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VOLUME 1

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Contents

II Cities, Cultures, and Migrations

III News and Reviews

Introduction

After twelve years of meetings, field research, discussions, three conferences, series of seminars and lectures, three books, and numerous articles on the Balkans and the Baltic region in the united Europe we decided to merge the earlier publications and start with an annual journal, The Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies, a scholarly journal published annually by the International Society for Balkan and Baltic Studies, with support by our home institutions.

The annual journal, The Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies, aims to promote and encourage research, and to provide a forum for those working in the field of ethnology, folkloristics, religiosity, and other traditional domains in the humanities and social sciences.

The key topic for this issue is the situation in the field of religion in the modern world. As has been predicted by Bronisław Malinowski, religion will still play a defining role for human civilization in the years to come. This topic has become especially relevant in recent years (and decades), when we have been observing a number of large-scale religious processes in Europe, and also on a global scale. On the one hand, for the post-Socialist countries, it has been a period of boisterous flourishing and extensive freedom in terms of religion. The opening of the borders and the freedom of religious expression, which replaced atheism, have both revived traditional religious confessions and allowed some new religious movements to penetrate the conservative national religious space. However, at the same time, religion has turned into one of the main arguments of xenophobia, racism, and ethnic and religious intolerance. Such stereotypes as "an Arab—a Muslim—a terrorist" are engraved in the minds of modern Europeans. In combination with large-scale migration processes in Europe, related to the arrival of migrants from Asian and North African

countries that are either poor or at war, they give rise to social fears as well as ethnic and religious tension. At the same time, similarly severe problems can be observed within the framework of Christianity, where political contrapositions affect the religious situation in the post-Socialist countries. For example, the problem of the belonging of churches to one or another patriarchate in the independent states of the former USSR and Yugoslavia is also becoming a major issue in Ukraine. Moscow and Constantinople (the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Patriarchate of Constantinople) are fighting for the souls of people of faith, engaging themselves in the existing contraposition, which all the more divides the already counterposed nations and states.

The first part of this edition is dedicated to the problems pertaining to religion and religious traditions. It starts with an article by Solveiga Krumina-Konkova, who presents research on religion and everything religious in the context of the new post-liberal situation. Other articles also deal with the diversity of the current religious situation. Traditional cults and their transformation in the modern world (Milena Lyubenova), worshipping practices and monuments (Robert Parkin), neo-paganism as a basis for the modern national identity (Ekaterina Anastasova), and new religious movements (Svetoslava Toncheva) and their monuments (Mare Kõiva) occupy a major place in the modern European identity, reflecting the search for the new and "uncompromised" framework for self-identification. Religion is still one of the most conservative social and cultural phenomena of the modern world. The preservation of traditional religious commitment, which makes a particular faith group stand out from the macro-society, continues to remain an important feature within the modern religious landscape (Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė). At the same time, the interest towards everything magical continues not only to be actualised, but also to create the new "magical" literature (folk fakes according to A. L. Toporkov). Tatiana Minniyakhmetova discusses the issues pertaining to the Balto-Slavic space that exist in magical books.

The second part of the edition deals with the problems covered by the topic of *Cities, Cultures, and Migrations*. The issues related to the city, free time, multicultural space, and migration institutions occupy a major place in the European research area. Žilvytis Šaknys and Irma Šidiškienė present research on the topics of friendship, professional contacts, and free time, comparing the situations in Bulgaria and Latvia. Guzel Stolyarova discusses the ethnic characteristics of the behaviour of the Tajiks in the multinational

city of Kazan (Tatarstan). Mariyanka Borisova writes about national cultural heritage, supported and developed by Bulgarian educational institutions abroad.

The present issue presents diverse research carried out by both young and well-established scientists, who study the areas of the Balkans, the Baltic States, and, on a wider scale, Europe and Russia. This collection of different topics, methodologies, and approaches represents the current state and urgent issues of European science. We hope that this edition will be interesting and useful for a wider audience.

Ekaterina Anastasova, Mare Kõiva, Žilvytis Šaknys

I

Traditions and Religions

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RELIGION IN THE POST-LIBERAL TIME

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Abstract: The paper is devoted to the analysis of the transformation of religiosity in the post-liberal time and shows such cases of change in the religious life of Latvia. Post-liberalism means the intellectual tendency arisen during the second part of the 20th century. It was first analysed in George Lindbeck's work "The Nature of the Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age". One of the specific features of post-liberalism is "return to traditions" while adopting this tradition to the present cultural situation and offering new explanation concerning human nature, personal experience in the world and within the particular cultural milieu. The increase of the application of tendencies of post-liberalism within the religious institutions and beyond nowadays determines also the growing interest in the mysticism and mystical experience. The paper will address some Latvian cases, which, in the author's opinion, are characteristic of post-liberal religiosity.

Keywords: Christian meditation, mystical experience, post-liberalism, radical traditionalism, return to traditions

First of all, let us briefly describe what the phenomenon of post-liberalism in general is. The post-liberalism means the intellectual tendency arisen during the second part of the 20th century. American Lutheran theologian George Lindbeck (1923–2018) first analysed it in his work "The Nature of the Doctrine:

Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age" (Lindbeck 1984). Explaining the feeling which was somewhat intensive among Europeans already in that time, Lindbeck emphasised that Christian doctrines should not be understood as universalistic propositions or as interpretations of a universal religious experience. Following the Wittgensteinian concept of the language game, they are more like the rules of grammar that govern the way we use language to describe the world. In theology, the turning point to the post-liberalism means a cultural-linguistic approach to religion and the interpretative regulation of various Christian doctrines or the appearance of so-called rule theories (See, for example, Murphy 1993, Tanner 1997). Lindbeck equates Christian doctrine with 'subjective grammar', but the preaching of the gospel in the Christian Church – with a regulator and a continuous narrative. It is like a script, a script that must be implemented and can also be used as a resource for self-criticism of Christianity and the criticism of existing Christian culture.

However, it should be noted, that there is still debate on the chronological framework of post-liberalism and whether it is a single direction or maybe we have to talk about some even parallel-emerging kinds of post-liberalism with significant differences. When talking about the chronological framework, for example, Karl Barth who actively wrote in the 1950s–1960s, is often called as a post-liberal theologian. For example, an opinion exists that some characteristics of postmodernism appear in the Barth's approach that the infallibility of theology is based on the Bible. However, it might be more accurate to say that Barth is on the border between liberalism and post-liberalism. In his liberalism (as in the liberalism of the 1960s and 1970s, in general), specific signs of new post-liberalism appear, just as post-liberalism still has quite a lot of elements of liberalism.

Lindbeck has also named the main feature of post-liberalism: 'the return to tradition' while applying this tradition to the present cultural situation and offering a new answer to such well-known questions as *What does God mean to the modern man? What is human nature or our being in the world and within the particular cultural milieu?* In other words, the rationality of theology must be rooted in the language of living faith which, in its turn, is based on the particular Christian community and on the culture that this community creates. At the same time, the normative nature of the Christian narrative determines the way in which this language of living faith is created. Post-liberal theology could be characterised by a return to the patterns of reading and interpreting

of gospels developed by the Fathers of early and medieval Church, that is, by combining the historically-grammatical reading and the spiritually-allegorical sensation in the coherent explanation of the Scriptures. Such an approach has led to post-liberalism being also called "radical traditionalism". Radicalism in this sense refers to the new methods used.

A typical example of this returning is the commentary on Biblical texts published by Brazos Press. So, on the one hand, there is the Bible's text as it is given to us, with its narrative. On the other hand, there are commentaries which take into account the relationship of this text with the particular Christian Church reading this text, with the identity of this church and the understanding of God which it worships. The same is true of critical studies of classical theological texts, such as of Saint Augustine or Saint Thomas of Aquinas, which respect the contemporary cultural discourse and the concepts used in it and therefore constitute an entirely new reading of one or the other text.

The increase of the application of tendencies of post-liberalism within the religious institutions and beyond nowadays determines also the growing interest in the mysticism and mystical experience. The importance of different kinds of mysticism and mystical theology can also be called a turning point toward the post-liberalism. The extensive encyclopaedia "Miracles. An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present", published by ABC CLIO in 2016, also evidence an increasing interest in mysticism that cut across denominational lines. Further, one case about the development of mystical practices from Latvia will be mentioned.

Latvian Lutheran pastor Juris Rubenis for several years was one of the most known teachers of Christian meditation in Europe. In several books, he has tried to combine the ideas and practices of different mystical teachings, such as of Spanish Catholic mysticism and Zen Buddhism. At the beginning of the book "Introduction to Christian Meditation" he writes:

> *More and more contemporary people are searching not for words and thoughts, but for the direct mental experience. This thirst is multiplied, and the indicator is a desperate quest and a wide interest in various spiritual offerings. Of course, it is significant for everyone to find his way, but looking for it, it is important to know that a serious path of direct spiritual experience has always been available in Christian mystical theology, meditation and contemplation* (Rubenis 2010: 10).

The book of Rubenis is also a comprehensive insight into the teachings of three contemporary Christian mystics – Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle (1898–1990), Bede Griffiths (1906–1993) and John Main (1926–1982). According to Rubenis, these three mystics are united by the fact that they have made meditation accessible to everyone, showing that "the practice of poverty of spirit can be combined with the life of any modern person" (Rubenis 2010: 41).

One should note yet another common feature of these mystics: they practised and promoted meditation techniques of Eastern religions in the Christian context, creating a new meditation practice. (More about it: Krumina-Konkova 2016: 30–31.) However, as Rubenis writes, this is not in any way a talk about the creation of a syncretic new religion: the encounter with the East "encouraged them to look at Christianity differently and bring up the tradition of meditation that had been neglected unsuccessfully. Meeting with other traditions made them better, deeper, more faithful Christians" (Rubenis 2016: 42).

In 2009, Rubenis founded a meditation centre "Elijah House". In the same year "Elijah House" was named a member of The World Community for Christian Meditation. In 2011, Rubenis graduated from *Lassalle Kontemplationsschule Via integralis* in Zürich. After a year, he left his service as a pastor in Riga and entirely occupied himself with the leadership of his centre. True, in recent years there has been a conflict between Rubenis and his opponents in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. Rubenis was blamed for the practising of meditation unacceptable for Lutheranism and for propaganda and recognition of homosexuality. As evidence, his book "She and He" (Rubenis 2016) about love, relationships and sex was cited. The conflict was so high that in February 2018 Rubenis left the post of the pastor. Commenting on this step, he emphasised that

> *this is a carefully considered and well thought out decision that results from long-standing external and internal processes in the Church and in me.*
>
> *I will abstain from broader comments. Nothing has changed in my value system. I still consider it the most important task of my life to remain on the path to spiritual growth by learning to be a genuine, loving, braver person and to help find and follow this path for other people. I will continue to serve as a contemplative teacher at Elijah House and Institute for Integral Education* (Jauns.lv. 2018).

Despite the tensions among the Lutheran clergy, Rubenis' teaching of Christian meditation is widespread among Lutheran and other Christian laypersons, as well as in the Latvian society as a whole. At the beginning of 2017, the Silence and Meditation Room was also created at the National Library of Latvia. The authors of the idea of this place belong to the association under the name *Symboli un Riti* (Symbols and Rituals). They emphasise that

> *One might think that the room of silence and meditation is something exclusive, no, it is an acute necessity of today's life. We each need our dose of inner and spiritual calm.* [--] *Meditation is the path to this inner silence, self-awareness* (Zilberts 2017).

The association's practice of meditation is related to the tradition of *Via integralis*, led by Rubenis. Nevertheless, the room of silence and meditation is also open to other schools of meditation.

As we see, the turn to post-liberalism appears in new forms of spirituality, the specificity of which is influenced by various liberal, neo-liberal and other political, economic and world-view contexts within the actual cultural situation. The case of the Baltic countries in this connection could be fascinating for extensive in-depth studies because here the post-liberal spiritual tendencies exist alongside expressly liberal and also excessively totalitarian strains of thought.

Another of the most visible examples of a post-liberal tendency in Protestantism is a communal transformation of liberal Protestantism in the way that it might begin to be more identifiable as a form of Catholic Christianity. Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church is directly such a case. It should be remembered that Lindbeck also actively participated in the ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and, was a 'delegate observer' to the Second Vatican Council. The third example is the growing focus on Orthodoxy. During the last years, sociological surveys in Latvia show that Orthodoxy is one of the few Christian denominations, which has the fast-upward dynamics. Perhaps, a similar example could also be the conversion to fundamentalist groups of Islam of people with a Christian background. For example, among Latvians, former Christians, there are also ISIS adherents. The number of women wearing the niqab is also rising.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia became closer to the Roman Catholic Church shortly after the archbishop Jānis Vanags took office in 1993.

From now on, Vanags manifests himself as a conservative theologian, and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church is considered as one of the most conservative Lutheran Churches in the world. One of Vanag's first innovations was the prohibition of women's ordination. This ban is also one of the reasons why the unity of the Lutheran Church in Latvia and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church abroad does not take place. In 1999, nine independent Lutheran congregations united in one church, which was named the Confessional Lutheran Church. One of the reasons for the establishment of this church was also the rapprochement of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church with the Latvian Roman Catholic Church.

Already in 2009, a group of the most conservative Lutherans made a suggestion, atypical for Lutheranism, – the creation of monk order and monasteries. In 2016, the highest decision-making organ of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Synod, took the appropriate decision, and now the first women's monastery is being built in Courland, and the Archbishop's blessing has also been received for the creation of a male monastery.

The building and the interior of the church of The Convent of the Holy Trinity of the women's monastery are designed accordingly to the Eastern or Byzantine tradition, because, as emphasised by the spiritual father Jānis Bitāns, it less appeals to the mind, more to heart, senses and feelings. However, as Bitāns said, "the Byzantine tradition would also be updated by a Latvian feature – the architect promised it!" (irLiepāja 2016).

It should be noted that the return to tradition is not always unmistakably clear, indisputable and sometimes should be considered with great caution. For example, in Spain, Alejandro García Sanjuán, a researcher at the University of Huelva, has published the article "The Persistence of National Catholic Discourse on Medieval Iberia in Current Spanish Historiography" (Sanjuán 2016: 132–153). In this article, he addresses the problem faced by the researchers of the Middle Ages. After the re-establishment of the Spanish Royal House in 1978, the so-called national patriotic historiography completely revises the history of Al-Andalus. Thus, just in 2016 Rafael Sánchez Saus published the book "Al-Andalus and the Cross. The Muslim Invasion of Hispania" (Saus 2016) where the history of Al-Andalus, as it was described by Spanish medieval scholars from the 19th and 20th centuries, was ultimately denied. It has turned into a history of violence, leaving no room for cultural developments or religious tolerance, who ruled in the caliphate. The main singularity of the before-mentioned book

of Saus lies in the fact that, despite its confessional perspective, it does not come from the clerical sphere, but from the academic world of the university. Sanjuán emphasises that such approach to the medieval Iberian past "may be summarised in two major features: the historical illegitimacy of al-Andalus from its origins, expressed through the notion of the Arab and Islamic "invasion" of Iberia, and the consequent legitimacy and glorification of the Christian conquest (so-called Reconquista), ending with the siege of Granada by the Catholic Kings in 1492" (Sanjuán 2016: 132). Sanjuán concluded that the national-Catholic historiography of the 21st century, advocated in works such as "Al-Andalus and the Cross", is far from that what European integration requires today – "to give its place to communities like the Muslim in the history and the present of Europe" (Sanjuán 2016: 152). Therefore, the rewriting of history is the case when the return to tradition is to be seen more than just a return to Christianity, even if we are talking about Europe.

