investigates the Lithuanian word *žiedas* and the Latvian word *zieds*, meaning ‘flower’, that are etymologically identical to the South Slavic *zидь ‘wall’, with which they coincide in form but not in meaning. The nature of these relations is examined in the article. An analysis on the lexicological level is presented in the essay by G. Styasin, entitled “Лексички спојеви с компонентом јабука” (Lexical compounds with apple component), in which the author explores the different types of lexical connections with the intention of determining the concepts that are realized within syntagms, collocations, and idioms on the basis of the semantic content of this lexeme. Linguistic units of this type were selected for analysis because the apple occupies an important place in Serbian culture and tradition, which is reflected both on the linguistic level and on the level of mental lexicon.

L. Burkovska’s article “Роль растительных мотивов в символической и стилистической системе украинской иконописи XVI–XVII вв” (The role of the plant-based motifs in the symbolic and stylistic system of Ukrainian iconography of the 16th and 17th centuries) demonstrates that the world of flora is equally important in the visual arts, such as icon painting. They carried a message about the significance and meaning of Flora for man through vegetative symbols (branches, leaves, floral ornaments – *grapes and vine, pomegranate, lotus, lily, acanthus, carnation, cornflower*) which appear on examined icons in combination with geometric patterns, six-petal rosettes, etc.

The emergence of ethnobotany as a scientific discipline and its development and scope, i.e. the potential for ethnopharmacology to develop out of ethnobotany with the help of new ideas and technology is discussed by T. Volodina in the essay “Из истории этноботаники в Беларуси” (From the history of ethnobotany in Belarus). Furthermore, it is not only important to speak and sing about plants, but also to care for them and, like all other living creatures, they reciprocate the love, as pointed out in the essay “People-Plants Entanglements in Bulgarian Home Gardens” by P. Petrov, who discusses various plants which are being grown in private gardens in Bulgaria. They are old species and are considered signs of cultural heritage and local identity, carrying emotional value for the families that grow and care for them over many years.

There are three supplements in the book. The first one, entitled “Грађа за српски мено слов биља (издела Захарије Орфелина)” (Materials for Serbian names of plants by Zaharie Orfelin) by M. Stefanović, is a dictionary of phytonyms in which Orfelin gives a systematic list of plants in his work “Велики српски травник и Искусни подрумар (1783)” (Great Serbian herbal book (1783)). The introductory note to his work also mentions the sources, structure, and content of this work, which is the oldest list of phytonyms in Serbia. In the supplement “Ботаника из Вукових ‘Српских народних пословица’” (Botanics from Vuk’s Serbian folk proverbs), S. Samardžija gives a tabular view of plants which appear in proverbs by Vuk Karadžić – another valuable contribution to the existing material regarding floral codes in the traditional culture of Serbs. “Куће опустеле, кровове падли, а на понекоји још расте чуваркућа (биљке у пословицама из пиротскога говора)” (Houses relaxed, roofs fell, and household keepers still grow (plants in Pirot dialect)), the supplement by S. Miloradović, gives a selection of more than 150 proverbs from the collection of Dragoljub Zlatković, from the region of Pirot (1988), which is also a testament to the existence of that dialect.

Viewed as a whole, the essays and supplements in this anthology deal with ancient experiences, knowledge and beliefs concerning plants, which have been transmuted into magic, rituals, and words. In segments of this book the authors discuss the world of flora and the functions of plants in oral tradition, various manuscripts containing descriptions of traditional methods of healing by the use of plants, as well as old recipes. The presence of plants in artistic literature is also discussed. The anthology features a series of supplements which, regardless of the fact that their authors have differing interests and come from

different professional fields – folklorists, linguists, historians, literary historians and theorists, art historians – they are all united by a common core, the world of flora, with its meanings and functions in the traditional culture of Slavs. I also note that all the works were written with adherence to the scientific approach to research and are methodologically uniform regardless of the wide thematic span.

This anthology is therefore, along with the previous four, a treasure trove of knowledge and a refuge from oblivion for this important segment of Slavic traditional culture which is disappearing, but also taking on different forms in which the ancient magic knowledge and medicinal values of plants are morphing into so-called alternative medicine and pharmacology.

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TRANSBORDER COMMEMORATION ROUTES AND RITUALS



**L. Gergova, V. Voskresenski,
Y. Gergova (eds.). Sofia:
Paradigma, 2019, 262 pp.**

The volume ‘Transborder Commemoration Routes and Rituals’ edited by Lina Gergova, Valentin Voskresenski, and Yana Gergova (Sofia: Paradigma, 2019) is a result of the work of a team based at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on the project ‘Constructing National Cultural Heritage Abroad. Transborder Pilgrimage and Commemorative Practices’ funded by the Bulgarian National Science Fund. The

issues that the book discusses are among the most important for present-day ethnology, cultural anthropology and folklore studies – constructing national identity abroad in the context of transborder commemorative and pilgrimage traditions, rituals, and practices. Both the subject and the area of the study are quite wide – from Europe to the Middle and Far East. The book is interdisciplinary – methods and approaches from the fields of ethnic and folklore studies as well as of sociology and social anthropology have been used. The volume consists of 262 pages and is rich in maps, diagrams and pictures.

