

# “WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY CALENDAR HOLIDAYS?” — TOWARDS THE NOMENCLATURE, POPULARITY, AND RESEARCH HISTORY OF ANNUAL FESTIVITIES IN LITHUANIAN ETHNOLOGY

*Dalia Senvaitytė*

*PhD, Associate Professor at the Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania*

*e-mail: [dalia.senvaityte@vdu.lt](mailto:dalia.senvaityte@vdu.lt)*

**Abstract:** The historiographical paper focuses on the history of popular and academic research of calendar year holiday celebrations in Lithuania as well as on the classification and terminology used for defining them. Changes in relevant popular and academic interest, certain circumstances of the popularity of examining holidays and their customs are discussed, and scientific discourse is contrasted with public discourse. The cultural, social, and ideological circumstances of the development and dissemination of terminology related to the topic are explored. In addition, the influence of certain personalities and institutions that formed the terminology of calendar year celebrations will be reviewed. The paper is based on the analysis of academic and popular science literature, internet resources, as well as the public discourse of annual holidays.

**Keywords:** calendar customs, calendar holidays, history of ethnographic terminology, Lithuanian ethnology, Lithuanian holidays, ritual year

## Introduction

The title of the article starts with the question, “What do you mean by *calendar holidays*?” which ethnologists speaking about traditional annual celebrations in public often receive from people.

Ethnologists, while studying holidays (as well as other cultural phenomena), try to categorise them. In the classifications of Lithuanian ethnological sources prepared for placement in the digital space, calendar holidays are designated as one of the specific areas of culture (Aruodai; Paukštytė-Šaknienė et al. 2005; The Ethnological Manuscript Fund and Electronic Data Archive at Vytautas Magnus University).

Various holidays that occur at or around the same time each year are commonly referred to as *calendar holidays* by contemporary ethnologists (Blockytė 2015; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2016; Savoniakaitė 2011; Šaknys 2009; Šaknys 2014, etc.). Besides the calendar holidays, there are work (e.g., beginning and ending of various jobs), family (e.g., birthdays, name days, etc.), and national holidays (e.g., holidays related to important dates for the state). Additionally, in scientific works, the *calendar holidays* are often named *annual holidays* or *traditional customs*. Appropriate naming of the subject and explaining the concept that describes it is an important part of every discourse. Terms are constantly changing and depend on a range of factors, and they relate to the history of ethnographic and ethnological research of phenomena.

The history of ethnographic research of calendar celebrations in Lithuania in general has been analysed by a few scholars. Bibliographical research of celebrations was compiled by Vacys Milius (2001; 2005). Studies of calendar celebrations written during the Soviet period were analysed by Žilvytis Bernardas Šaknys (2014).

The main aim of this article is to present a summary of the history of popular and academic interest in Lithuanian traditional festivities and their investigations. The following questions are also discussed: calendar holiday terms, the popularity of different calendar holidays in the studies, and the reasons for the change in popularity. The analysis is based on a study of publications about calendar celebrations. Additionally, the analysis of the discourse about celebrations compared with their popularity in the press and the Internet (by using internet search engines and online databases) is provided.

It is important to note here that the translation of the Lithuanian ethnological term *kalendorinės šventės* to other languages (including English) is challenging. If the first word of this compound is possible to translate with the international term *calendar*, the translation of the second one poses complications. Lithuanian word *šventė* is possible to translate to English as ‘holiday’ (because etymologically it is related to the word meaning ‘holy’ in Lithuanian), but it is also related to and possible to be translated as ‘celebration,’ ‘festivity,’ and (partly) as ‘feast.’

## The earliest historiography of Lithuanian calendar holidays

Lithuanian calendar holidays have been mentioned in historical sources since the fifteenth century, when an interest in Lithuanian pre-Christian traditions and local customs appeared. The written historical sources (*Historia Polonica* (the fifteenth century) by Jan Długosz (Vėlius 1996: 542–585), *Der Vnglaubigen Sudauen Ihrer Bockheiligung Mit Sambt Andren Ceremonien, So Sie Tzu Brauchen Gepflegeth* (~1520–1530) by anonymous author (Vėlius 2001: 127–153), *De Sacrificiis et Idolatria Veterum Borussorum, Livonum, Aliarumque Vicinarum Gentium* (1551) (Vėlius 2001: 202–212) and others) inform us that the most important Lithuanian feasts happened in spring (before main agricultural work had to start) and in autumn (after the main agricultural activities were completed and the crop was harvested).

More consistent descriptions and interpretations of the traditional Lithuanian holidays appeared in the late seventeenth century. It was the time when the Prussian historian and ethnographer Matthäus Prätorius wrote in German the most important work *Deliciae Prussicae, oder Preussische Schau-bühne*. In the fifth part of it, he described the particularities of Lithuanian holidays (of the part of Lithuania, which at that time was part of Prussia) connected with the main agricultural activities. The main festivities, according to this author, were related to the start and end of seasonal farm work (Pretorijus 2006: 451–537).