Some years ago Douglas John Hall, Canada's most celebrated living theologian, Emeritus Professor of *Christian* Theology at McGill University, wrote: "It is inevitable, I think, that the most serious Christians and Christian groupings will experiment with all kinds of new arrangements and alliances. Some of these will prove unhelpful and wrong, and some will be or become relevant – will prove a way into the future" (Hall 2013: 34). The same we can say about the Latvian cases. However, no matter how religious life in Latvia will emerge in the future, one benefit is already undeniable: the current experiments are significant to preserve the sense of wonder and awareness of the mysterious boundary conditions of human experience and to renew the community of the people who need religious beliefs.

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RELIGIOUS SITES AND SACRED SPACES IN LITHUANIA AND POLAND: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ŠILUVA COMPLEX AND THE ŚWIEBODZIN STATUE OF JESUS [1]

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Abstract: This paper compares two religious sites associated with the Catholic Church: Šiluva in Lithuania, where a religious complex has existed for several centuries because of visions of the Virgin Mary seen there in 1608; and the much more recent statue of Jesus Christ erected earlier this century in the town of Świebodzin in western Poland. It is argued that, unlike the former, a central site where religious devotion comes together with expressions of Lithuanian nationhood, the latter's status as a religious site is still uncertain and at best in a process of becoming. This is not least because this site appears to lend itself to touristic interest more than religious devotion expressed through pilgrimage. It therefore raises questions about what we mean by sacred spaces in a way the site at Šiluva does not.

Keywords: pilgrimage, Šiluva, statues of Christ, Świebodzin, tourism

Statues of Jesus Christ are exceedingly common around the world, and some of them are large in scale. Since 2010, to the latter must be added the statue in the west Polish town of Świebodzin, which rivals the more famous one in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in size and form. Unlike the Rio statue, which depicts Christ as the Redeemer, the one in Świebodzin is crowned, in conformity with the image of Christ as king. In respect of its size, it is in definite rivalry with its Rio opposite number, and the dimensions themselves have symbolic significance. Thus the statue itself is 33 metres high, one metre for every year of Christ's life, and the crown measures three metres in height, one for every year of Christ's ministry.

In this article, I compare this site with another I am familiar with, though much less so, namely the religious complex at Šiluva in Lithuania, which I visited in 2014. This site has grown up on the basis of a vision of the Virgin Mary dating back to 1608; thus it is some four centuries older than the site in Świebodzin, which in addition is not based on any sort of miracle, though it has acquired miracles associated with it subsequent to its planning and execution. The purpose of this comparison is therefore to reflect on the popularity of sacred sites and the reasons for people visiting them. In particular, are visitors to the new statue to be regarded as pilgrims, or as tourists, or as both? Is the distinction between them, which the sociologist Erik Cohen (1922) sees as very clear on the basis that the pilgrim's destination is an aspect of his or her own culture, the tourist's destination the culture of others, still valid?

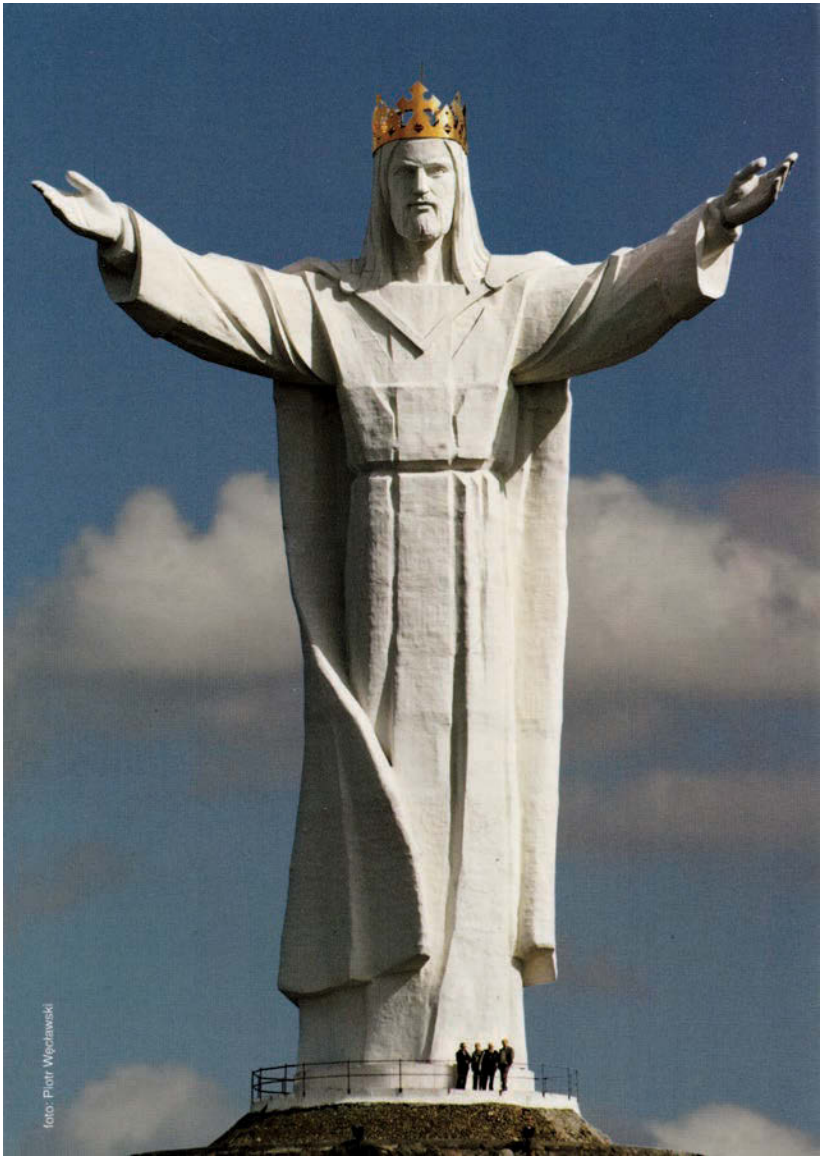
In fact, the statue was, in one view, the vanity project of a local priest, Sylwester Zawadzki,[2] who had a reputation for building and restoring ecclesiastical buildings, with which the statue can be associated (as such, he was known as the 'Builder Priest'). There are different reports of how Zawadzki came to build the statue just here, in this small and unremarkable town in western Poland. In one version, he was inspired by Christ coming to him in a dream. A second version tells how he took over an earlier plan to build such a statue in the eastern Polish town of Tarnów, which came to nothing. Finally, there was his own desire to build a church in a local parish that lacked one. He did indeed build a new church to serve the new post-war housing estates to the south of the town centre. In this version, the idea for the statue, which is located in the same parish, came subsequently.

At all events, between about 2005 and 2010 Zawadzki's life was dominated by this project, which involved overcoming both bureaucratic hurdles and

difficulties in construction. By all accounts it was done on the cheap, partly through willing donations, partly allegedly by Zawadzki exploiting the goodwill of those involved in the construction by treating work done as donations that need not be paid for and/or as voluntary labour. As a result, the site still has an unfinished air, and the statue itself has had to be worked on further to improve its facilities and even its basic stability since being consecrated in 2010.

Local opinion is not universally in favour of the statue, nor of Zawadzki, whose non-celibate, self-indulgent lifestyle became notorious and offended many. For many, especially the non-religious, his statue is an expensive indulgence, the costs of which could have been spent more usefully on other local projects. However, others, especially the more religious-minded (including a local doctor), have supported the idea and think that the fuss made about him and the statue is unnecessary. The Catholic Church's attitude to the statue has also been ambivalent. While not obstructing Zawadzki's initiative directly, its support was evidently lukewarm throughout, though local Church dignitaries did play a full role in its eventual consecration, and some individuals were more supportive than others. However, the statue has not been adopted by the Church as a major site of pilgrimage like other sites in Poland (such as Częstochowa or Góra Świętej Anny/St. Anne's Hill in Silesia) or Lithuania next door (such as Šiluva, the Hill of Crosses or Tytuvėnai; on the first of these, see below). Against this, Zawadzki did gather around him a hard core of lay supporters who remain faithful to his memory to this day and are still involved in managing and improving the site of his statue.

Despite these controversies, which are largely only of local importance, the statue has become a site of tourism, with a steady stream of visitors walking round it base (it sits on a mound providing a view of the surrounding area, which is on the outskirts of the town) and using its other facilities, such as the café, shop and toilets. There are also some religious facilities, such as an open-air pew for prayer and a structure consisting of electronic candles that light up when a coin is inserted into it, but comparatively few visitors make use of either. Clearly some visitors have already visited Zawadzki's new church nearby and carried out their devotions there, but others, especially if from Germany and other foreign (especially non-Catholic countries), appear to be tourists to the statue alone. No doubt some treat their visit as a pilgrimage, especially indicated by the occasional infirm visitor who prays at the open-air pew, but in the main they seem to be in the minority.



The Świebodzin statue of Christ. Photo by Robert Parkin.

There are nonetheless some miracles associated with the site, all of which are connected with Zawadzki himself to a greater or lesser extent. Thus even in the planning stage, while Zawadzki was hospitalized briefly with exhaustion, doubting that his statue would ever be built, a figure in white appeared to him to tell him that all would be well – and shortly afterwards, much to his delight, the local authorities gave him formal permission. A second miracle is connected with the removal – very probably illegally – of Zawadzki's heart after his death in 2014 and its internment near the base of the statue, in accordance with his last wishes; i.e. his heart had been in the project metaphorically, so it ought to be there literally. Although it was raining during the brief ceremony connected with its deposition, a dry area appeared around those celebrating the event, protecting them from the wet. Lastly Zawadzki is said to have died at three o'clock in the afternoon, supposedly the time of Christ's death on the cross. However, all these miracles were ancillary to the statue and the circumstances of its construction – two of them were subsequent to its construction – and none of them provide the inspiration for the statue being constructed in the first place, nor do they appear to be what draws visitors to the site, since they are little known and are certainly not emphasized by the Church authorities.

The Świebodzin statue therefore raises important issues about what is meant by both sacred spaces and sacred objects. Associated with this, we have become used to the blurring of the distinction between pilgrimage and tourism, given the use of touristic methods and paraphernalia by pilgrims. This is seen in the forms of modern travel like buses (though many pilgrims also walk, even on their knees, as at Tytuvėnai in Lithuania) the provision of accommodation, of souvenirs, etc. Nonetheless there is a definite sense, from observation and some discreet enquiries, that tourism is more important than pilgrimage where visitors to the statue are concerned. As for the statue itself, is it just an object, a representation of Christ, or does it actually contain his sacredness? Again, the answer will probably depend on whether the visitor regards him- or herself as a pilgrim or a tourist. Those who pray at the site, we can be a little more sure, at least regard it as a sacred space and, as such see the statue itself as containing Christ's sacredness, at least in part.

Nonetheless there is a definite sense in which the site of the Świebodzin statue is defective as a sacred space, a point that will hopefully emerge more fully by means of a brief comparison.

Compared with Šiluva in Lithuania, a small village where a large pilgrimage complex consisting of a basilica, chapel and seminary has grown up around the site of a vision of the Virgin Mary in 1608 and is attended by thousands of pilgrims every September, including the president and the rest of the political class,[3] the attention devoted to the Świebodzin statue is modest indeed. One key difference is the much greater length of time the site at Šiluva has been in existence – since at least the seventeenth century, as opposed to a mere decade or so – and the fact that accordingly it has acquired symbolic significance as the site not just of a vision of the Virgin,[4] but also of the fate of the Lithuanian nation and its resistance to outside rule, especially in the Soviet period. Thus, as well as being an 'exclusive spiritual centre' and a site of pilgrimage, it is now also 'a place of national unity' (Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2009: 156); in the words of Stankevičienė (2009: 34), 'an ordinary place [in] Lithuania became a special spiritual centre'. Also, the site was heavily patronized by the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century, after being taken back from Protestant control in 1622 (Kamuntavičienė 2009: 17–18), and the local priesthood and bishops were behind the construction of the main basilica in the succeeding century (Šinkūnaitė 2009; Stankevičienė 2009: 21).

By contrast, and as already noted, while in Świebodzin the local church hierarchy ultimately supported Zawadzki's initiatives in the sense of taking part in the consecration of both church and statue, they have not adopted the site of the latter as a sacred space of any great importance – nor was Zawadzki promoted within the Church for his efforts, but remained an ordinary parish priest until his death. In other words, while any statue of Jesus is bound to have a sacred aura for the believer, as a sacred space this particular site lacks the necessary associations with divine interventions or other sacred events – miracles, in short – that would attract the interest of both the church hierarchy and believers in such miracles. To repeat, as a sacred space it has its own miracles, but in this case they did not stimulate the idea for the statue but evolved after its conceptualization. Only time will tell whether the site will become anymore sacred *because* it has the statue.

Nevertheless, in so far as the Church supported it at all, it can be seen as a small example of the attempts being made by the Catholic Church in Poland to maintain its position in a time of a moderate decline in church attendance and indeed to advance its cause in general, along with the activities of, for example, the strongly Catholic and conservative Radio Marya and associated media,

as well as Poles' continued devotion to John Paul II's memory as the Polish pope and the Church's tendency to align itself politically with the right-wing Law and Justice Party[5] government that came to power in 2015. Moreover, the statue and the new church in whose parish it sits can both be associated with recent suggestions that Christ should be declared the King of Poland and the Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland. On 21 November 2000, again on Zawadzki's initiative (publicity material), Świebodzin submitted itself symbolically to the protection of Christ the King, and the consecration of the statue, which was to symbolize this submission in concrete form, took place exactly ten years later. Indeed, one other sacred item placed next to the pew by the statue is the enthronement prayer, and as already noted the statue wears a crown to symbolize Christ as king.[6] Generally these suggestions seem to have come from enthusiastic individuals rather than the Church hierarchy, with whom the submission of Świebodzin to Christ the King was unpopular. Nonetheless, if in a much more modest and controversial fashion, they do represent attempts to link the Catholic Church to the Polish nation in a manner that can certainly be compared with the much more central place of the site of Šiluva in Lithuania's sense of nationhood. The key difference here is that in the Polish case these moves have been bottom-up initiatives not fully adopted by either Church or state; in the case of Šiluva, Church and state come together every September (the latter in the form of visits by the entire political class from the president downwards) to celebrate Lithuanian nationhood as a secular phenomenon deeply rooted in the Church's validation of it. This is not to say that the Polish state ignores or is hostile to the Catholicism of a majority of its citizens – far from it; rather, this extraordinary monument to Christ the King has so far not interested the religious authorities and secular politicians in the country as a site at which they might come together to affirm their joint commitment to the maintenance of Polish Catholic society and Polish nationhood.