The edition starts with an editorial (by L. Gergova), which outlines the horizon of studies on borders and identity, national and transnational, history and current trends of presenting the national beyond its borders, as well as the variety of commemorative practices – pilgrimages, rituals, monuments, and the whole palette of national symbols and mechanisms and forms of national heritage representations abroad. The book contains 15 articles that are based

on presentations at the international conference ‘Transborder Commemoration Routes and Rituals’ held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 1–2 November 2018.

Traditionally, pilgrimage practices are connected with religious and evolved terms labeling them in the postmodern secular societies, and their transformations in the context of national and transnational from the perspective of diverse religious denominations. There are studies on Catholicism (V. Voskresenski. *Collective Transborder Commemorations and Pilgrimage: The Case of Bulgarian Catholics*) and Orthodoxy in the context of transnational character of global denominations, on the one hand, and reconsidering and valorizing the national, on the other (T. Matanova. *Journeys to Mount Athos: Motives and Bulgarian Places of Worship*; L. Galabova. *Sociocultural Roles of Transborder East Orthodox Christian Pilgrimage in Rethinking Sacral Elements of Bulgarian National Identity*). The contribution of L. and Y. Gergovi, from the perspective of national, transnational and European, reflects on a cult (that of St. Cyril and St. Methodius) that is common for the Catholic and Orthodox Christians, which has been designed to be a geopolitical one, and is undoubtedly rather secular (L. Gergova, Gergova, Y. *Official and Informal Commemoration Routes to St. Cyril and St. Methodius Heritage Sites in Europe*). The following studies by B. Alexiev, M. Borisova, and E. Hein discuss the issues of national cultural (and natural) heritage abroad in terms of its valorization and popularization (B. Alexiev. *Constructing Your Own Through the Alien: The Bulgarian Cultural Heritage in Istanbul*; M. Borisova. *Constructing Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Abroad: Mikulčice (Czech Republic) as a Pilgrimage Center*; E. Hein. *Preliminary Thoughts on the Cult of Mount Taishan Outside the People’s Republic of China: Could It Be a Kind of Projection of Chineseness Throughout the World?*).

Beside classic commemorative forms, the volume displays also various attractive presentations (that are not only an illustration but also a mechanism of migrant consolidation) of national cultural heritage – concerts (songs and dances) (L. Psycheva. *Concert Practices of the Presentation of the Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Abroad (The Case of Iliya Lukov)*). G. Grigorov’s article considers national symbols and their ritual valuation (Gr. Har. Grigorov. *Constructing National Territory through Ritual*). N. Dimitrova, R. Witt, and E. Alexandrova study the role of historical figures and events and of symbols and myths that they are associated with the process of religious and national bases formation (N. Dimitrova. *Crossing Borders: Maria Skobtsova and Russian Émigrés in Paris on the Routes to Freedom*; R. Witt. *Singleminded Multitasking*;

Heinrich der Löwe Visits the Lands of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1172; E. Alexandrova. Commemorative Celebrations and Homage in Connection with the Ilinden Uprising of 1903).

The next texts examine the importance of national heritage for the tourism branch and the potential of the Balkan military history for dynamizing tourist practices and messages (O. Akbulut, Y. Ekin. *Tourism Potential of Battlefields of Balkan Wars (1912–1913): A Comparison of Turkey and Bulgaria*; N. Vukov. *Transborder Commemorations and the Issue of Time Distance: The Bulgarian-Turkish Border in the Perspective of Historical Temporality*). The article that discusses historical battlefields and military monuments in terms of space sacralization and touristic practices is also intriguing (O. Akbulut, Y. Ekin. *Battles between Turkish and Opponent Parties (1910–1922) Considered According to the Site Sacralisation Theory*).

The idea of the studies in the volume as well as its realization offers an interesting and vivid discussion on issues that are important in dynamic present: the role of the national dimensions of the transnational, the need for getting to know and (no less) adapting, integrating, and accepting “own/alien” in a global world that seems to be looking for the national. Publishing the articles in English makes the volume accessible to the international, scientific community.

The volume edited by L. Gergova, V. Voskresenski, and Y. Gergova, ‘Transborder Commemoration Routes and Rituals’ is among the achievements of contemporary Bulgarian (and generally Balkan) ethnology and cultural anthropology, and is interesting both for scholars and a wide audience.

Ekaterina Anastasova

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