Despite the mentions of Lithuanian holidays in historical sources, it is important to say that all historical sources about Lithuania until the nineteenth century were written in different languages (Latin, German, and others), but not in Lithuanian. This partially led to the fact that specific Lithuanian names

for the holidays were not introduced (with the exception of *Pergubrinės* (a holiday associated with the name of the deity *Pergrubrius*) (Vėlius 2001: 145, 208, 493, etc.) and *Ilgės* (a day for the commemoration of spirits of the ancestors) (Vėlius 2001: 596)). *Pergubrinės* was traditionally celebrated in spring, before the main seasonal farm work began (at the same time as Catholic St. George's Day). *Ilgės* people celebrated in autumn, after completion of all major seasonal farm work (the next day after the Catholic All Saints' Day).

The specific romantic interest of authors towards the Lithuanian traditional calendar holidays appeared in the nineteenth century due to the influence of romanticism in general. The Lithuanian-Polish historian Teodor Narbut, in the first volume of his book *History of Lithuania* (published in 1832 and written in Polish), connected the described holidays with the schedule of specific farm work. He also tried to connect the described old Lithuanian holidays with pre-Christian Lithuanian gods (Narbutas 1992). T. Narbut spoke about specific Lithuanian holidays such as *Sutiktuves* (*Sutinkus*) (celebrated in spring in honour of the deity *Pergrubrius*). He assumed that it was the same celebration as the *Pergubrinės* mentioned previously (ibid.: 258). He also wrote about the traditions of Pentecost (he described this day as a celebration held by shepherds) (ibid.: 260). He also introduced the holiday called *Rasa* (celebrated on the eve of Catholic St. John's Day) (ibid.: 261). Also, T. Narbut spoke about the important rye harvest celebration and the celebration kept after the rye harvesting is finished as well as other festivities to which he tried to align pre-Christian mythological content (ibid.: 253–269).

So, the earliest attempts to present and describe Lithuanian holidays were based on their relation to the sequence of farm work. In all cases, the authors summarize the celebrations under the general category of *Lithuanian holidays*.

The first author who wrote about Lithuanian holidays in the Lithuanian language in the nineteenth century was the Lithuanian historian Simonas Daukantas (1793–1864) (Daukantas 1976). He wrote about the holidays: *Vainikai* (local celebrations of the Feast of Corpus Christi), *Apjavai* (celebration held in connection with rye harvesting), *Ilgės* (All Souls' Day), *Kalėdos* (Christmas). Along with calendar holidays, he described the other types of customs, such as *Įkures* ('housewarming party') and *Budynė* ('keeping vigil over a sick person'). In describing all Lithuanian holidays in general, he used two specific terms – *viešės* ('visitation') and *šventės* ('holidays') – as synonyms.

Later, the Lithuanian linguist Kazimieras Būga (1879–1924), one of the founders of the standard Lithuanian language, used two words as synonyms – *šventės* ('holidays') and *iškilmės* ('celebrations,' 'holidays,' 'festivities') in his writings to name the respective phenomena (Būga 1958). In later times, the word *šventė* came into force in the Lithuanian common language to describe a solemn day which marked a specific event.

The first printed calendars in Lithuanian (edited by Laurynas Ivinskis, later by others), which appeared in Lithuania in the nineteenth century, as well as the first newspapers in Lithuanian, used the term *šventės* as a general name to describe all calendric celebrations and popularised it.

In the first printed calendars in the nineteenth century, holidays connected with the Christian liturgical year were presented. The festive grid of that time in Lithuania was based on the Catholic tradition. In addition, the calendars used the specific Lithuanian names for liturgical Christian holidays – *Kalėdos* (Christmas), *Velykos* (Easter), *Sekminės* (Pentecost) and others. The annual holiday that had vital importance was Easter. The movable holidays connected to Easter also had great significance and were distinguished from the daily round in the calendars: *Užgavėnės* (Shrovetide), which marked the day before the beginning of Lent, *Šeštinės* (i.e., Ascension Day, often called *kryžiaus dienomis* ('the Days of the Cross')), *Sekminės* (Pentecost) and *Devintinės* (commonly known as the Feast of Corpus Christi) (Senvaitytė 2013a; 2013b). Newspapers of the time written in Lithuanian also mentioned various holidays, though they paid most attention to the New Year Day celebration and Christmas as the most important festivities of the year (ibid.).

## The beginning of ethnographic and ethnological research of Lithuanian traditional holidays and their nomenclature

Ethnological academic interest in Lithuanian traditional holidays arose quite late. Consistent research on Lithuanian holidays appeared only in the interwar period (1918–1940) with the development of interest in ethnographic research and ethnological science in general. In articles written by researchers of that time (Balys Buračas (1933; 1936; 1937), Jonas Balys (1930; 1939), Stepas Zobarskas (1931), Jurgis Dovydaitis (1935), and others), calendar holidays were

simply named, and their typical customs described (for example, Christmas customs, Easter customs, St. John's Day customs, etc.), but a deep analysis of the holidays was not carried out.

The leading scientific institution that published ethnographic materials and researched ethnic culture in the interwar period was Vytautas Magnus University, which also had a Department of Ethnography (Anglickienė 2008: 13). In the articles published by the university scholars, a considerable amount of attention was paid to the local calendar customs. The most notable of these studies is Jonas Balys's compilation of holiday descriptions of Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year, and the Three Kings (Balys 1930).

During the interwar period, the *Aušra* (Dawn) museum was established in Šiauliai. This organisation as well as the Local History Society were particularly important institutions for the study of annual holidays (Anglickienė 2008: 29). In the journal *Gimtasai kraštas* (Homeland), in addition to other areas related to the traditional Lithuanian culture, Lithuanian annual celebrations were analysed. Balys Buračas (1934), Vladas Trinkas (1935), Jurgis Dovydas (1935a; 1935b) and other authors published in this journal their articles describing various traditional annual customs.