In short, to repeat, the Świebodzin statue raises the issue of what constitutes a sacred space and whether such spaces are any different from a simple site of commemoration. While the new church, the Sanctuarium, like any consecrated church, is sacred in the sense that one encounters, indeed seeks out, the divine there, there is ambiguity over whether this applies to the statue, given its evident attraction for larger numbers of tourists than pilgrims.

Is the same true of other statues of Christ around the world? The circumstances in and reasons for which these other statues have been erected are very

varied, as are those who sponsored them. Some of them, like the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio, have chapels nearby in which services can be held; that is not true of the Świebodzin statue, which merely has its one outside pew for private prayer. However, the Rio statue had an unambiguously religious motive for its construction in the belief of those behind it that Brazilians were becoming less religious. In many cases, including that of Rio, the inspiration for the statue seems to have come from a lay believer or organization rather than a priest, often as a way of honouring Christ, or indeed someone or something entirely different, rather than marking the site of a vision or other miracle. Sometimes, indeed, the religious message seems to be entirely absent or secondary, political reasons being to the fore. Thus the statue of Christ in Dili, East Timor, was given to the then Indonesian territory by President Suharto of Indonesia to mark twenty years of its incorporation into Indonesia, simultaneously acknowledging the territory's Christian heritage; the statue in the Andes was put up by laity in 1904 to celebrate Chile and Argentina having resolved a potentially dangerous border dispute two years earlier (Bowman 1915: 76); the statue in Lima, Peru, was motivated by the desire of some Brazilian businessmen to celebrate Alan Garcia's presidency; a bishop of Ibiza constructed a statue to thank those on the island who had hidden him in the Spanish Civil War; the statue in Lisbon was put up to keep Portugal out of WWII; that in Madeira marks the place where the bodies of non-Catholics were disposed of; and in a number of other cases, local businessmen have been prompted to sponsor a statue by community spirit rather than clear religious feeling.[7] In only one case I know of, apart from the Świebodzin example, was the sponsor motivated by a dream, and that was a businessman in Imo State, Nigeria.[8] A general question therefore poses itself, namely which comes first in creating a sacred space – a miracle or vision, or a statue or similar structure?

Notes

1 This article was originally given as a paper at the International Conference on "History, Religion, and Culture III", held at the Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, Lithuania, on 9–11 October 2017. I am grateful to the organizers for inviting me to the conference.

2 As Zawadzki died in 2014, I feel free to identify him by name, and indeed it would pointless not to, given his reputation and the extensive local knowledge of his activities; his name will forever be linked with his statue, the crowning achievement of his career as the Builder Priest.

3 Personal field observations. I am grateful to Dr Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė for facilitating this visit in September 2014.

4 Although there are images of Christ here, in what is a far more complex religious site, the predominant representation appears to be of the Virgin, in accordance with her having appeared here in visions. A number of her images are also crowned; see Stankevičienė 2009.

5 PiS, or Prawa i Sprawiedliwość.

6 The crown is a "royal" one and not the crown of thorns usually associated with Christ's suffering, as in images of the Sacred Heart.

7 Information from Wikipedia, unless otherwise stated.

8 "Africa's largest statue of Jesus unveiled in Imo, the man behind it", *The News* (Nigeria), 01.01.2016, retrieved 26.04.2016.

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RELIGIOUS IDENTITY OF BULGARIAN CATHOLICS' COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: This article analyses the issue of religious identity of Bulgarian Catholics during the start of the 2000s. The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork materials gathered by the author in Bulgaria in 2015–2017. It presents the results of a research, carried out on a comparative basis among the communities of Bulgarian Catholics from Sofia, Plovdiv and its regions (in the villages of General Nikolaevo, Sekirovo (today forming the quarters of the town of Rakovski), Kaloyanovo, Belozem, Zhitnitsa).

The research performed by this author reveals that religious identity of Bulgarian Catholics is not a unified one. There are some different characteristics and peculiarities among the local and regional religious identity of this confessional community. The presented observations confirm the thesis that the local and regional religious identity of Roman Catholics are interconnected and mutually dependent. Further, the cultural and religious forms of Bulgarian Catholics' religiosity are transformed through acculturation and they are put in a new context with a distinctive cultural and religious identity.

Keywords: Bulgaria, Bulgarian Catholics' communities, religious identity

Introduction

Today religious identity among Bulgarians coincides with the differences in their faiths, which, in Bulgaria, are Eastern-Orthodox, Muslim, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Uniat and other Christian confessions[1]. The study presents the religiosity of Bulgarian Catholics for the period between the second part of the 20th century and the second decade of the 21st century. This chronological framework marks the time of transition from tradition to modernity among the communities of Bulgarian Catholics. The study focuses on the so-called southern *pavlikjans*, but it does not include the so-called northern *pavlikjans*, *Banat Bulgarians*, as well as *Uniates* who formally adopted Catholicism during the struggle for church independence during the Bulgarian National Revival period (Jankov 2003: 326).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the religious identity, as well as traditions and innovations of religious forms of contemporary Bulgarian Catholics. Moreover, the study specially focuses on the local and regional religious identity of the communities of Bulgarian Catholics. Religion as one of the most significant features of identity helps individual to determine the purpose of human life, and serves as a source of moral support. Moreover, "religious activity helps make individual aware of their community, enables them to symbolically express the social order, gain an objective awareness of society" (Serafimova 2011: 116).

The aim is to answer the following questions: How do different generations of Bulgarian Catholics understand the Roman Catholic identity nowadays? How does the religious identity become pronounced in contemporary Bulgarian Catholics life? This article deliberates the problem of changes in religious identity in Bulgaria during the start of the 2000s.

Methodology. This paper presents the results of a research, carried out on a comparative basis among the communities of Bulgarian Catholics from Sofia, Plovdiv, as well as in the villages of General Nikolaevo, Sekirovo (today forming the quarters of the town of Rakovski), Belozem, Kaloyanovo, Zhitnitsa in the region of Plovdiv from the 24th March to the 5th April 2017, and from the 1st to the 14th October 2010.

The ethnographic material was gathered by the author using anthropological fieldwork *methods* such as the questionnaire form, discussions, structured and semi-structured interviews, observation methods. 38 respondents from

different social strata were interviewed (students, pensioners, teachers, scholars, businessmen, white/blue-collar workers, priests (Catholics, Orthodox, Uniates, nuns, and monks)). The stratification of the sample was accomplished by gender, age and social strata. The sample contained 38 respondents, 17 of whom were female and 21 male. The age of respondents ranged from 26 to 80.

In recent years the Bulgarian Catholics have received rather great attention from different scholars. There are some surveys related to historical sociocultural, political, and religious aspects of Bulgarian Catholics (Curtis 1992; Brown 1983; Kanev 2002; Kent 2002; Leustean 2014; Eade 2012), local varieties of family and calendar feasts of Bulgarian Catolics (Boncheva 2005; Jankov 2003), local treatment of religion as a marital ban in view of its role as a key marker in constituting the community identity (Boncheva 2006), the distinctiveness of musical culture and national identity among the Bulgarian Catholics (Grozdew 2004), the interrelationship of Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria (Georgieva 1999).

Catholicism in Bulgaria

Catholicism in Bulgaria is the result of a complex and heterogeneous historical-political process (Grozdew 2014: 257). According to Janice Brown, although Bulgaria's Catholics now form one of the smallest Catholic national communities, numbering about seventy thousand, Bulgaria might have been a Catholic nation. Tsar Boris, baptised in 864 AD, approached both the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope, and at first leant towards Rome, but finally chose Orthodoxy in 870 (Brown 1983: 310). Catholicism in Bulgaria is related to missionary activities of the Passionists, the Capuchins, the Franciscans, and the Benedictine nuns who came from Italy, France (Grozdew 2014) and Poland. Their influence on Bulgaria's Catholics is not denied.

The policy of containment during Soviet times separated Catholic Europeans of the West from Catholics of the East for forty years and resulted in extensive persecution of the Church in Eastern Europe (Kent 2002: 5). In the early 1950s, the property of Bulgarian Catholic parishes was confiscated, all Catholic schools, colleges, and clubs were closed, and the Catholic Church was deprived of its legal status. Only nominal official toleration of Catholic worship remained (Curtis 1992: 90–91). According to Brown, by 1983 church

life was generally stagnant, the Catholic community was 'paralysed by fear and depressed by ghetto conditions and poverty' (Brown 1983: 314). Despite the Communist regime's attempts to eliminate religion in Bulgaria as part of secularisation strategy, Catholicism only weakened rather than faded away completely.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and democratic transformations in East Europe, the Roman Catholic Church in Bulgaria became a common part of the European Catholic Church. According to Peter Kent, 'the Roman Catholic Church had been one of the defining institutions of the concept of Europe and, through the development of Western Christendom, of European culture and civilization' (Kent 2002: 21). West European countries, such as Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Croatia, Poland, made a big impact on Catholic Church tradition in Bulgaria. Croatia's community has very old Catholic traditions in Sofia, whose representatives from Dubrovnik, as merchants arrived in Bulgaria in the Middle Ages. Italian cultural and religious influence on Bulgaria's Catholics is also very vivid. Nowadays Vatican is the most important centre for the study of Bulgarian Catholic priests. Austria's cultural and religious impact on Bulgarian culture is not denied. Sofia city was constructed according to the Vienna city' model, the support of Austrian Catholics was appreciated, as well.

There are three religious centres (Ruse, Plovdiv and Sofia) of Catholicism in contemporary Bulgaria. The oldest Roman Catholics' diocese of Plovdiv and Sofia was founded in 1601, as well as Ruse (diocese of Nikopol) in 1648. Majority of Bulgarian Catholics' communities are mainly situated around the centres of Ruse, Svischtov and Nikopol, as well as Plovdiv. There are some villages inhabited by the Catholic believers in Plovdiv region: Belozem, Borec, Duvanlii, Kaloyanovo, Miromir (Partchevich, Sekirovo, General Nikolaevo – nowadays the town of Rakovski), and Zhitnitsa.

St. Joseph Catholics' Parish in Sofia

Bulgarian Catholics from Sofia are closed up around Saint Joseph's Cathedral, which is located in the heart of Sofia, across from ruins of ancient Serdica, near the Central Mosque, the Synagogue, and the Central Market Hall. The temple is the co-cathedral of the Diocese of Sofia and Plovdiv, together with the Cathedral of St. Louis in Plovdiv. It has a long and complex history from its

construction, which started in 1875. Gradually, the parish began to increase due to the fact that foreign Catholics (Croatians, Germans, Austrians, the French) were visiting Bulgarian capital. Unfortunately, the church was destroyed by the Allied bombing raid during World War II (30.03.1944). The cathedral was rebuilt only after 60 years, on 2006 at its previous location after Pope John Paul II's visit to Bulgaria in 2002 (Pelovska 2006; Nikolova 2006).

Nowadays about 700 Catholics (in 2011 there were 3000 parishioners) attend the Holy Mass at St. Joseph Church every week. Sunday service attracts around 100 parishioners, ranging from regular Bulgarians to foreign diplomats speaking different languages. Its multicultural and multilingual character is a peculiar feature which singles the parish out from other Bulgarian parishes. While the church is attended by 80% of Bulgarians, its members include foreigners (Poles, Croats, Austrians, French, Italians, Romanians, Arabs, Filipinos, Lebanese, Vietnamese), those who come from different backgrounds and make different contributions. E.g., Catholics from Indonesia and Columbia practice local forms of popular devotion: they place bracelets at the foot of Mary's sculpture; Bulgarians place roses there – the national Bulgarian symbol. In the process, new forms of liturgy emerge. Some communities, e.g., French, include elements characteristic of liturgy celebrated in their country. Italian community prefers the midday Latin Mass, with roots back to early in the present century, while the Polish community attends the service, carried out in the Polish language, and incorporating distinctive elements of Polish liturgy.

The parish life is enlivened by organ concerts, nearby is a hostel which houses a considerable number of Catholic students, the course of catechumenate, which lasts for two or three years, enjoys great popularity among adult parishioners. Additionally, the parish organises pilgrimages to various sacred places of Bulgaria. During the Holy Week in April 2017, the author made a participant observation at the Road of the Cross organised by the parish members on the hill of Vitosha. The ceremony was led by three Polish Capuchins from the St. Joseph parish, accompanied by parish community members from seven European countries. Catholics in Bulgaria have a longstanding tradition to celebrate Marian feast in May in the mountains – there they celebrate the Holy Mass, pray rosary, sing chants and litanies venerating God's Mother.

During the fieldwork, the author interviewed the respondents from different ethnic groups (Bulgarians, Poles, Croats, Romanians, Italians, Russians)

which constituted a common part of St. Joseph Catholics' Church community. Polish Capuchin emphasised the strong faith of Bulgarian Catholics: "Every day they attend the Holy Mess and obey the moral rules and ancient traditions. With the help of grandmothers and grandfathers Bulgarian Catholics saved their faith" (II/3).

One Bulgarian woman who grew up in St. Joseph parish during Soviet times talked about her childhood. When in 1958 her parents had their wedding ceremony at the Catholic Church of St. Joseph, there was only one priest who wasn't imprisoned then. Others were in the concentration camp, under house arrest or simply detained. She mentioned that the Soviets established a tradition to close a church after the parish priest died. The respondent pointed out that "Sad as it was, there were no Catholic priests left in Soviet times. Obviously, it was done on purpose. Clearly, it was a form of repression..." (II/1).

Annihilating the clergy, the Soviets strived to undermine the pastoral activity within the Catholic Church, to instil fear and distrust among parishioners, also, to weaken the Catholic religious identity. According to respondent,

> *Repressions targeted not only the Catholic Church, but also the Bulgarian Orthodox and Unitarian Churches. The latter have kept unity with the Catholic Church until now – repressions both Churches underwent during Soviet times and other negative experience they had then brought them even closer* (II/1).

The Catholic and Unitarian Churches have maintained strong spiritual bonds until now, Unitarian priests sometimes even celebrate Mass together with Catholics. Additionally, Unitarian Church members take part in religious events organised by the Catholics, including the adoration of the Holy Sacrament. The author had a chance to talk to a young woman, a parishioner of a Unitarian Church, who every morning on her way to work attends Mass at a Catholic Church and explains it as her inner need.

Young Croatian man, a regular visitor of St. Joseph parish, talked about his religious experience in this parish:

> *I was baptised about twelve years in 1987. At that time priest was afraid to baptise me. The priest, who baptised me, was one of a few, which were survived at the prison after the War. The priest, called Pavel France. He baptised me secretly in secret ceremony in 1987 with my grandmother and*

her sister in Sofia. At that time it was not so easy. Most only old people was going in the church. The church never stopped the church life, but it was not easy according political situation.

