

Lithuanian ethnologist Petras Kalnius - 75



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Petras Kalnius was born on November 16, 1948, in the village of Vaineikiai-Medsėdžiai, Kretinga county (Northwest Lithuania). In 1967, he graduated from Darbėnai High School and entered Vilnius University, Faculty of History and Philology. He graduated from the university in 1972 and obtained the specialty of historian and teacher of history and social sciences. In 1972 - 1975, he worked at the Kėdainiai Regional History Museum as a senior researcher; at

the Council for the Protection of Scientific-Methodical Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Culture as a senior researcher and head of a group of historians, also. Since 1975 he started working in the Department of Ethnography of the Institute of History (later the Department of Ethnology of the Institute of History of Lithuania, now – department of Ethnology and Anthropology) as a senior assistant, then as a junior research worker, from 1986 - research worker. In 1989 he was elected as a head of the Department of Ethnography and held this position until 1991. From the end of 1991 until his retirement in 2012, he worked there as a senior researcher.

From the beginning of his work at the institute, he was directed to urban ethnographic research. In 1983, he published the monograph “Ethnographic Problems of the Culture and Family of Lithuanian SSR Industrial Workers” together with the most famous urban ethnology specialist in Lithuania Antanas Daniliauskas.

In 1984, Petras Kalnius defended his candidate’s thesis in historical sciences at the *Institute of Art Studies, Ethnography and Folklore* of the Nacional Academy Ssciences of *Belarus* on the topic “The current family of workers in

the Lithuanian SSR industry” (in 1993, the Lithuanian Science Council certified the diploma and recognized the doctoral degree). In 1982-1984 together with the scientists of Lithuania and the *N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology* he carried out the project “Lithuanian residents’ household and culture” and published the monograph “Contemporary Urban Family of Lithuanian SSR “ (1988).

After the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania, the ethnologist spent several years researching the ethnic processes that took place in Southeastern Lithuania in the 20th century. Unlike other authors interested in this issue, Petras Kalnius focused mainly on the natural ethnic assimilation in various ethnic communities and the role of the family in ethnic processes. His work was crowned by two large monographs “Lithuanian Family and Customs” (with Angele Vyšniauskaitė and Rasa Paukštytė, 1995, second supplemented edition in 2008, new foreword written by P. Kalniaus) and “Ethnic Processes in South-East Lithuania in the 2nd half of 20th c.” (1998).

A very important area of his scientific research is Lithuanian regional communities (ethnographic regions) and Lithuanian regional self-awareness. Over ten articles have already been published on this topic in prestigious Lithuanian publications, and the largest publication is the monograph “The Samogitians. From 1900s to early 2000s” (2012). I would call the last book one of the most important works of the scientist. The scientist is working intensively on this topic even these days.

In addition to these questions, the articles also analyze the theoretical issues of the science of ethnology, the prospects for the development of this science, and students studying ethnology are still currently studying his publication “Application of Statistics in Ethnology” (1999).

In 1991-1992, he headed the Lithuanian History Institute’s scientific program “Lithuanian Family and Customs”, in 1993-1998 - the program “Family and Ethnic Processes”, in 2001 he was head of the projects financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania “Current Lithuanian regional identity: forms of expression and development trends”, 2005 - “Lithuanians of the Seinai region: features of ethnic and cultural identity”. The result of this project, will go down in the history of Lithuanian ethnology as the first book published abroad (in Poland), and before this there was no case that a monograph was published within less than a year after the completion of field research (2006). This is the merit of P. Kalniaus’ efforts.

He participated in ethnographic expeditions in almost all districts of Lithuania, also in the Punska-Seinai region in Poland. In the latter, as in many areas of Lithuania, he led expeditionary groups. In addition to six monographs (two of them with co-authors), he published more than a hundred scientific articles, was a member of the editorial board of many publications, a scientific reviewer, scientist who paid a lot of attention to students, scientific management and the popularizer of ethnology. After retirement, the jubilee pays a lot of attention to ethnology and does a lot of science popularization work, gives lectures, participates in seminars, and also writes scientific articles. We congratulate Peter on the occasion of his honorable anniversary and wish that all the expectations and dreams of the eminent ethnologist become reality.

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