The studies of all holidays conducted during the interwar period were summarised later by the ethnologist Vacys Milius (2001). He considered those descriptions and studies of holidays to be researches on *calendar holidays* and classified them according to which celebration they were dedicated to. Calendar holidays in this bibliography were classified as follows:

- 1) Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas
- 2) New Year
- 3) The Three Kings
- 4) Shrovetide, Lent
- 5) Palm Sunday, Easter, Week after Easter
- 6) St. George's Day
- 7) Mother's Day
- 8) Pentecost
- 9) St. John's Day
- 10) All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day

- 11) Parish Celebrations
- 12) Lutheran worship at home
- 13) Others (i.e., other celebrations).

According to this bibliography, the most researchers focused on Christmas (25 publications), Easter (17), St. John's Day (10) and Pentecost (6) during the interwar period (Milius 2001).

Discussions in periodicals about holidays during the interwar period became more widespread and especially multifaceted. The holidays described in the press at the time mirrored the holidays celebrated by people. If one were to compare scientific research and publications in the periodicals of that time, one could conclude that the most mentioned festivities were the three main holidays: Easter, Christmas, and New Year (Senvaitytė 2013a; 2013b).

## **Ethnographic research of Lithuanian traditional holidays and their nomenclature during the Soviet period**

Ethnographic research and ethnological studies were interrupted by the Second World War and later by the Soviet occupation and totalitarian regime. There were no publications dedicated to the Lithuanian traditional festivities in 1945–1956.<sup>1</sup> In addition, during the Soviet years, the public celebration of traditional Catholic holidays in Lithuania was also severely restricted, and it was not possible to speak publicly about these holidays. Only the New Year's Day celebration was neutral and officially treated as corresponding to the Soviet ideology.

Scientific interest in traditional festivities gradually started to recover in the 1960s, during the Soviet "thaw," when the Soviet ideology tried to show the world that ethnographic science was continuing to develop in the republics of the USSR. Though, when writing about the holidays, it was still not possible to point out their links to the Catholic tradition, so interest was directed towards folk customs related to the celebrations only. Ethnologists had to construct new ideological content for the festivals that was relevant to the Soviet ideology and unrelated to religion. Due to the strong atheistic propaganda of the period, all traditional Lithuanian celebrations were analysed from a secular perspective without mentioning their relation to the Christian liturgical year (even though some used names connected those holidays with Christian tradition).

During the Soviet era, one of the most important scientific institutions studying folk culture in Lithuania was the Institute of Ethnography, set up in Vilnius in 1941.<sup>2</sup> The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR), the Historical-Ethnographic Museum of the LSSR, the LSSR Society of Regional Studies, founded in 1961, and other institutions also collected local history materials during this period. The folklore collecting expeditions organised at that time focused on recording agrarian calendar customs. Regional materials were published in the book series *Kraštotyra* (Local history) (25 titles) (Anglickienė 2008).

A significant role in studying and popularising the calendar customs in general was played by Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republican House of Folk Creativity, which not only popularised new Soviet festivals but also recreated (and sometimes renamed) traditional folk celebrations according to Soviet ideology. For example, Easter was transformed into the Spring Festival, *Užgavėnės* (Shrovetide) into the Festival of the Banishment of Winter, Pentecost into the Festival of Shepherds. The cultural centres followed the scripts supplied and recommended by this institution's staff, and therefore The House of Folk Creativity had a significant impact on new traditions of celebrating Lithuanian annual holidays (Senvaitytė 2014).

From the 1960s on, the number of studies gradually increased. The need to classify collected ethnographic materials in one or another way has appeared. Terms *calendar ceremonies*, *calendar celebrations* were introduced to the academic discourse. They appear in the article by Lithuanian philologist Ambraziejus Jonynas entitled *Songs of Calendar Rites* (Jonynas 1963) and in the chapter of the ethnographic book *Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai* (Features of Lithuanian Ethnography) entitled *Folk Calendar. Holidays* (written by the ethnologist Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, 1964). Soon afterwards, terms *calendar rites and customs* appeared in the works of folklorists (e.g., Skrodenis 1967). The compounds *customs and traditions*, *rites and customs* also possible to find at the same time. First, it was related to the need to define the cultural phenomenon and to put it into the classification as well.

However, as Žilvytis Šaknys noted, after the 1960s, there were only a few scientific studies on traditional calendar customs (except encyclopaedias) until the end of 1985 (with exceptions in 1965–1971) (Šaknys 2009: 66–67). After the 1980s, bans on analysing traditional calendar customs, including traditional holidays, weakened, and more relevant studies appeared. On the other hand,



the emphasis on connections with agriculture in the holidays remained. Additionally, the conditional tolerance of the period for interest in paganism (as an alternative to Christianity) gave researchers and enthusiasts of ethnography the opportunity to be interested in Lithuania's oldest past as well as to study it, take part in local history expeditions, study folklore, folk customs, and be engaged in respective activities.