I started as ministrant from twelve to twenty years in the St. Joseph Church. Now I am coming to Latin Mass in Sofia on Sundays. This Latin Mass has very very old tradition in Sofia. The people, who like the Latin Mass, they come on Sunday. A lot of foreign people come in Latin Mass. It's only one place in Sofia [where you can attend the Latin Mass]. *Our family like the Latin tradition. During the communist time existed this Latin Mess in Sofia. It's a long tradition in Sofia.*

I go to the church every Sunday because I like to go. I need to practice, I feel good, when I come. I feel nice in a church. I like, I am not thinking, that it's duty. I go, because I like to be a part of liturgy. Especially for our small church, I think, it is necessary. Because if people stop do it, would be difficult to survive the church surrounding of Orthodox. So, for me this is an issue. I married an Orthodox girl and we married in Catholic Church, in Cathedral of Plovdiv. Also this is tradition (II/4).

Some religious practices and traditions, mentioned in this interview, are very important for such young man, who has accepted them from his childhood. Such religious traditions are alive and are extended in his and his family life nowadays.

Later he spoke about differences of Bulgarian religiosity between Soviet period and nowadays:

It was difficult years in communist period. The generation between me and my grandparents was much less religious, because it was not easy for them. So, mostly, what I have got, was from my grandparents. Generation of my parents, they are not very religious, because it was not easy to be religious. About 20% of Orthodox are religious of my generations. Latin Catholics, who feel himself as a part of a community, are religious about 60%, may be, Uniates about 70%. Uniates are very strong community what I see in Bulgaria. The Orthodox tradition it's not so strong of my generation (II/4).

Another parishioner, born in Sofia in 1959, asked about Bulgarian religious identity, said that "First of all, we are Bulgarians, then Christians, and only after that we break up into Orthodox and Catholics" (II/1). In the case of her

family, both confessions are equally important, because her father is Orthodox and mother is Catholic. Thus, ethnic identity is considered to be of utmost importance, the second in line is Christian identity and confessional identity comes last.

A scarce number of Bulgarian Catholics, according to the respondent, was determined by two reasons.

> *The first cause is that lots of Catholics emigrated after the changes took place. None of the children, who accompanied me on the day of the First Communion, live in Bulgaria. I have also been away from the country. When communism came, lots of Bulgarian Catholics who had ties with Western Europe either remained there or managed to escape. After Bulgaria was freed from Turkish yoke there were not many Bulgarian Catholics left, because Catholics took part in the risings for freedom. Many of them died, others fled Bulgaria after the risings* (II/1).

The Roman Catholic Communities in Plovdiv Region

Catholic believers from small villages in the region of Plovdiv are the descendants of Pavlicians, which did not adopt Christianity as long as until the 9th century, later, encouraged by Capuchins, they became zealous Catholics.

Rakovski is the largest predominantly Roman Catholic town in the historical region of Thrace, located in the Plovdiv province. Rakovski was founded in 1966 with the merging of three villages – General Nikolaevo, Sekirovo and Parchevich. According to the statistical data, Rakovski had 25 520 population in 2017 (Demographic and Social Statistics 2017).

Nowadays the Catholic Church of Sacred Heart in Rakovski has 6000 Catholics: about 80% of them are seniors, 15% – middle generation and only 5% are youth. According to Catholic priest:

> *The biggest group of Catholics are women. Bulgarian men not participate in a church; they are aloof from the church life. It's our problem. Young people don't have a deep faith. Such tangible, as a power, property, and a success are appreciable. Bulgarian nation believes in superstitions. One part of people has a deep faith, another part – superficial faith* (I/9).

Another priest from Rakovski told about his childhood:

> *Communism destroyed the faith of people. Human beings could not attend the Churches. The policemen stood at the churches and destroyed their life. Only communists had possibility to study in the universities, only the grandparents and children could attend the churches. The faith was transmitted from grandparents to grandchildren. I was baptised by my grandmother at night, as well as my friend. The grandmother took me from my mother confidentially and baptised me in the church at night. I was baptised in 1985, after one month in the Nativity of God Mother Church near by Danube. In this church was baptised a bishop Evgenij Bossilkov (1900–1952), born in Belene. He was shot in Sofia, but his body was not discovered until nowadays. During communism time the faith was lost* (III/14).

A nun living in Sekirovo told me that the majority of people in the area are Catholics:

> *Some 8000 Catholics live here, however, most of them are not very devout – less than 50% of believers come to Mass on Sundays. There are three groups of parishioners: the elder generation (aged 60–70); young adults (aged 20–30), who study the Bible; and children, who study the catechism.*
>
> *Most parishioners come to church to baptise their children, for the wedding ceremony, however, they don't go to church regularly. The faith of those people has no expression in everyday life, there is no connection between their faith and their deeds. Besides, there's an ongoing discrimination of the Roma. There is a great distance between Bulgarians and the Roma. In Sekirovo one can see that Romany exist as a different community. There are about hundred Roma houses in Sekirovo where three-four families live in each of them. The Roma don't go to Mass because of discrimination. If ever they come to church, they remain standing by the door and are watched by everybody. I say, Jesus loves even his enemies. I speak about Roma's discrimination. I observe people's reaction. They say: "You don't know our experience with the Roma. They are uneducated, they are thieves." People don't want to integrate them.*

> *Jesus is very radical ordering us to love everybody. Bulgarian people don't accept my words. Faith is associated only with ideas or ideology, it doesn't get deeper* (I/3).

Belozem is another village in South Bulgaria, located 38 km from Plovdiv. It has about 5000 inhabitants. There are 700 Catholics in the Roman Catholic parish in Belozem; due to the demographic situation, the number of Catholics is on the decrease. The village is well developed with excellent infrastructure; a railway station, a town hall, a primary school, a kindergarten, a community centre with library, restaurants and gas stations. The majority of the Belazem population is engaged in farming – agriculture, greenhouses and livestock.

Belozem has two churches – Orthodox and Roman Catholic. This village is famous for a Catholic "International Christian Music Festival Belozem", which has been organised every summer since 2000. It's popular not only among Catholics, but also among Orthodox, Protestants and Muslims as well.

Nowadays, two brothers of the Capuchin Order with native Catholics, help people, do charity work, organise catechesis for children, youths, supervise a Bible study groups for adults. Their Kitchen of Saint Anthony gives fifty daily meals to the poor, especially for Roma people.

Zhitnitsa is one of the small villages in Plovdiv region. A small monastery of Franciscan sisters is located there. In the surroundings of Zhitnitsa, some forms of local popular devotion may be detected. Every day in May, Catholics gather at the crossroads, round small chapels with the statuettes of Mary, bring flowers there and sing chants venerating God's Mother. Every May in the village of Belozem the inhabitants have a procession honouring the Blessed Virgin during which they carry Mary's statue and flowers. Different groups of people (children, youth, and senior) take part in the procession. They stop in four places and read extracts from the Gospel dealing with Mary, Mother of God. Celebrating the feast of the Assumption of Mary, a procession is held again during which the participants chant, pray the rosary and recite a litany. Late in the evening, at about 7 p.m., they walk in a candle procession which lasts for one or one and a half hours (I/1).

There is an old tradition of the Franciscan, known as the Third Order of Saint Francis, in Zhitnitsa. There is a big group of women, about 70, who attend The Assumption of Mary Catholic Church every day. Additionally, every Tuesday they have popular devotions rituals of St. Anthony and his relic, and

once during the month, they have a common meeting. They have a very strong faith, praying rosary every day, and they have adoration every first Friday during the month. Besides that, they are very simple and have an old tradition to pray together rosary outside. It's possible to see a group of women sitting outside, near their house, who are praying rosary together. Generally speaking, there are a lot of praying traditions in Zhitnitsa village. For example, the families with their children are praying rosary before high Mass every Sunday. People like to pray rosary during funeral. They pray for all family and relatives, for their grandparents, parents and their children, they remember their ancestors. They don't finish praying (I/7).

Consequently, the traditional Catholic religiosity forms, such as rosary prayer, singing chants venerating God's Mother, participating in the processions honouring the Blessed Virgin during every May, are more specific to rural area people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the religious identity of Bulgarian Catholics is not a unified one. There are some different characteristics and peculiarities among the local and regional religious identity of those Roman Catholic communities. The presented observations and interviews confirm the thesis that the local and regional religious identity of Roman Catholics is interconnected and mutually dependent.

This investigation reveals that ethnic identity among Bulgarians is considered to be of utmost importance, the second in line is Christian identity and confessional (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Uniat) identity comes last.

This investigation reveals that the grandchildren generally identify themselves more strongly with the Catholic religious identity and Christian values of their grandparents than with their parents. Their mastery of necessary Catholic cultural codes gives them other options in their identity management than were available to their parents. Traditional Catholic religiosity forms such as a daily rosary prayer, singing chants venerating God's Mother, participating in the processions honouring the Blessed Virgin during the May month, are more specific to rural area people. Urban Catholics take priority to pilgrimages to sacred places of Virgin Mary, for example pilgrimages to Lurd in France, or Bachkovo monastery in Plovdiv region.

The cultural and religious forms of Bulgarian Catholics' religiosity are transformed through acculturation and they are put in a new context with distinctive cultural and religious content of identity.

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Notes

1 According to the survey of EURO 2000 and BBSS Gallup and Balkan British Social Surveys, in Bulgaria, 79% of the population defines itself as Christian, 16% as Muslim and 5% as atheist. Amongst the Christian population, 86% define themselves as Orthodox, less than 1% together Catholics and Protestants, and 13% as non-aligned Christians (Kanev 2002: 76).

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CIRCULAR MOBILITY AND NEO-PAGANISM (ESTONIAN CASE)

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Abstract: In recent years, numerous papers related to what is known as migration studies have been written. I would like to point out right away that this particular article does not belong to that stream of papers. It has rather been "brought to life" by a number of other factors. I consider as an example a story of the post-socialist migrant, using mobility between Estonia and Scandinavia after 2000, within the context of the search for the "national" not only as an "image" or a "narrative", but also as a migration strategy.

Keywords: Estonia, migration, neo-paganism

In recent years, numerous papers related to what is known as migration studies[1] have been written. I would like to point out right away that this particular article does not belong to that stream of papers. It has rather been "brought to life" by a number of other factors.

On the one hand, there has been a tendency towards the research of migration diasporas[2] from the perspective of the "national" as an institutional structure, which is predominant in Bulgarian literature. As a rule, this particular approach replicates studies of minorities' "revival" after the 1990s, the studying of which follows the paradigm of structuring the nation, as it has been displayed

in a number of papers (for example, see Gossiaux 1996: 191–198; Anastasova 2008: 5–10). When applied to a diaspora, it comes down to researching the institutions to which the diaspora is related (an embassy) and the ones created by it (a school, a church, mass media, etc.) in the process of adaptation to a foreign state (Penchev 2016). As a rule, some part of a diaspora is considered, and it is either in chronological terms (traditional, before/after the Second World War, socialist, post-socialist, etc.) or on account of some other distinctive features (professional, social, sexual, etc.; for example, see Krasteva 2014). Thus, a diaspora can be characterised as an isolated community (or a group), in accordance with the multicultural approach, which brings its national/ethnic features to a new country (at least some souvenirs from their homeland to a new home abroad). It is represented by an isolated community, which exists "on its own", preserves its traditions, and has limited contact with the macro-society that has no effect on it. It seems as if under any other approach a diaspora (if it even perceives itself as a community) could be considered as a group of *individuals* who create their own individual strategies of adaptation and integration. The latter are related to different circumstances pertaining mainly to the relations with the local population and the position of an individual / a group in the macro-society. However, naturally, this does not mean that no typological or universal features exist. This attitude is rather related to an intercultural approach[3] which considers both the role of an individual in migration processes and his or her interaction (or the interaction of a group) with the society in the recipient country. Obviously, in terms of methodology, a case study would probably be the most suitable method to be used in this respect, i.e., the study of the most significative cases that demonstrate individuality, predominant features, and the variability of the processes of adaptation/integration in the context of migration. Would those "cases" be representative? Maybe they would (since every single individual represents a kind of a social class), but even if they would not, they would contain a story and imagination, rich in cultural associations, structuring the image of "a national" and "a national narrative" in the context of migration. It can also be assumed that they would hardly be identical to the prism of institutes, which creates something like a "set" of features, including folklore, celebrations, food, and memories about the homeland.

On the other hand, the paradoxical development of "democratic changes" after the 1990s has provoked a search for unique features in the nature of minimum migration from the Socialist Bloc to the West (before the 1990s),

and within the migration flow, accounting for millions of people arriving from the countries of Eastern Europe that were "free" already.[4]

Ronald Skeldon believes that migration is the outcome of inter-relations between the level of economic development, the level of the formation of the state (nationhood), and the characteristics of the mobility of the population. Hence states with moderate social, economic, and infrastructural development force people to emigrate (Skeldon 1992: 52). Economic and social instability as well as the "abdication of the state" (in accordance with the popular media cliché existing in Bulgaria, while the claims laid against the authorities in different Eastern European countries are quite similar) determine the exceptionally labour-related nature of the post-socialist emigration flow, in which there have been considerably fewer white-collar workers[5] than so-called blue-collar[6] ones (in terms of their self-fulfilment in the recipient state). The following question arises in this perspective: how is identity related to the perceptions pertaining to the "national" structured in a socialist or a post-socialist emigrant?

Thirdly, the issue of immigration and mobility is very peculiar, presenting two possible strategies in the perspective of the "national".[7]

Hereby I consider as an example a story of the post-socialist migrant, using mobility between Estonia and Scandinavia after 2000, within the context of the search for the "national" not only as an "image" or a "narrative", but also as a migration strategy.

I would like to offer a more nuanced interpretation of post-socialist[8] migration to the West, which could represent different aspects of the search for "roots", and correspondingly, the structuring of the identity of a post-socialist migrant, on the one hand. On the other hand, I would like to present the role played by national mythology (a national story), generating the image of the homeland (the donor state) in the process of selecting one or another form of migration. This article was written on the basis of field studies carried out by the author in the Baltic states in 2013–2016, and, in particular, one specific study carried out on the Island of Muhu in Estonia in 2013.

> *Recently scientists doing folklore studies have been winning more projects under the European and national programmes than natural scientists.*
> *I strongly believe that today people need folklore much more than chemistry.*[9]

Estonia is one of the "high achievers"[10] in Eastern (North-Eastern) Europe, who joined the European Union and NATO in 2004 and has been a member of the Schengen Agreement since 2007. A quick overview of its history reveals the existence of a number of cornerstones that still determine the predominant cultural elements of the nation.

In the 13th century, the territory of modern Estonia was conquered by the Livonian Order (a branch of the Teutonic Order), and the Germans ruled these territories in the following centuries. In the 16th century, the country went through the Reformation, and Protestantism became the main confession. At the same time, as a result of numerous wars, some parts of Estonia were taken over by Sweden, and later on by the Russian Empire (1721). After the dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1918, Estonia claimed its independence, and the War of Independence led to the signing of the peace treaty between the Republic of Estonia and Soviet Russia in 1920. Estonia was independent until 1940, when it was occupied by the Soviet army (after Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) and became one of the republics of the USSR. From 1941 until 1944, the country was occupied by Germany, after which it was incorporated into the USSR. In 1990, Estonia restored its constitution, and in 1991, declared its independence.

Thus, it can be concluded that there have been several major influences affecting local culture, namely German, Swedish, Russian, and Soviet. Not much is known about the ancient history and culture of the Aesti.

Along with some democratic transformations, a number of significant changes took place in Estonian society, starting from a complex situation with the Russians in the country and "getting rid of the Soviet past", and up to such "accompanying phenomena" as economic recession, unemployment, and social instability.[11] In spite of that, the Estonians have been able to find ways out of very difficult situations for the sake of their independence. Alongside the anti-Soviet discourse and the "fight against monuments" (see information about a notorious story about the relocation of a monument to Soviet soldiers in Tallinn, e.g. Vukov 2009: 58–65), the nostalgia for the USSR manifests itself not only in memories about the social stability of the socialist "super-state", but it also turns into an artefact that often takes on funny shapes (for example, the series of socialist chocolates[12], socialist souvenirs, etc.).

One of the most significant post-socialist phenomena for a country as small as Estonia has been emigration.[13] In the result of migration processes, the population of Estonia diminished from 1,570,000 people in 1991 to 1,315,944

people in 2016.[14] The main points of destination preferred by the Estonians have been the countries of Northern Europe (the most numerous migration has been to Finland, also Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark), and Great Britain). The main form of migration between Estonia and these countries has been what is known as circular migration[15] – regular legal mobility (back and forth) between the donor state and the recipient state, or a "typical transnational way of life" (UN, Economic and Social Council – ECE/CES/2014/30[16]). Due to some obvious reasons (the opening of the borders, the fact that employed foreigners lack a social insurance number, and the absence of a state organisation responsible for the emigrant labour statistics, illegal labour, etc.), it is very difficult to monitor this type of migration. Some specialists observing migrations between Estonia and Finland (the most popular point of destination among the Estonian migrants) have pointed out that quite often people "do not know themselves where they would really like to settle down" (Zaiceva & Zimmermann 2008; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). In spite of that, it has also been pointed out that transnational mobility between Estonia and Finland has been increasing (ECE/CES/2014/30: 13).

When staying in Estonia within the framework of a short-term field study, it is quite difficult to arrange a meeting with Estonian emigrants who have returned home. In 2013, within the framework of research dedicated to the religious commitment of Estonians living on the islands in the Baltic Sea, I was lucky enough to meet one Estonian lady who spends her winters in Norway, while coming to one of the villages on her home island of Muhu for the summertime.[17] Piret[18] was about 55 years old and a former medical worker, who left Estonia after she had been made redundant at the local hospital in the middle of the 2010s. She continued her employment in Scandinavia in a company engaged in apartment cleaning.

It should be pointed out here that Muhu is a very peculiar island, which welcomes hundreds of tourists from Estonia, the Scandinavian countries, and the republics of the former USSR (especially from nearby Saint Petersburg, whose inhabitants are in the habit of renting summer houses in the Baltic states in summer). The island has preserved its traditional appearance, especially Koguva village, which represents a fully preserved fishermen's village. This island is the homeland of the classical Estonian writer of the Soviet period, Juhan Smuul (Schmuul), whose monument stands by the sea (it was relocated from Tallinn in 2006), while his house has been converted into a museum. There are

Figure 1. Piret's Sacral Place (*koda*). Photo by Ekaterina Anastasova.

several villages and farmhouses on the island. The island still reveals traces of ancient history, presenting castle ruins, stone graves (from the end of the first millennium BC to AD), the medieval St. Catherine's Church (12th century), windmills, the ethnographic museum, etc. Muhu also has some connections with the processes of European integration; namely in 2012, the Fishing Museum was set up, supported by European funding. All in all, Muhu is a "folklore village" in which local ethnography and folklore (dwellings, settlement, crafts, handicrafts, songs, tales, etc.) have turned into a way of life, which is displayed to visitors and tourists by the locals with great pleasure (and for a charge).[19]

Piret's house and the yard represent an authentic image of the traditional Estonian way of life. The main dwelling house is decorated in the manner of a traditional barn. In the yard, there are several outbuildings, a stone fence (according to local beliefs, these stones protect the inhabitants from evil spirits), wooden idols in the garden, and an archaic *koda* (a summer kitchen that

Figure 2. Inside the Sacral Place. Photo by Ekaterina Anastasova.

is used as a fisherman's hut on Muhu Island). Her house is located just a few steps away from an archaeological site, which is referred to by the locals as "sacrificial stones". These are huge roundish stones with dents in them, in which the locals would leave gifts, according to local beliefs. Today it is still believed that these stones have magical powers, which give health and well-being (there are about 1,700 similar stones in Estonia, and about 500 of them are referred to in legends and beliefs, while a hundred stones are protected by the state as

archaeological sites). People still leave money, candles, and other small items in the dents on these stones.

Piret spends eight months a year in Norway and comes back to Estonia for the remaining four months (from May to September). She welcomes tourists and visitors from Norway and other Scandinavian countries into her house, attending to them herself. She has a garden and a small greenhouse, and also a few sheep. Piret is planning to come back to Estonia for good when she gets old.

The most interesting building in her household is the *koda*, which she refers to as a cult structure, where only the lady of the house can enter. This is where she prays and holds special rituals in honour of her guardian spirit. This holy place took its beginning after lightning had struck a huge old tree in the yard, which fell down on the house, doing some serious damage (almost dividing it in two), but no one got hurt. This occurrence stimulated her faith, and she built a sanctuary of her own to hold daily rituals.

But who or what does Piret believe in? She barely answered this question, nor did she name the spirit or told us anything about her rituals. She allowed us to look inside, and we saw several charred tree branches, which made us think that she burned something in there while saying her prayers. Piret emphasised that this was very personal and should not have been discussed or recounted.

Basically, in the context of the mysterious Muhu and the characteristics of Estonian mythology, Piret's faith can be reconstructed. As has already been mentioned in the beginning, we do not know much about the life and religion of the Estonians before the 13th century. Some individual data about the beliefs of Estonians can be found in chronicles and manuscripts, but mainly they are reconstructed on the basis of materials collected in the 19th century and Kristjan Jaak Peterson's[20] translation of *Finnish Mythology* by Cristfried Ganander[21]. Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, the founder of the Estonian Learned Society, published folklore texts, including legends and mythology. He wrote a draft of the Estonian epic in prose, which later became the basis of the Estonian national epic.[22] In 1925 the *Taarausk* (The Faith of Taara) organisation started its activities. Taara is perceived as a deity that is known in one of the Livonian chronicles as a supreme deity from Saaremaa, an island next to Muhu. A new branch of Estonian paganism started in the 1980s – *Maausk* (The Faith of the Earth), forming an organisation called *Maavalla Koda* (1995). Today, it incorporates the covens from different regions of Estonia; they have relations with pagan communities outside of the country. Their faith is defined as a unity

Figure 3. Sacral Stones. Photo by Ekaterina Anastasova.

of "the faith of Taara" and "indigenous Estonian religions", as "everything the Estonians have been believing in throughout the last 800 years of history and thousands of years before that". The calendar of *Maavalla Koda* dates back more than 10,000 years (the foundation year of the organisation is marked to be 10,208/1995), from the moment of the "Birth of the Estonian Land" (it is believed that it emerged in the result of the retreat of a glacier). Religion is animistic and local, i.e., every single locality has its own deity or spirit which cannot be removed or relocated. The main places of worship are sacred groves

(*hiis*), sacrificial stones, springs, and trees. Even though some holy sites are already under state protection (as archaeological sites), the organisation is still discussing options for their preservation with the state. From time to time, conflicts arise in connection with the erection of infrastructure facilities. The main goal of this organisation is "to provide every single Estonian, regardless of his or her opinions or beliefs, with an opportunity to take pride in the religion of his or her ancestors".[23]

It is quite peculiar that in 2000, statistics registered 18% of believers in Estonia, while a serious sociological study conducted in 2002 found that 11% of Estonians had a liking for *Maavalla Koda,* or the "Estonian traditional religion" (Kõiva 2016: 64–77; see also Trifonov 2006). Obviously, the pre-Christian faith poses a much greater concern for Estonians than Lutheranism or Orthodox Christianity (which is traditional for the territory where the Seto tribe lives, and for some islands in the Baltic Sea). In spite of the bans imposed by the Lutheran Church, and later also of the disapproval expressed by the Soviet authorities (during that period, the organisation functioned illegally) and the victimisation of the "old faith" after the democratic changes in some areas (for example, Hiiumaa, where the religious field is occupied by Baptists), neo-paganism was revived along with the independence of the country.

The link between neo-paganism (considered within the paradigm of new religious movements) and nationalism, which is emphasised in the definitions of this phenomenon, is also well-known. V. Schnirelman defines neo-paganism as a nationwide religion, which is generated artificially by urban intellectuals from the fragments of ancient local beliefs and rituals with the aim "to revive national spirituality" (Schnirelman 1998: 3). As a rule, the main objective of such movements is considered to be the generation of the "new ethnic/national identity" (cf. definitions by Strimska 2005: 1–53; Aitamurto & Simpson 2013: 1–9; Doyle White 2016, etc.).

It appears that the generation of this new national identity, influenced by the ideology of neo-paganism, has been quite successful. It is obvious that it supports the identity of not only 11% of the population of Estonia, but of some migrants that circulate between Estonia and the countries of Northern Europe and Great Britain. Neo-paganism determines the attachment to one's home locality, inhabited by one's own, at times individual spirits and deities. My interview demonstrates the neo-pagan beliefs of one migrant, and shows that this is one of the reasons that makes Estonians choose *mobility* over *immigration* (as the studies of the mass emigration of Estonians to Finland have shown).

This example also reveals a new theoretical perspective. It appears that it is not only the urban elite who accepts "authentic religion". Obviously, this case represents a new trend in the development of nationalism, where the latter is no longer the creation and practice of national elites (Gellner 1999 [1983]), but the spirituality of "ordinary people". The opposition between global and national is already taking place at the level of elites and ordinary people. Nationalism is developing among the latter as a form of resistance and opposition to transnational authorities, transnational businesses, and transnational bureaucracy.

Within the framework of this topic, it is essential to point out that the Estonian case demonstrates the structuring of identity, in which *folklore* (and *pseudofolkloric*) *sources* predominate. These perceptions are becoming determinant under the conditions of migration so much that the conservative worldview / model of the world, enclosed within the framework of tradition (island isolation should also be taken into account), is becoming the basis for a more successful migration model, i.e., *circular mobility*, linked to faith in local spirits and deities, which are only available in one's homeland.

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Notes

1 For example, see the bibliography of migration studies in Bulgaria by Mancheva & Troeva 2011; theoretical perspectives of migration studies can be found in Krasteva 2014. See Marushiakova & Popov 2013: 11–34, who consider the ethnographic approach in the research of the phenomenon of migration.

2 In Bulgarian literature, the term *diaspora* (with relevant specifications, i.e. traditional, socialist, etc.) is used to denote different waves of migration. For the purposes of this article, it is essential to point out that in the Baltic States (and not only), the term *diaspora* covers emigration before and immediately after the Second World War. Hereby I am using this term with its Bulgarian connotations.

3 For multiculturalism and interculturalism, see Alonso-Ponga & Pena Castro 2016: 52–63.

4 Under the socialist regime, migration "to the East" was determined by the so-called Iron Curtain:

- a risky *escape* into the "free world";
- expulsion from the homeland for dissident manifestations;
- *limited options for legal emigration* for the purpose of pursuing personal and professional ambitions and aspirations (marriages with foreigners, labour emigration by invitations, for highly qualified specialists).

After the democratic changes took place, migrations have been determined by a symbolic shift of the Iron Curtain from the Socialist Bloc to the West (access to the Schengen zone and the European labour market; white/black lists of the states in/outside the EU, etc.). Labour migration in search of a "normal life", which is impossible under the conditions of economic recession, social instability, and political cataclysms in post-socialist countries, prevails.

5 Highly qualified professionals that manage to find prestigious jobs in the recipient country.

6 Emigrants that find low-skilled jobs, quite often notwithstanding good education and qualifications (sometimes they come across as blue-collar workers).

7 Quite often they are contingent on the „light at the end of the tunnel" in the donor state, as interviews with Bulgarians voting abroad (BNT, 2016) in the last election in Bulgaria (2016) have demonstrated.

8 See Anastasova 2017: 228–240.

9 U. R., about 40, higher education, Tallinn, December 2016, private conversation.

10 Estonia is referred to as the "Baltic tiger", or the "fifth Scandinavian country". In the 2000s, Estonia had the lowest debt (13% of the GDP), and in 2011 it entered the Eurozone (according to data provided by the Eurostat agency).

11 See, for example, the memories of an Estonian diplomat who talks about an upsetting image of the first years of democracy: "I opened the fridge, and there were only a couple of yoghurts left. We went through a lot of difficulties" (M. M., female, higher education).

12 Chocolates with the pictures related to socialism, for example, Leonid Brezhnev and sunflowers (this crop was believed to be especially abundant during his rule). By the way, the "Soviet fashion" started after M. Gorbachev's Perestroika, and is widespread throughout the world.

13 It is worth mentioning that in the period of 1950–1980, Estonia was a country accepting emigrants (mainly from other republics of the USSR), while in 2000–2011,

it was accepting emigrants from Finland, Great Britain, the USA, and Russia (people of Estonian origin born abroad) (see https://www.stat.ee/phc2011, 12.12.2016).

14 Data cited from Eesti Statistika (Estonian Statistics), Population by sex and age group, 1 January (see http://andmebaas.stat.ee/Index.aspx?lang=en, 23.04.2017).

15 The notion of circular migration (similarly to "pendulum-type" migration, circular migration is transboundary, while the "pendulum" is related to regional migrations, like town – village) has been covered in a number of articles, and several attempts to define it have been made. Cf. Skeldon 2012 and lit. quot.; Krasteva & Otova & Staykova 2011; UNESCO 2007 (see http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001557/155779R.pdf, 15.12.2016).

16 Economic Commission for Europe. Conference of European Statisticians. 62nd plenary session, Paris, 9–11 April 2014. Point 4 of the preliminary session agenda – Measuring transborder mobility between Estonia and Finland with the aid of collecting data by means of mobile positioning. Prepared by Statistics Estonia and the Board of Statistics of Finland (see http://www.cisstat.com/BigData/CIS-Big%20Data_05%20UNCES%20Estonia_Finland-migration.pdf, 15.12.2016).

Also see http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2014/ECE_CES_2014_30-Estonia___Finland-Migration.pdf, 15.12.2016).