The People's Household Museum in Rumšiškės, which opened in 1974, played a significant role in recording and preserving the traditions during that period too. The museum made a great contribution to the organisation, modification, and popularisation of various modified annual holidays. Of course, during the Soviet era, the events organised at the museum had to reflect (and did reflect) the official Soviet ideology, so traditional holidays were presented as agrarian folk customs with no religious significance. The festivals, such as the feast of the *Margučiai* (decorated Easter eggs), the First Ploughing of the Furrow, the Feast of the Shepherds, and others, were organised. The removal of the religious dimension from the organised traditional holidays eventually had a profound effect on the understanding of real Lithuanian holiday traditions, which remained (and partly in specific ways were reinforced) even after Lithuania regained its independence (Anglickienė 2008).

The term *calendar customs* was used more intensively in the Lithuanian academic space in the late 1980s when more academic publications on holiday studies appeared. Ethnologist Pranė Dundulienė used the term *calendar and agrarian customs* (Dundulienė 1979) in her book with the same title. During the same period, the term *calendar holidays* appeared in the book of Jonas Balys (1978) and in Jonas Stoskeliūnas's article (Stoskeliūnas 1979).<sup>3</sup> P. Dundulienė's textbook *Lietuvių etnografija* (Lithuanian Ethnography, 1982) had a significant impact on introducing calendar holidays into research and popularisation of their folk elements. It also affected the prevalence of the term *calendar holidays*. While presenting a general look at traditional Lithuanian ethnic culture, P. Dundulienė spoke about the customs of Lithuanian calendar holidays and rites and divided those holidays into separate groups according to their seasonality or format (Dundulienė 1982):

- 1) the rites of the shortest days and the return of the sun
- 2) winter banishment
- 3) spring holidays

- 4) the holidays of the longest day
- 5) rites of remembrance of the dead
- 6) customs and rites of the Soviet period
- 7) work customs and rites
- 8) harvest rites
- 9) threshing customs and rites

Summarising separate ethnographic studies of the Soviet period dedicated to the specific traditional Lithuanian holidays makes it possible to say that scientific interest was focused only on Shrovetide (7 publications), though it is important to notice that it was called *žiemos išvaymo* (‘winter banishment’), and to St. John’s Day (3 publications).

## Research and classification of Lithuanian annual holidays after the 1990s

After the 1990s, when Lithuania regained its independence, changes took place in all areas of life. Studies of ethnology were no exception (including research on traditional annual celebrations). The number of publications dedicated to Lithuanian calendar holidays increased significantly. Books on Lithuanian calendar holidays in general were published. The first of them was a book edited by the ethnologist Birutė Imbrasienė (1990) (with the majority of articles written by A. Vyšniauskaitė). Further followed the publications by Juozas Kudirka (1991b), P. Dundulienė (1991; this work was repeatedly published later, in 2009 and in 2020), A. Vyšniauskaitė (Vyšniauskaitė 1993), Sonata Kisilienė (1997). The book on Lithuanian calendar holidays published by J. Balys in Unites States in 1978 was published and presented in Lithuania (Balys 1993; 2013).

In the book edited by B. Imbrasienė (1990), traditional calendar holidays were divided into two categories: 1) permanent and mobile holidays; 2) holidays associated with the year’s solstices and equinoxes. All calendar holidays in the book were grouped by seasons:

- 1) Christmas and Christmas period customs
- 2) winter banishment (Shrovetide)

- 3) Spring holidays (Easter, St. George's Day, Šeštinės (Ascension), Pentecost)
- 4) Summer holidays (St. John's Day)
- 5) Autumn (All Souls' Day)

P. Dundulienė (1991) grouped calendar holidays into four main categories (similarly as she did in her earlier book published in 1982):

- 1) the rites of the shortest days and the return of the sun
- 2) winter banishment holidays
- 3) the longest day holidays
- 4) rites of remembrance of the dead

Books and articles describing particular traditional calendar festivals were published intensively during this period too (e.g., Juozas Kudirka's *Velykų šventės* (Easter Holidays) (Kudirka 1990), *Joninės* (St. John's Day) (Kudirka 1991a), *Užgavėnės* (Shrovetide) (Kudirka 1992) and others).

Few authors – J. Balys, B. Imbrasienė, S. Kisilienė – used the terms *calendar festivals*, *holidays*, and *Lithuanian holidays*. Others used the terms *Lithuanian customs* while describing the object.

Around the 1990s, the term *wheel of the year*, designating a ritual annual cycle, began to spread. It was popularised in Lithuania by the amateur ethnologist Aleksandras Žarskus.<sup>4</sup> His active public lectures and the book *Rėdos ratas: lietuvių kalendorinės šventės* (Rėda's Wheel: Lithuanian Calendar Holidays) (Žarskus 1990) (later it had the second edition *Rėdos knyga: Baltų kalendorinės šventės* (Rėda's Book: Baltic Calendar Holidays), Žarskus 2009) based on his lectures both contributed to this. Moreover, he invented and popularised the new original terms *metų virsmas* ('turn of the year') and *rėdos ratas* ('the wheel of the order'), which he used as alternatives of the wheel of the year.<sup>5</sup>

The Lithuanian press also did not depend on the propaganda of the official Communist Party ideology anymore, and a wide variety of publications were launched. The presentation of holidays has partly returned to a comparable situation prior the Soviet period.