The data, collected by means of mobile positioning, is an analysis of the relocation of mobile phones provided and analysed by mobile network operators from Estonia and Finland.

This method is suitable for such highly technological states as Estonia and Finland, since both countries hold leading positions in the field of IT technologies. On the other hand, the custom of changing SIM cards when moving from one country to another makes it difficult to carry out research, as has been pointed out by the authors of the report (p. 13).

17 Muhu is the third largest island in Estonia (after Saaremaa and Hiiumaa). This is a part of the Moonsund archipelago in the Baltic Sea. The population of the island is 1,600 people.

18 The name of the respondent has been changed for ethical reasons.

19 Here I only present my observations from Muhu Island during my brief stay in 2013. More about religion and religious processes in Estonia see in the works of T. Jonuks, E.-H. Västrik, R. Ringvee, etc.

20 Kristjan Jaak Peterson (1801–1822), Estonian poet. His translation from Swedish to German of *Finnish Mythology* by Christfried Ganander (1789) was published in 1822, after the death of the translator.

21 Christfried Ganander (1741–1790), Finnish folklorist, writer, linguist, author of the dictionary of the Finnish language (more than 30,000 words – *Nytt Finsk Lexicon*, 1787), and pastor. *Finnish Mythology* (*Mythologia Fennica*) was published in 1789.

22 On the basis of the examples from Finnish mythology, Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (1798–1850), an Estonian writer and doctor, gave birth to the idea of the Estonian epic poem *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son). In 1844 he published a collection of folklore and mythological stories in German. He described the pantheon of deities (the supreme deity Vanemuine, and others). By means of schools and newspapers those stories became very popular.

23 For detailed information about the history, features, organisation, structure, goals, and events of *Maavalla Koda*, see http://www.maavald.ee/en/about-maavalla-koda (12.12.2016).

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INVENTING SACRED PLACES: WOODEN SCULPTURES AND PLACEMAKING OF CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE

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Abstract: This article describes some characteristics of modern vernacular architecture as placemaking models and presents the biographies of two monuments – the energy pillars. The paper also examines the connection between the concept of earth power and the cosmopolitan views of earth energies. These monuments are used to highlight the religious, folkloric, and healing potential. In the expository part, I shall address the attitudes towards the structures and discuss to what extent they can be regarded as creative innovations.

Keywords: energy pillars, geopathia, new religious movements, placemaking, wooden monuments

Introduction

Placemaking in public spaces uses institutional support, official permits, and resources for beautifying the surroundings. The majority of the wooden sculptures and monuments installed in Estonian public space since the 1980s have been designed by artists, although examples of vernacular art do exist. Wooden

sculptures have been created as part of placemaking in the urban (suburban) environment. At the same time, wooden sculptures have also been installed on private lands without any institutional backing. This paper examines wooden sculptures – energy pillars, which have been created since the 1990s and are consecrated with an initiation rite as places of special power. The most well-known examples include the large wooden pillar in Otepää, southern Estonia, and the one in the Tuhala karst area near Tallinn.

Materiality and placemaking have been examined in anthropology, folkloristics, and in religion studies for approximately thirty years (Mazumdar & Mazumdar 2006; Orsi 1999; Vásquez & Knott 2014; Sofield *et al.* 2017). Sofield remarks that placemaking as a result of a community-led organic process invents emic, organic, folkloric, and community-driven initiatives that differ markedly from the formal 'industry' of place-making. Tourism-related outcomes are explored even where tourism was not a primary motivation (Sofield *et al.* 2017: 2). This standpoint also suits Estonian cases.

This article describes some characteristics of modern vernacular architecture and the placemaking model and presents the biographies of two monuments. These are used to highlight the religion-related practices concerned with material objects and their religious and folkloric potential. We can trace new explanations of earth power as well as the invention of cosmopolitan teachings of earth energy in local culture. In the expository part, I shall address the attitudes towards the structures and discuss to what extent they can be regarded as creative innovations.

To characterise the wooden sculptures or monuments, it should be mentioned that the societal meaning of wooden sculptures is somewhat different from that of metal and stone monuments – these clearly stand for mental and symbolic values rather than events or persons. The past can also be interpreted as mythical, reconstructed, and folkloric. Sculptures have a number of functions: they are used to decorate and structure spaces/environments, they carry folkloric, mythical or religious meanings, while statues are expressions of vernacular architecture and markers of mixed religious expressions. Their production is cheaper and faster, but they need considerable care – their age is short. They are necessary for performing ritual practices, which is one of their many functions (in more detail see Kõiva 2017; Kivari 2016).

Otepää Energy pillar. Photo Andres Kuperjanov 2005.

Method

The method used for this research was folkloristic. Several data collection techniques were employed to collect data; observations were made of the physical environment of the wooden monuments. People and their activities were studied by means of participant observation and interviews. Data was recorded in the form of field notes, photographs, and video recordings as well as by examining newspapers and websites. This paper is part of a larger ongoing study of sacred spaces (both private and public).

Short Historical Background

Dowsing is one the oldest methods and was still common in the early 20th century. This was, above all, necessary for finding good water sources for wells, but dowsing rods were also used for locating mineral resources or treasures. According to ethnologist Ants Viires, dowsers of previous centuries sometimes wore special clothing, and their experiences during dowsing were close to altered states of consciousness and unconsciousness (Viires 1986). Dowsing rods were not the only method for locating groundwater – hidden aquifers were given away by differences in vegetation, unusually coloured or shaped plants, and other natural signs (see Skriptoorium). Unlike in the Western European tradition, the 18th–19th-century Estonian calendar literature and popular publications did not address locating treasures with dowsing rods (cf. Estonian calendars 1739–2015).

The trajectory of changes in earth power / earth energy-related folklore and belief practices cannot be clearly defined on the basis of current knowledge. Still, it is clear that throughout time their focus for these practices has been on health, followed by other aspects. In older folklore records we can trace the concept of earth power – earth, beer, milk, etc. had power). Many important knowledge popularisation activities have been carried out via lectures by and practices of mediums and healers, which have helped to establish a newer belief layer regarding dangerous earth energy, spatial points, and sleeping above an aquifer as a health risk:

> *Buildings, especially residential buildings, must not be built on still aquifers, because you cannot get a good rest sleeping on top of them and this may lead to many illnesses* (Koppel 2011).

In the 1990s, the increasing use of dowsing rods and frames led to the emergence of hobbyists and professional service providers who helped to determine the location of aquifers and dangerous areas in living quarters and buildings, find places with beneficial properties for storage facilities, locate places with favourable conditions for growing plants (see Skirptoorium), and diagnose people's health status and illnesses. The spectrum of health problems and indicators diagnosable or measurable via this method came to include the intensity of stress and depression, lesions, chronic diseases, tumours, blood pressure and blood count, but also the intensity of intrapersonal relationships and their failure (Kõiva 1993).

One of the new notions introduced into the heath and pendulum market was the idea of an invisible energetic grid that occurs on the Earth's surface – a concept formulated by German physicist Ernst Hartmann (1915–1992). Hartmann spread his ideas through various publications in the 1950s and 1960s, of which *Krankheit als Standortproblem* (1954) was central. According to his theory, these magnetic-like lines form a regular grid around the Earth, along compass lines at a distance of approximately two metres; the negative effect they exert on living in a particular place is the reason for a higher rate of mortality in that place. According to various printed and oral materials, sleeping or working at the location of a Hartmann's knot causes problems with health and technology and can even prove to be fatal (Kõiva 1993; Kivari 2016). Rein Koha, a professional doctor, not only investigated Hartmann's net in medical environment, but also initiated experimental investigations. As a new approach, people began to determine the healing properties and functions of old cultic sites and offering stones in particular (Kõiva 1993), which was followed by the establishment of new sites.

On his website, Energoman (2018) provides the following summary of everything that concerns buildings: *This is certainly due to constant urbanisation and buildings being built right next to one another. These days, you can safely say that 40–60% of people have built their homes in areas with unfavourable energy fields. This study was concerned with Estonia, but I am certain that it is the same in other countries, especially in Europe and the U.S., where people constantly*

enter new site fields or remain in such areas only partially. The 'energetic' layer of religious/new spiritual lore is concentrated around the concept of certain places that embody an unexplainable power that has a strong impact on the mental and physical wellness of a human as well as on plants and trees. Energy columns are reported to be situated at geological breaks (meaning they occur due to peculiarities of the earth's surface) or in churches and other sacred places. The forces that can be detected around the columns are often related to magnetism, electricity or just 'fields'.

The entrenchment of teachings and practices in everyday life requires the existence of a certain critical number of practitioners and communal activities. Since the 1980s, people with similar skills and worldviews have joined the Estonian Geopathic Society. The conferences of the society have served as interdisciplinary forums with a broad scope, where representatives of different research fields hold discussions and share their knowledge of the topic in the form of academic presentations (cf. Koha 2006, 2009; Kivari 2016). The society's activities were endorsed by academician Anto Raukas; the fact that it is part of an academic institution – the Institute of Geology – created an interesting social dialogue which brought together academic and intuitive research. Raukas' personality and charisma served as a unique guarantee of credibility not only to the pendulum community but also to other extrasensory disciplines.

In the next chapter I discuss, by examining the history of two sites, the process leading from the previously mentioned colourful practices to the explanation behind specific energy columns and the installation of wooden pillars on sites charged with energy.

The History of the Otepää Energy Column

The area of Otepää in southern Estonia is an ancient settlement site and rich in historic landmarks. In ancient times, Otepää hillfort featured a stronghold of the Estonians from Ugandi County, where they successfully fought invading crusaders and Russian armies from the 11th to the 13th century. Otepää had an important role in the Estonian national independence movement. On 4 July 1884, pastor Rudolf Kallas consecrated the first Estonian flag in Otepää Church. During the Soviet period, this picturesque area served as a training site of the Soviet ski team. The most notable events of the independence period include

a visit by the leader of the Tibetan people, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama Tendzin Gyatso on 3 October 1991, during which he blessed Lake Pühajärv and reportedly visited the future site of the energy column. The historic visit is commemorated by a wooden sculpture on the edge of Pühajärve Park, which faces the lake.

A monument celebrating the existence of positive energy fields was unveiled in Mäe Street on 1 October 1992. The upper part of the more than two-metre-tall wooden pillar, erected in the energy field, features twelve forged-iron bear figures. The erection of the pillar was initiated by the then Mayor Jaanus Raidal (born 1967), who was one of the founding members of the Estonian National Independence Party, established in 1988, and joined the green movement in the same year. He became a member of the parliament in 1992.

The entire field is surrounded by benches, and the location of these as well as the column itself was selected by psychics. The energy column is a symbol that reminds us that in this rapidly changing world, humans are a part of nature and everything is based on the rules of nature, which rely on balance and co-dependency. The Wikipedia entry for Otepää says the following:

> *The city is home to Otepää Church. Next to the church there is a monument commemorating soldiers killed in the Estonian War of Independence and an energy column* (Wikipedia; cf. Oidra 2017).

The energy column makes the location unique – there are no similar sculptures in our neighbouring countries. As a result of the media fame, a holiday house of the same name has been opened near the column:

> *The Energy Column Holiday House is located in a quiet area. The famous energy column is just across the road. Come and relax in an energetically charged and empowering location! You will have the use of four rooms and a cosy fireplace lounge on the ground floor of the building* (Energiasamba puhkemaja).

In the summer of 2003, the column fell over and was replaced by a new one with the help of craftsmen from Otepää. Riho Karu, Deputy Mayor of Otepää rural municipality, confirmed to the media that the column, which had been erected more than a decade ago, was completely rotten in the inside. The energy column was given to local craftsmen, who restored it within a few weeks (BNS 2003). The

article triggered a brief discussion on social media and in comments sections, but tourists and other people who happen to come across the column are not interested in the polemics on its authenticity.

The History of Tuhala Witch's Well and Energy Pillar

Tuhala Witch's Well is located in a karst area in northern Estonia (in Kose rural municipality in Harju County). There are eleven prehistoric settlements and three burial cairns in the vicinity. The area features several notable natural/man-made monuments – approximately thirty offering stones with small depressions, the sacred Kataveski juniper and four supposed sacred sites. The local non-material cultural heritage that dates back to the 19th century is also noteworthy with its legends about witches, witch doctors, and sages. These narratives form the bases for the contemporary history of placemaking. Legends are supported by the popular name for Tuhala rural municipality, Nõiavald, which roughly translates as 'witch's realm' (Kallasmaa *et al.* 2017 [2016]). Today, the main attraction in Tuhala is the so-called Witch's Well, which begins to overflow during times of high water when the flow rate in the Tuhala River is at least 5,000 litres per second, making the well 'boil over' up to 100 litres of water per second. The well provides brownish, yet clean, bog water.

Behind the advertisement of the phenomenon is a local man, Ants Talioja, the head of Tuhala Nature Centre, who is an expert on local folklore. He has written the books in order to highlight the special significance of local folklore (cf. Talioja 2002). Ants Talioja began advertising the site using folklore and the phenomenon of the Witch's Well, but it is generally known that the well was already a sightseeing destination in the 1970s. A few decades later, in 2001, mediums located an energy column there, which was then featured in several media channels:

> *Estonia's most powerful energy pillar was discovered next to the Witch's Well in 2001. The energy column (as it is commonly called) is a stream of electromagnetic radiation that is expelled from the Earth's crust via a vertical limestone passage. These often occur in karst areas as 50–80 cm circles. Tuhala energy pillar has a very strong magnetic field. The oak pillar erected next to the Witch's Well marks the exact location of the*

positive energy column. An equally powerful column is located in a cave in Lourdes, France (Post 2001).

Folklorist Kristel Kivari, who has studied the phenomena of Tuhala and Kirna Manor (Järva County), highlights Rein Hanstein as one of the first mediums and the discoverer of the energy column, and refers to influential dowser Rein Weber's[1] role as the developer of the spirituality of Tuhala as well as the advertiser of the location (Kivari 2016).

As the next logical step, Tuhala was advertised as a special healing place. New rituals started to be performed at the site and the number of tourists increased (see Kõiva 2017). The national television channel ETV traditionally reports the overflowing of the Witch's Well as a special event in the news. People come to see this phenomenon in buses and cars, making Tuhala a popular place to observe high water in spring. Aside from the Witch's Well, attention has also been drawn to the energy pillar, other energetic sites, and the ritual conducted on site. The whole complex has been featured both in Estonian and via international media (*BBC News*, *Herald Tribune*).

In conclusion, we can see that this significant contemporary site was shaped by a number of people, but the long history of the place is once again important – it is located in an unusual natural landscape – a karst area. The energy pillar and the media contributed to the combined effect of the above. The site became a popular tourist attraction thanks to its natural environment, traditions, spirituality, and esoteric nature.