## Research and classification of Lithuanian holidays after the 2000s

After the Millennium, interest in traditional Lithuanian calendar holidays arose even more significantly in comparison with previous times. According to the bibliographic list of books and serials compiled by the Lithuanian Integral Information System of Libraries (LIBIS), researchers paid the most attention to the following holidays:

- 1) Christmas (147 items)
- 2) Easter (47 items)
- 3) Shrovetide (27 items)
- 4) St. John's Day / Midsummer (25 items)
- 5) New Year (19 items)

This reflects the real popularity of the holidays. On the other hand, proper scientific interest in certain holidays contributes to the popularisation of these holidays in society.

Respectively, according to the international scientific database *Lituanistica* (2022) majority of the academic texts about calendar celebrations were dedicated to:

- 1) Christmas (138)
- 2) holidays (in general) (140)
- 3) Pentecost (125)
- 4) Easter (120)
- 5) St John's Day (118)
- 6) Midsummer (107)
- 7) Lent (101)

Keywords related to publications on Lithuanian calendar holidays in general in the international scientific database *Lituanistica* (publications of 2000–2020) may be arranged as follows:

- 1) annual celebrations – 183 publications

- 2) calendar holidays – 118 publications
- 3) year cycle – 95 publications
- 4) calendar customs – 44 publications
- 5) wheel of the year – 38 publications
- 6) ritual year – 4 publications

Evidently, the majority of the research was devoted to the most popular Lithuanian annual holidays in society. The most popular Lithuanian annual holidays among people of all ages at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Lithuania are Christmas Eve, Christmas and Easter, then follows St. John's Day (Senvaitytė 2014). Proportionately less attention scientists pay to Christmas than to its actual popularity, and more attention is given to Midsummer (St. John's Day), All Souls' Day, and especially Pentecost.

As the author noted above, academic research on the holidays of the year can also have a significant impact on the popularisation of the holidays in the public sphere.

## **Lithuanian holidays in the public discourse after the 2000s**

In this period, the whole public discourse has changed dramatically, including the annual Lithuanian holidays. It has become remarkably diverse and depended on sources of information, objectives, and other factors. With the increasing use of the Internet, a wide variety of online media appeared with a specific language and presentation of news, influencing public opinion in a distinctive and significant way.

Since the various media sources and other information available in the public sphere during this period are rich, in this work, analysing the annual holidays of the period, the author relied on data from the Current Lithuanian Language Database of the Center for Computational Linguistics of the Vytautas Magnus University ([tekstynas.vdu.lt](http://tekstynas.vdu.lt)). It was used to find out the frequency of annual holidays mentioned in Lithuanian texts, as well as the most popular contextual noun phrases for the respective holidays in journalistic texts. According to the database, the most commemorated holidays are:

- 1) Easter – 617 positions
- 2) Christmas – 387 positions
- 3) Shrovetide – 122 positions
- 4) Pentecost – 133 positions
- 5) All Souls’ Day – 161 positions
- 6) St. John’s Day – 121 positions
- 7) Žolinė (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) – 105 positions

According to the google.lt system (in Lithuanian, accessed on 13 November 2021), the most popular keywords related to calendar holidays are:

- 1) *Metų ratas* (‘wheel of the year’) – approx. 2,500,000 positions; *lietuvių metų ratas* (‘Lithuanian wheel of the year’) – 1,240,000 positions. Entries include not only texts about calendric customs but also about change of nature during seasons.
- 2) *Metinės šventės* (‘annual holidays’) – approx. 1,460,000 positions; *lietuvių metinės šventės* (‘Lithuanian annual holidays’) – 481,000 positions. Entries also include national days.
- 3) *Ritualiniai metai* (‘ritual year’) – approx. 562,000 positions; *lietuvių ritualiniai metai* (‘Lithuanian ritual year’) – 317,000 positions. Entries also include texts about funerals, beauty rituals, magical rituals.
- 4) *Metų virsmas* (‘turn of the year’) – approx. 1,870,000 positions; *lietuvių metų virsmas* (‘Lithuanian turn of the year’) – 88,800 positions. Entries include different topics (like change of the cities with years, presentation of various cultural events).
- 5) *Kalendorinės šventės* (‘calendar holidays’) – approx. 126,000 positions; *lietuvių kalendorinės šventės* (‘Lithuanian calendar holidays’) – 19,100 positions.
- 6) *Kalendoriniai papročiai* (‘calendar customs’) – approx. 32,400 positions; *lietuvių kalendoriniai papročiai* (‘Lithuanian calendar customs’) – 24,500 positions.
- 7) *Rėdos ratas* (‘Rėda’s wheel’) – 74,300 positions; *lietuvių rėdos ratas* (‘Lithuanian Rėda’s wheel’) – 19,900 positions.

8) *Kalendorinės apeigos* ('calendar rites') – approx. 29,500 positions;  
*lietuvių kalendorinės apeigos* ('Lithuanian calendar rites') – 10,500 positions.

## Conclusions

Interest in Lithuanian traditional annual holidays have a few centuries of continuity. The earliest descriptions of Lithuanian holidays appeared in the fifteenth century. The oldest historical sources that mentioned Lithuanian holidays usually referred to holidays related to agricultural work. Later, Lithuanian holidays were considered as closely intertwined with Christian traditions and the Catholic liturgical year.

The ethnographic and amateur studies of Lithuanian annual holidays started in the nineteenth century with the emergence of national and romantic ideas, but scientific ethnological research of the phenomenon began in the twentieth century and became especially widespread after the 1990s and later. The most studied traditional Lithuanian holidays during the interwar period by ethnologists were Christmas, Shrovetide, and Easter; during Soviet times – Shrovetide. In the twenty-first century, researchers gave the most attention to Shrovetide, Christmas, Easter, and St. John's Day.

Mentions of annual holidays in Lithuanian media appeared in the nineteenth century, though in the twenty-first century, the presentation of Lithuanian annual holidays in the media increased significantly. New Year, Christmas and Easter are the most mentioned celebrations (which reflect the real popularity of the holidays in society).

Along with the research of traditional annual holidays, the need to classify and name the types of holidays appeared in the second part of the twentieth century. Even though the general term defining traditional annual holidays in Lithuania is not fully established and they vary, the terms *calendar holidays* (*calendar festivals*) or *calendar customs* are the most common and cover the celebrations of Easter, Christmas, All Souls' Day, Shrovetide, and others, which have cyclical recurrence in the year and relate to the traditional Lithuanian agricultural cycle and/or Christian liturgical year. The use of terms depends on researchers and the popularisation of terms they use in the public sphere.

The names of specific calendar holidays in the Lithuanian language are sufficiently well established. More complications occur when translating them into other languages.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> But outside Lithuania, the study of Jonas Balys was published at that time. His monograph, *Lietuvių tautosakos skaitymai*, had a chapter dedicated to annual holidays (Balys 1948: 99–138).

<sup>2</sup> After the Second World War, the Institute of Ethnography was transformed into the Archaeology-Ethnography Sector at the Institute of History, and later it was reorganised and renamed several times.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that these two works were published outside the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, in the USA and Poland.

<sup>4</sup> Aleksandras Žarskus has been involved in self-published activities since 1977, and since 1982 he has given lectures on national culture, religion, and psychology underground. In 1988, since the beginning of *Sąjūdis* (Movement, initially known as the Reform Movement of Lithuania), the Sunday *Sąjūdis* Lithuanian Culture School was set up in Kaunas, and he took part in its activities and gave lectures on Lithuanian ethical culture and moral topics. In 1995 in Kaunas, the Sunday School became the center of national culture. He gave lectures on national, religious, psychological, and moral topics there further on.

<sup>5</sup> According to contemporary Lithuanian linguists the term *rėda* is a barbarism; its meaning is ‘world order; system’ (Mikulėnienė & Dvilytė 2013).

## Internet sources

Aruodai = *Lituanistikos paveldo informacinė sistema Aruodai*. [Information System for Lithuanian Heritage ‘Aruodai’.] Available at <https://aruodai.lt/index.php>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.

LIBIS = *Lietuvos integralios bibliotekų informacijos sistemos*. [Lithuanian Integral Information System of Libraries.] Available at <https://www.lnb.lt/istekliai/katalogai/libis-jungtinis-katalogas-ibiblioteka-lt>, last accessed on 12 October 2022.

*Lituanistica Database*. Available at <https://www.lituanistika.lt/en>, last accessed on 12 October 2022.

tekstynas.vdu.lt = *Kompiuterinės lingvistikos centras. Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas*. [Center for Computational Linguistics. Vytautas Magnus University.] Available at <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas>, last accessed on 12 October 2022.



*The Ethnological Manuscript Fund and Electronic Data Archive at Vytautas Magnus University.* Available at <http://etnologijadb.vdu.lt/>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.

## References

- Anglickienė, Laima 2008. *Lietuvių etnologijos istoriografija (XX amžius)*. [Historiography of the Lithuanian Ethnology. Twentieth Century.] Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla.
- Balys, Jonas 1930. Kalėdų papročiai ir burtai. [Christmas Customs and Spells.] *Mūsų tautosaka*, No. 1, pp. 124–153.
- Balys, Jonas 1939. Naujieji Metai kaime. [New Year Day in the Village.] *Ten pat*, № 805.
- Balys, Jonas 1948. Metinės šventės. [Annual Holidays.] In: Jonas Balys. *Lietuvių tautosakos skaitymai*. Vol. 2. Tübingen: Patria, pp. 99–138. Available at [http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/tautosaka/Balys\\_TS.pdf](http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/tautosaka/Balys_TS.pdf), last accessed on 15 December 2022.
- Balys, Jonas 1978. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės: Tautosakinė medžiaga ir aiškinimai*. [Lithuanian Calendar Holidays: Folklore Material and Interpretations.] Silver Spring Md.: Lietuvių tautosakos leidykla.
- Balys, Jonas 1993. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės*. [Lithuanian Calendar Holidays.] Vilnius: Mintis.
- Balys, Jonas 2013. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės. Iš Jono Balio palikimo*. [Lithuanian Calendar Holidays. From the Legacy of Jonas Balys.] Vilnius: Mintis.
- Blockytė, Kristina 2015. *Lietuvininkų kalendorinės šventės Mažojoje Lietuvoje: tradicijų tęstinumas ir jų kaita*. [Calendrical Holidays of the Lietuvininkai in Lithuania Minor: Changes and Continuity in Tradition.] Doctoral thesis. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla. Available at <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/entities/etd/ccc19b04-8e12-4f52-a51d-e40e07374dcf/details>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Būga, Kazimieras 1958. *Rinktiniai raštai*. [Selected Writings.] In 3 vols. Vol. 1. Vilnius: Valstybinė Politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla. Available at [https://archive.org/details/buga-rinktiniai-rastai-t.-1-1958\\_202012/page/n1/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/buga-rinktiniai-rastai-t.-1-1958_202012/page/n1/mode/2up), last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Buračas, Balys 1933. Senieji Kalėdų papročiai. [Old Christmas Customs.] *Trimitas*, No. 51–52.
- Buračas, Balys 1934. Senieji lietuvių papročiai kaime. [Old Customs in Country.] *Gimtasai kraštas*, No. 1, pp. 52–53.
- Buračas, Balys 1936. Kupiškėnų Kūčios. [Kupiškėnai Christmas-Eve.] *Ūkininko patarėjas*, No. 52.