Site Efficiency and the Multitude of Opinions

Eric Hobsbawm distinguishes between three types of invented traditions, each of which has a distinctive function: a) those establishing or symbolising social cohesion and collective identities, b) those establishing or legitimatising institutions and social hierarchies, and c) those socialising people into particular social contexts. The first type has been most commonly referred to and often taken to imply the two other functions as well (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: 9). In the case of Tuhala, the emphasis is put on socialising people into a social context.

The next stage takes us to the efficiency of the site: people often discover other sites with healing properties and locate places where specific groups of

illnesses can be treated. Talioja shares stories about the beliefs regarding Tuhala, which vary from reports of diseases going into remission to miraculous recovery narratives. The proportion of information mediated by storytellers and the recipients of their stories varies to a great degree and in the following text, it is somewhat unclear whether Talioja recounts other people's (Weber's?) opinions or whether journalist Jõgeda is referring to previously published media texts:

> *Ants Talioja tells a story of a lady who came to see the columns with a tour group and was back at six o'clock the next morning. "Three hours later, there was a crack in her ear – and she could hear again." Dowsers assure that people with radiculitis and rheumatism and those who are impotent or infertile should find relief here* (Jõgeda 2007).

One of the most detailed pendulum demonstrations featured in the media was conducted by Rein Weber, who talked about what could be healed at Tuhala:

> *Hepatitis? The pendulum only shows 10% on the map. It is practically useless for treating this. Flu? Now this you can probably heal. Schizophrenia? Practically zero. Pneumonia? It doesn't help. Cancer? It could have a positive effect. Gynaecological diseases? The pendulum does not move in the case of infection. The pendulum begins to move once Weber stops to think what illness to name next. Headache? Very little. Impotence? See, the pendulum moves, so it could be beneficial. Female infertility? See, it moves again* (Heinla 2001).

Ants Talioja's own position is represented in interviews given to the media within a longer period of time, as well as in media appearances and video clips that demonstrate how he has progressed from being a local history enthusiast to believing in energy fields. In later interviews he refers to renowned specialists, the expert opinions of powerful mediums, and the participation of academics in determining the location, and shares his opinions about what happened. In these interviews Talioja is certain his personal energy is so great that the column cannot cause damage to him. A video filmed in educational style features Talioja and interviewer Kalju Paldis (biogeodesist) when sharing their experiences in sensing energy: [y]*ou need to put your left or right hand near the oak log; if you feel warmth, cold, heaviness or a tingling sensation, it is an energy column* [---] – *Tuhala has an energy field so strong that your hands*

tingle all the time. However, if you pull back, you will face another energy field (*Energiasambad Tuhala nõiakaevul* 2012).

Even though energy fields and energy pillars received fewer comments than exciting health topics (reactions are mainly triggered by fresh news stories), these discussions display a colourful range of opinions. The general attitude towards energy pillars is positive:

> *VAHO (February 13, 2017)*
> *For people passing by it's just a column. For those who are close to nature and love hugging trees, it can be a place to get some energy.*

> *Gitapandit (December 4, 2015)*
> *Amazing positive energy can be felt and gathered and one is cleansed by just being there. There is a board with guidelines telling you what you should do to receive and feel the energy.*

At the same time, people are seeking answers to questions whether the phenomena exist, why they work, and to what extent they work:

> *Ligeia (29.10.2005, at 17:35)*
> *I was wondering how many of you believe in the changing or healing powers of energy or whether someone has personally felt something near the energy column? – I didn't feel any warmth or cold, even though I was told I should have. I did get a splitting headache. Perhaps people have different reactions to energy. What is your general view on the New Age movement?*

Nevertheless, it is clear that sceptics report every setback online as evidence of things not working and of false teachings. When the first wooden pillar in Otepää fell over, commentators were not interested in the fact that wooden sculptures and pillars do not last long in the Estonian climate. Instead, they presented their own views on this phenomenon:

> *Hari Matus (19.07.2003 15:30)*
> *If the column is a source of energy, then you'd have to be able to use it to light a lantern, a light bulb or even a simple light diode, whereas Eesti Energia should not make money from this energy. The words of these energy column nuts will continue to be seen as a lack of natural science education until they manage to light such a lamp. Their secondary school*

> *diplomas should be withdrawn and they should be sent back to school to study physics.*

Harsh criticism sometimes forces those who believe in energy columns to renounce or hide their opinions:

> *"You relax, close your eyes and put your hands on it," the singer said, explaining how to absorb cosmic energy. The scepticism of interviewer Mihkel Raud with regard to the powers of the aforementioned log even made Marten doubt himself* (Anonymous 2011).

Discussion

The use of wooden sculptures has a long history: the oldest surviving wooden sculpture covered in symbols is 2.8 metres tall and 7,000 years old, and it is preserved in a museum in Yekaterinburg in Russia. Pillars are also very common in history: Indian iron pillars with inscriptions date from the beginning of the calendar era. Historic examples include the Wolferchampton pillar in England, the tribal candles of Erzyans and Mokshas, woodhenges in Durrington, and other locations. Maypoles, which are still erected in European countries today, have a similar shape. Wooden sculptures of Norwegian and Slavic deities date from later centuries and flourish in contemporary wooden art.

H. Whitehouse and R. McCauley (2005) stress that despite the heterogeneity, there are similarities in religious materiality. The individual cases discussed indicate that the structure of different sites and the dynamics of creating a religiously important place are subject to a certain standardisation. Most members of a certain group create mental representations using forms that are roughly similar – experts use simpler forms. They begin with structures whose concepts are known to be found in various places in the world.

Previous examples show that the third important characteristic of placemaking is connecting the site to ancient times and/or a colourful history. What is also notable is the recreation and introduction of wooden sculptures of spirits and fairies. Vernacular wooden sculptures created by artists feature a similar form. For instance, one of the stereotypical examples of sculptures is the figure of a long-haired, bearded male spirit. Sculptures are often decorated with

magical symbols. The stereotype can be observed in examples of sculptures from different regions in Europe – the artistic language and mental models used are the same. The incorporation of fairy tales with fictional characters, nature/ecology, and history is also interesting. Thirty-six wooden sculptures depicting Estonian fairy tale characters and fairies were installed along the Small Nature Energy Trail, taking into account energetic places. Sculptures of fairy tale and fictional characters can also be found in urban environments, but their incorporation into specific healing and balancing places mainly happens at special ritualistic sites.

Although folkloric wooden sculptures are usually installed in places with positive energy, negatively charged sites are sometimes also marked. Healing places with wooden sculptures of different characters to sit on can be found both in public spaces and on private land. A good example of this is the Wood Crone family park in southern Estonia (Kõiva 2017: 210).

One significant aspect of modern placemaking is wilderness/nature, the social and symbolic value of which is very important to urbanised people. The meaning of nature is expressed not only in forests, but also in individual trees, green areas, urban water bodies, and other things that relate to nature. Over time, the preservation of the natural environment and its protection from intensive management has brought together people with different worldviews in Estonia to participate in protests and engage in active defence as well as raise petitions where necessary. When a mine was planned in the Tuhala-Nabala Nature Reserve, people rallied to protect local nature and its symbol, the Witch's Well. More than 65,000 signatures were collected in defence of the place, but cultural protests were also powerful. One of the examples was the song "Nõiakaevu loits" (Incantation of the Witch's Well) composed by Urmas Sisask, which was performed by eleven well-known rappers and pop, rock, and choral singers (*Eesti tähtede ühislaul* 2010).

An important part in the body of data related to the invention of sacrality is the creative process based on worldview, which can at least partially be described by Csikszentmihalyi's (1996: 8) model of creativity, where creativity occurs as a result of the concurrence of three main components: personal development and its background, cultural domain, and social field (companions, critics, teachers, and the elite). This definitely characterises both the song "Nõiakaevu loits" and the practice of marking useful places with sculptures. However, the society can both support and curb the development of creativity.

Valuable ideas can be found in the theory of social anthropologists Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam, which argues that people act in a space between novelty and conventionality and are forced to improvise, because there are no systems of codes, norms or rules that can predict every situation (2007: 2).

An important factor is adaptation and changes in the main concepts. The main explanatory model claims that energetic places are dangerous but pillars are not. The knowledge and interpretations vary – here we can see how places with enormous energy are marked with a pillar.

Research on the modern monuments of Northern Europe in Estonia has shown that such wooden monuments were tools for the social and symbolic construction of the world. The integration of the monuments into the surrounding landscape, the incorporation of the mythological/fairy tale/fictional figures into the monuments, and replication of older architectural figures has constituted an essential part of the contemporary placemaking process as well as that of inventing sacrality.

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Notes

1 Rein Weber (1940–2018) – Estonian architect, graduated from the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR in 1965 and from Sorbonne University (Civilisation française) in 1979. He was a geobiologist and a dowser.

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TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE FEAST OF ST. HARALAMBOS WONDERWORKER IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: According to the Orthodox Church calendar, 10 February marks the feast of St. Haralambos the Wonderworker. In Bulgarian traditional culture, this saint is worshipped as the commander of diseases, especially the plague, as well as the patron saint of beekeepers. On St. Haralambos's Day, new season's honey is brought to church to be consecrated and is kept as a remedy in every home. Nowadays, the cult of the saint is celebrated locally, in Blagoevgrad region being updated with some contemporary practices.

The text presents the result of a field research carried out in 2017 during the feast of St. Haralambos at the Presentation of the Virgin Church in Blagoevgrad. The focus is on traditional practices related to the patron saint of the beekeepers and the contemporary manifestations of the feast in the local community.

Keywords: beekeeping, beliefs, customs and rituals, St. Haralambos's Day

Hagiography of St. Haralambos

On 10 February, the Orthodox Christian Church celebrates the memory of St. Haralambos who was a bishop in Magnesia, Thessaly[1]. According to his hagiography, he was born around the year 85 and died in 198. He perished like a martyr at the time when the Christians were persecuted during the reign of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus who ruled between 196 and 210. St. Haralambos was not afraid of the persecutions and bravely preached the Christian faith. He was captured by the pagans and was severely tortured. As the church tradition affirms, the torturers lacerated his body with iron hooks and hammered nails in it, they scorched him with fire and broke his mouth with a stone, but the old man endured with patience and courage the torments, and every night his wounds were miraculously healed. St. Haralambos cured the sick and with the help of God's power worked many miracles. At the Emperor's orders, he was sentenced to death by beheading with a sword. When taken to the place of his execution, St. Haralambos raised his hands to heaven and prayed to God for all the people – to give them physical health and spiritual salvation, to multiply their earthly prosperity and to bless the fruits of their labour. After the pray, the holy old man gave up his ghost before the executioner could touch his neck with the sword. This happened in 198, when he was 113 years old. St. Haralambos is considered one of the saints-healers along with Saints Cosmas and Damian, St. Panteleimon, St. Trifon, and others.[2]

Beliefs Connected with St. Haralambos in Bulgarian Traditional Culture

In Bulgarian traditional culture, the saint is honoured as the lord of all diseases and especially of the plague; he is venerated as the patron of beekeepers as well. He is called *St. Haralampi*, *St. Haralambi*, *St. Aralambos* (Marinov 1994: 492). On his day, the fresh honey is brought in the temple to be consecrated and then is kept for healing in every household. "People call him *father*, *bey*, *doorkeeper of the pains*, and his holiday is known as the Plague's or the Aunt's Day. Sporadically in the Thracian lands as the *Plague's father* is honored St. Spyridon, in the region of Sliven – St. Minas, and in Macedonia – St. Euthymius" (Popov 2008: 155).

Figure 1. Icon of St. Haralambos (FtAIF No. 1581, arch. unit 36).

In the entire Bulgarian ethnic territory, the two saints Anthony and Athanasius are considered brothers and are honoured as patrons of the plague. "According to the different regional and local folk notions, the Bulgarians believe that 'the plague was born (sometimes together with the bear) on St. Athanasius's Day', that 'St. Athanasius released the plague in the world' or that 'St. Anthony gathers the diseases, while St. Athanasius sends them to the people, who work on those days' (Blagoevgrad region). Long years ago the bad disease stalked at large and exterminated people until St. Haralambos's Day, when he managed to capture her and to put her in chains" (Popov 2008: 156–157).

A legend from Plovdiv region recounts that the plague went to take Haralambos's soul and found him at the beehives, as he was a beekeeper. He told her to wait for him, while he bids farewell to his bees. Then he opened the beehives, let the insects out and they chased the plague as far as Constantinople. There people managed to block her up in a bottle (Popov 2008: 157, Kirova 1970: 689).

On icons, St. Haralambos is depicted beating and torturing the plague. Work is forbidden on his day and women particularly observe the prohibition. Early in the morning, every homemaker kneads and bakes a bread. She carries honey in the church and spreads from it on the bread; then it is incensed, broken to pieces and is handed out in three houses for the health of the 'aunt' (the plague). In some places they prepare three small loafs or *tutmanik* (sort of a cheesecake). They keep throughout the whole year part of the honey, which was consecrated in the church, for healing (Marinov 1994: 492–493).

Customs and Rituals, Connected with Beekeeping

Investigations carried out in Central Western Bulgaria indicate that beekeeping was an additional occupation in the first decades of the 20th century. The number of beehives in a village was not high but was enough to meet its inhabitants' need of sugar. Usually in a village, there were about 20 beekeepers and many of them were women. In most cases, it was women who took care of the beehives.

Among the many customs for health and abundance, there are some, which focus special attention to the bees. On Christmas Eve, a particular ritual bread is kneaded for them with small dough balls on it representing bee swarms. The bread should be left on one of the beehives before supper. On Christmas Eve as well, women in the house spin a woolen or hemp thread, make a hoop from it and consecutively put it on every beehive saying: 'Here you are, Mato, a shirt'. Actually this is a way to symbolically dress the beehives (Manova 1986: 61). Among the incantations on Shrovetide, there are some for the bees as well. On Annunciation (25th March) all the members of the family ritually eat honey when they visit the bee garden dressed in holiday clothes. On St. George's Day, a wreath is made for the bees as well and is left on one of the beehives.

In 1981 in the region of Pernik, an interesting custom related to the swarming of bees is documented. When the time comes for a beehive to swarm, the owner beekeeper leaves for a day or two the fieldwork and waits to catch the new swarm in order to increase his beehives. He entices and captures it with a hive coated from the inside with common balm. After capturing the swarm, the beekeeper turns the hive upside down on the place where he caught it, dresses it in a clean white men's or women's shirt, and binds a bunch of flowers on its top. It stays like that the whole day long without being moved until the

evening or the next morning when the swarm is carried in the bee garden and the shirt is stored eventually for the next swarm. When taking the hive, they also take from the place several lumps of soil, grass and little stones, which they leave on the new place. In some villages, the hive is dressed not only with a shirt, but with a whole bride's costume. This custom was still living until mid-20th century. Later the practice of dressing with a clean men's or women's shirt or with a whole costume gradually dies out and the beekeepers wrap the hives with a new white cloth or a sheet (Manova 1986: 60).