- Buračas, Balys 1937. Kupiškėnų Sekminės. [Kupiškėnai Pentecost.] In: Balys Buračas. *Tautosakos darbai*, Vol. 3. Kaunas: [s.n.], pp. 98–106.
- Daukantas, Simonas 1976. Būdas senovės lietuvių, kalnėnų ir žemaičių. [Lifestyle of Ancient Lithuanians, Upper Landers, and Lower Landers.] In: Simonas Daukantas. *Raštai*, Vol. I. Vilnius: Vaga, pp. 403–656.
- Dovydaitis, Jurgis 1935a. Kanapiniskis ir Lašinskis Užgavėnių tautosakoj. [Kanapiniskis and Lašinskis in Shrovetide Folklore.] *Gimtasai kraštas*, No. 1, pp. 206–210.
- Dovydaitis, Jurgis 1935b. Joninės. [St. John’s Day.] *Gimtasai kraštas*, No. 6, pp. 257–261.
- Dundulienė, Pranė 1979. *Lietuvių kalendoriniai ir agrariniai papročiai*. [Lithuanian Calendar and Agrarian Customs.] Vilnius: Lietuvos TSR Aukštojo ir specialiojo mokslo ministerija.
- Dundulienė, Pranė 1982. Kalendorinių švenčių papročiai ir apeigos. [Customs and Rites of Calendar Holidays.] In: Pranė Dundulienė. *Lietuvių etnografija*. Vilnius: Mokslas, pp. 269–364.
- Dundulienė, Pranė 1991. *Lietuvių šventės: tradicijos, papročiai, apeigos*. [Lithuanian Holidays: Traditions, Customs, Rites.] Vilnius: Mintis.
- Dundulienė, Pranė 2020. *Kalendoriniai ir agrariniai papročiai*. [Calendar and Agricultural Customs.] Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras.
- Imbrasienė, Birutė (ed.) 1990. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės*. [Lithuanian Calendar Holidays.] Vilnius: Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademijos Istorijos institutas.
- Jonynas, Ambraziejus 1963. Kalendorinių apeigų dainos. [Songs of Calendar Rites.] In: Ambraziejus Jonynas (ed.) *Lietuvių tautosakos apybraiža*. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, pp. 144–158.
- Kisieliene, Sonata 1997. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės*. [Lithuanian Calendar Holidays.] Kaunas: LR Žemės ūkio rūmai.
- Kudirka, Juozas 1990. *Velykų šventės*. [Easter Holidays.] Vilnius: Mintis.
- Kudirka, Juozas 1991a. *Joninės*. [St. John’s Day.] Vilnius: Vizija.
- Kudirka, Juozas (ed.) 1991b. *Lietuvių liaudies papročiai*. [Lithuanian Folk Customs.] Vilnius: Lietuvos liaudies kultūros centras.
- Kudirka, Juozas 1992. *Užgavėnės*. [Shrovetide.] Vilnius: Mokslas.
- Mikulėnienė, Danguolė & Dvylytė, Aurelija (ed.) 2013. *Kalbos patarimai. 4: Leksika. Skolinių vartojimas*. [Language Tips. 4: Lexicon. Use of Loanwords.] Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras.
- Milius, Vacys 2001. *Lietuvių etnologijos bibliografija*. [Bibliography of Lithuanian Ethnology.] Vilnius: LII leidykla. Available at <https://archive.org/details/lietuvii-etnologijos-bibliografija-2001>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Milius, Vacys 2005. *Lietuvių etnologijos bibliografija. 1997–2002*. [Bibliography of Lithuanian Ethnology, 1997–2002.] Vilnius: LII leidykla.

- Narbutas, Teodoras 1992. *Lietuvių tautos istorija*. [History of Lithuanian Nation.] Vol. I. Vilnius: Mintis.
- Paukštytė-Šaknienė, Rasa & Savoniakaitė, Vida & Svidinskaitė, Danguolė & Šaknys, Žilvytis & Šidiškienė, Irma 2005. Lietuvos etnologijos šaltinių klasifikacija. [Classification of Sources of Lithuanian Ethnology.] *Liaudies kultūra*, No. 1, pp. 14–27. Available at <https://www.lituanistika.lt/content/1806>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Paukštytė-Šaknienė, Rasa 2016. Šeima ir kalendorinės šventės sovietinėje Lietuvoje. [Family and Calendar Holidays in Soviet Lithuania.] *Lietuvos Etnologija: Socialines Antropologijos ir Etnologijos Studijos / Lithuanian Ethnology: Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology*, Vol. 16 (25), pp. 9–34. Available at <https://www.istorija.lt/data/public/uploads/2020/09/lietuvos-etnologija-16-25-3-rasa-paukc5a1tytc497-c5a0aknienc497-c5a0eima-ir-kalendorinc497s-c5a1ventc497s-p.-9-34.pdf>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Pretorijus, Matas 2006. *Prūsijos įdomybės, arba Prūsijos regykla*. [Deliciae Prussicae, oder Preussische Schaubühne.] Vol. III, Book 5. Vilnius: LII leidykla.
- Savoniakaitė, Vida (ed.) 2011. *Lietuvos etnologijos ir antropologijos enciklopedija*. [Encyclopedia of Lithuanian Ethnology and Anthropology.] Vilnius: LII leidykla.
- Senvaitytė, Dalia 2013a. Kalendorinių švenčių diskursas tarpukario Lietuvos periodikoje. [The Discourse of Calendar Holidays in Periodicals of Lithuania During the Interwar Period.] *Soter*, Vol. 73, No. 45, pp. 115–138. [http://dx.doi.org/10.7220/1392-7450.45\(73\).8](http://dx.doi.org/10.7220/1392-7450.45(73).8).
- Senvaitytė, Dalia 2013b. Kalendorinių švenčių pristatymas lietuviškoje periodinėje spaudoje XIX a. – XX a. pradžioje. [Presentation of Calendar Holidays in Lithuanian Periodicals of 19th and the Beginning of 20th Centuries.] *Res humanitariae*, Vol. XIII, pp. 267–285. Available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/233177490.pdf>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Senvaitytė, Dalia 2014. Lietuviškų tradicinių metinių švenčių kūrimo klausimu. [On the Question of Creation of Lithuanian Traditional Annual Festivals.] *Lithuanian Journal of Anthropology*, No. 1, pp. 77–88. Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347511203\\_Lietuvisku\\_tradiciniu\\_metiniu\\_svenciu\\_kurimo\\_klausimu](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347511203_Lietuvisku_tradiciniu_metiniu_svenciu_kurimo_klausimu), last accessed on 11 October 2022.
- Skrodenis, Stasys 1967. *Lietuvių kalendorinių apeigų tautosaka*. [Folklore of Lithuanian Calendar Rites.] Doctoral Thesis. Vilnius.
- Stoskeliūnas, Jonas 1979. Kalendorinės šventės. [Calendar Holidays.] *Aušra*, No. 1, p. 32.
- Šaknys, Žilvytis 2009. Iniciaciniai ir kalendoriniai jaunimo papročiai. [Initiation and Calendar Customs of Youth.] In: Žilvytis Šaknys (ed.) *Lietuvos kultūra: Dzūkijos ir Suvalkijos papročiai*. Vilnius: LII leidykla, pp. 63–110. Available at <https://>

etalpykla.lituanistikadb.lt/object/LT-LDB-0001:B.03~2009~1367166213670/, last accessed on 10 October 2022.

- Šaknys, Žilvytis 2014. Tradicinių kalendorinių papročių tyrimai sovietinėje Lietuvoje. [Studies of Traditional Calendar Customs in Soviet Lithuania.] *Etnografija*, Vol. 20 (2010), pp. 92–106. Available at <https://www.lituanistika.lt/content/82472>, last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Trinka, Vladas 1935. Užgavėnių ir Pelenų dienos papročiai. [Shrovetide and Ash Day Customs.] *Gimtasai kraštas*, No. 5, pp. 210–212.
- Vėlius, Norbertas (ed.) 1996. *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*. [Sources of Baltic Religion and Mythology.] In 4 vols. Vol. 1. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla. Available at [http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Vėlius\\_Norbertas/BRMS\\_1.pdf](http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Vėlius_Norbertas/BRMS_1.pdf), last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Vėlius, Norbertas (ed.) 2001. *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*. [Sources of Baltic Religion and Mythology.] In 4 vols. Vol. 2. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla. Available at [http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Vėlius\\_Norbertas/BRMS\\_2.pdf](http://tautosmenta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Vėlius_Norbertas/BRMS_2.pdf), last accessed on 10 October 2022.
- Vyšniauskaitė, Angelė 1964. Liaudies kalendorius. Šventės. [Folk Calendar. Holidays.] In: Angelė Vyšniauskaitė. *Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai*. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, pp. 536–550.
- Vyšniauskaitė, Angelė 1993. *Mūsų metai ir šventės*. [Our Year and Holidays.] Kaunas: Šviesa.
- Zobarskas, Stepas 1931. *Tautiški lietuvių papročiai*. [National Lithuanian Customs.] Kaunas: Pažanga.
- Žarskus, Aleksandras 1990. *Rėdos ratas: lietuvių kalendorinės šventės*. [Rėda's Wheel: Lithuanian Calendar Holidays.] Vilnius: Eksperimentinės technikos paminklų restauravimo įmonė.
- Žarskus, Aleksandras 2009. *Rėdos knyga: Baltų kalendorinės šventės*. [Rėda's Book: Baltic Calendar Holidays.] Kaunas: Dakra.

**Dalia Senvaitytė**, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies, Vytautas Magnus University. Her research interests are in the field of the ritual year, ancient and modern Baltic paganism, and Lithuanian ethnology.

dalia.senvaityte@vdu.lt