The people explain that the new swarm is dressed in a white shirt so that the bees who are gone to look for pollen know where to return and to easily get used to their new place, because the bees like the white colour. This folk knowledge originated the still active practice, when dealing with bees, the owner to dress in white or light in colour clothes. In some villages, they assume the dressing of the hive as an endowment. In the villages where the hive is dressed in a whole bride's costume, when explaining this habitual practice, people relate the new bee family to a new human family, pointing out that they both have a bride who should be dressed. In the village of Uglyartsi the explanation is different – the new hive is like a new child and they dress it in new clothes gifted by the people around. Giving a shirt for the beehives in the winter on Christmas Eve essentially does not differ from the custom at the time of bee swarming in the summer. Obviously, the two practices have a common root. In the summer case of bee swarming, the dressing in a shirt is real, while in the winter it is a symbolic one. In both cases, however, the essence is in bringing a shirt in the bee garden and dressing the beehive (Manova 1986: 60).

Contemporary Manifestations of the Feast

Today honey is still taken to the church for consecration and is kept as a remedy in the houses. Beekeepers started to observe the feast as they accepted the saint as their protector. Thus, the winter feast of the beekeepers is established on 10 February (along with the summer one, St. Procopius, celebrated on 8th July[3]). In more recent days the beekeepers' associations in various Bulgarian towns also accept 10th February as their patron feast and observe it with lectures, ceremonies and merriments. On the most outstanding beekeepers the titles 'Queen-bee'[4], 'Queen of Beekeepers'[5] and 'Queen or King of Honey'[6] are conferred.

Figure 2. 'Presentation of the Virgin' Cathedral in Blagoevgrad (FtAIF No. 1581, arch. unit 18).

The fact that the saint's name was well known among the Bulgarians in many parts of the country is an evidence for the worship of the saint. Today there are also men with that name, even if already rather rarely. Some settlements accept St. Haralambos for their patron – they name the local church after him and celebrate his feast as the settlement's fair.

Today the cult of the saint is typical for Blagoevgrad region (southwestern Bulgaria), where beekeeping was practiced in the past, as is also in our days. On 10th February the ritual of consecrating honey in the Blagoevgrad 'Presentation of the Virgin' Cathedral is accomplished, and along with it, some contemporary manifestations of the feast may be observed in the last few years on St. Haralambos's Day. In 2017, we carried out a field research in Blagoevgrad.[7] We observed the ritual in the 'Presentation of the Virgin' temple, and carried out interviews with the priest and with some church attendants, as well as with some people present on the holiday liturgy. We photo and video documented the feast.

Figure 3. The jars of honey in the church (FtAIF No. 1581, arch. unit 107).

According to our respondents' words, on that day people from the town and from the neighbouring settlements have always carried small jars with the healing bee honey to be consecrated in the church. Priest Petar Stefanov told us: *there has always been a service on that day*[8]. During socialism, local people visited the church on the feast as well. In the last 10–15 years however that tradition becomes more and more popular. The jars of honey, brought to the church, increase in number and exceed 2000. Adelina Stefanova, an administrator in the church, says: *From 20 jars they became 2000*[9]. A new practice has become popular in the last years – they arrange the honey-jars on tables in the form of a cross. In the morning of the feast, a Divine Liturgy is performed and they light the candles on the jars while the honey is consecrated. In that way, a great fiery cross starts shining in the centre of the church.

According to our interlocutor's information, there are many beekeepers in the region and the succession is typical – the practice is transmitted from

generation to generation. The celebration of St. Haralambos's feast is traditional as well. In our days, people already carry jars of honey the day before the feast, so that they may stay overnight in the temple, and they take them home after the liturgy. Some people believe that the longer the honey stays in the church, the greater healing power it acquires. Others carry the honey-jars earlier for practical reasons, as they are not able to attend the Divine Liturgy, when the feast coincides with a workday. There are even cases when people carry their honey for consecration after the liturgy is fulfilled, if they did not have the opportunity to visit the church in time. Thus, nowadays the ritual of consecrating honey sometimes happens in the frames of the whole week around 10th February. People do believe in the healing properties of the honey, carried to the church, and preserve it for a remedy during the whole year. According to some hereditary beekeepers, this honey, besides for a remedy for humans, is used for ritual feeding of the bees in the beehives[10].

Figure 4. The consecration of honey on the day of St. Haralambos (FtAIF No. 1581, arch. unit 96).

Figure 5. The consecration of honey on the day of St. Haralambos (FtAIF No. 1581, arch. unit 80).

The field research observations lead to the conclusion that St. Haralambos's feast is observed not only in Blagoevgrad, but in the neighbouring region as well. As the respondents point out that the holiday liturgy is performed in all the churches in the town and in the villages of the region. In the village of Zheleznitsa, ten kilometres from Blagoevgrad, almost all of the villagers deal with beekeeping and a new temple named after St. Haralambos is built there.

Our field interviews indicate that the honey, which people bring in the church for consecration, in most of the cases is a self-production. Quite indicative in that respect is also the absence of numerous traders selling honey on the holiday and on its eve; we registered only two people selling honey near the church.

A characteristic peculiarity of St. Haralambos's feast in Blagoevgrad during the recent years is its great popularity in the media – on local and national TV channels, in printed papers and on the internet. This popularity is mainly due to the introduced new element of the feast, connected with the consecration of the honey, namely the lighting of the candles, as a result of which the so called 'fiery cross' is obtained[11]. Such element proves to be very attractive for journalists and their mass attendance in 2017, too, was rather indicative.

When asked how they reached the idea to arrange the honey-jars in the form of a cross, the priest explained, that it happened spontaneously, as the jars increased in number during the recent years, and respectively increased the tables where they ordered them. In the beginning they arranged them in a straight line, but when there was no place any more, the cross arms were formed, first the one, then the other. *It happened in a natural way.* […] *No one aimed at making this cross*[12]. And in the last years it is exactly the cross, which popularises St. Haralambos's feast in Blagoevgrad not just in the local media, but also in the national ones. On the other hand, our field research proved that in spite of its great media popularity, the celebration of the feast has only local dimensions. Only local people attended the Divine Liturgy. We did not come across people from places outside the Blagoevgrad region, except for the mass presence of journalists and reporters, reflecting the ritual in the church.

In the contemporary epoch of globalisation increases the popularity and the influence of some particular local cults, which attract more and more pilgrims from outside the respective communities, and the mass media play a decisive role in that process (Baeva 2017: 226). Many holy places (monasteries, churches, chapels) acquire popularity in the media space and as a result the stream of pilgrims from other regions and of tourists increases. In our time the mass media and frequently some other external agents play an important role for the meaningful evaluation of the local cultural heritage. In some cases, the media have an active role in constructing the communities' collective memory as well[13].

Time will show whether St. Haralambos's Day in Blagoevgrad will remain one of the important feasts for the local community only or its media popularity will also attract people from outside the region in the future; it will show if some other dynamic processes will be catalysed to influence the local ritual practices.

Notes

1 According to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Charalambos, St. Haralambos was an early Christian bishop in Magnesia on the Maeander, a region of Asia Minor (note of the translator – A. G.), last accessed on 12.03.2018.

2 Sv. sveshtenomachenik Haralampiy Chudotvorets, episkop v Magneziya [St. Martyr Haralambos Wonderworker, Bishop in Magnesia]. *Pravosalvie.* Available at http://www.pravoslavieto.com/life/02.10_sv_Haralampij.htm; Baeva, V. Za sveti Haralampi, chumata i meda [About Saint Haralambos, the Plague and Honey]. *RBP.* Available at http://bnr.bg/radiobulgaria/post/100794558/za-sveti-haralampi-chumata-i-meda, last accessed on 12.03.2018.

3 St. Procopius – patron of the beekeepers and also called a beekeeper (Marinov 1994: 678).

4 Baeva, V. *Za sveti Haralampi, chumata i meda* [About Saint Haralambos, the Plague and Honey]. Available at http://bnr.bg/radiobulgaria/post/100794558/za-sveti-haralampi-chumata-i-meda**,** last accessed on 12.03.2018.

5 Mariya Nedelcheva stana "Tsaritsa na pchelarite" [Maria Nedelcheva Became 'The Queen of Beekeepers']. *Dariknew*s. Available at https://dariknews.bg/regioni/blagoevgrad/mariq-nedelcheva-stana-carica-na-pchelarite-901302, last accessed on 30.03.2018.

6 Vladimir Marinov e tazgodishniyat "Tsar na meda" [Vladimir Marinov is This Year's 'King of Honey']**.** *Balkanec.bg.* Available at http://balkanec.bg/vnukyt-na-nikolai-cvetanov-vladimir-marinov-e-tazgodishniqt-%E2%80%9Ecar-na-meda%E2%80%9D-3276.html, last accessed on 30.03.2018.

7 The field research was realized together with Daniel Fokas in the framework of the project 'Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage – Analyses, Documents, Practices', financially supported by 'Scientific Research' Fund, agreement No. DN 09/17.

8 FnAIF No. 2972.

9 FnAIF No. 2972.

10 FnAIF No. 2972.

11 Tsvetanova, K. Ognen krast ogrya v hram v Blagoevgrad na Sveti Haralampiy [A Fiery Cross Shone in a Temple in Blagoevgrad on Saint Haralambos]. *Dnes.Bg.* Available at https://www.dnes.bg/stranata/2017/02/10/ognen-kryst-ogria-hram-v-blagoevgrad-na-sveti-haralampii.331586; Ivanova, A. S ognen krast pochetoha Sv. Haralampiy v Blagoevgrad [With a Fiery Cross they Worshiped Saint Haralambos in Blagoevgrad]. Available at https://www.dnes.bg/obshtestvo/2018/02/09/s-ognen-kryst-pochetoha-sv-haralampii-v-blagoevgrad.367597, last accessed on 30.03.2018.

12 FnAIF No. 2972.

13 On those topics see: Baeva 2012: 44–45; Baeva 2017: 226–227; Georgieva 2012: 187–199; Karamihova 2014; Markov 2015: 28–46; Petkova 2013: 118–129; Troeva 2015: 7–26.

Illustrations

2017. Photographer: Milena Lyubenova. IEFSEM – BAS. Archival number: FtAIF No. 1581.

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ON THE PATH OF THE BUDDHA – SPECIFICS AND DISTRIBUTION OF BUDDHISM IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: The article deals with an unexplored topic in Bulgarian anthropological context – the distribution and specifics of Buddhism in Bulgaria. It aims at providing information about the penetration of Buddhism in the country and the state of the Buddhist communities at the present moment. Suggesting that Buddhism should be studied within the paradigm of the new spirituality/new religiousness, it attempts to view this specific worldview in the context of its global distribution in the Western world.

Keywords: Buddhism, Bulgaria, global, new religious movements

Introduction

In the last decades we observe "the return" of the religiousness not only in its traditional forms but also as various new religious movements/New Age including exotic religions such as Buddhism. The Buddhist ideas of compassion and nonviolence, the comparisons of its principles with the achievements of quantum physics and neurobiology (Yong 2008), its powerful influence on the Western psychology (Virtbauer 2012), the charm and mysticism of the East,

the idea of relieving the suffering, the transformation and achieving happiness on the path to enlightenment are part of the reasons for its large distribution in the West[1] that has reached unprecedented levels over the last 20 years. This postmodern or global Buddhism is synchronised with the characteristics of the contemporary period: pluralism, hybridity, ambivalence, globality and lack of territoriality. It seems adaptable to the Western world, offering varied traditions and practices, democratic principles, moral norms, and, above all, with its emphasis on the rational in synchrony with the modern science (Barker & Rocha 2011: 10).

Its transnational distribution has led to the formation of an international or "cyber" Buddhist sangha, mobile teachers, international centres and contacts. The purpose of this article is to introduce the subject of Buddhism in Bulgaria into the ethnological/anthropological discourse and serve as a basis of future (and comparative) analysis of the transnational distribution of this religious denomination. It presents the distribution and specifics of the various Buddhist schools in Bulgaria in the context of the global studies of Buddhism in the West. The article has been prepared on the basis of fieldwork performed between May and October 2016 among various Buddhist communities in the country including Nyingma, Kagyu, Bon, Zen, etc. This approach defines the methodology of the research, based on well established anthropological approaches: interviews (structured and semi-structured), questionnaires and participant observation.

Buddhism in Bulgaria

Buddhism in Bulgaria is established in the context of the distribution and specifics of global Buddhism: pluralism and heterogeneity, traditionally oriented centres and forms of "Western Buddhism". In the context of two types of Buddhism, according to Prebish (1993) – of migrants and converted to Buddhism the one in Bulgaria falls completely within the second category. M. Baumann demonstrates within his classification of Buddhism as traditionalist and modernist (Baumann 2001), that those converted to Buddhism follow predominantly its modernist interpretations. As we are going to observe, however, in Bulgaria exists a trend of search of authenticity and avoidance of the Western forms of modernist Buddhism.

Buddhism found a niche in Bulgaria after the changes in 1989 and began to distribute in the form of communities within the various Buddhist schools (predominantly of Tibetan Buddhism). This process begins symbolically with the visit of the Dalai Lama in Bulgaria in 1991. Since the 1990s, various Buddhist communities were established, some of which had disappeared over time (for instance Sakya) while others have been transformed and modified to reach the state we observe them today. Conditionally, without analysing how authentic the practiced Buddhism is, but on the basis of the methods of its dissemination, several basic forms of Buddhism can be distinguished in Bulgaria:

- **"Western model"** or Buddhism distributed by the Europeans (Lama Ole Nydahl);
- **"authentic Buddhism"**, distributed by teachers from the East (mainly India and Tibet - Drikung Kagyu, Nyingma, Gelug, Bon) and Japanese Buddhism (Zen), which is more specific and related to martial arts.

Apart from this classification, each of the different types of Buddhism has its own specifics that will be presented below.

The "Western" Model – The Diamond Way of Buddhism (Lama Ole Nydahl)

The most widespread form of Buddhism in Bulgaria is the so called Diamond Way of Buddhism – a Tibetan Buddhism from the tradition of Karma Kagyu, spread in the West by the Danish Ole Nydahl. The term "diamond way" originates from vajrayana (sanskrit, 'dorje tegpa' – Tibetan) – the diamond or the most perfect gem, in connection with the idea that these are Buddha's sublime teachings. Lama Ole Nydahl is a qualified lama and meditation teacher in this particular Buddhist tradition[2], a student of the 17th Karmapa Thaye Dorje. In 1972, he was sent by him to teach Buddhism to the West, becoming the most successful European, spreading Buddhism beyond its original context, creating more than 650 Diamond Way Centres in 44 countries around the world (Diamond Way 2016). The possibility of meeting a living llama, the personal contact with him, the transmission of Buddhism into the language of the Europeans, the knowledge of the cultural specifics, etc. makes the Buddhism of Lama Ole leading not only in Europe, but also in Bulgaria.

The school of the Diamond Way spread in Bulgaria in 1992, when people associated with Zen Buddhism invited Lama Ole to deliver his first lecture in Bulgaria. The following year he arrived again, and in 1994 he visited Varna when already organised groups of followers (including one in Sofia) awaited him. Today the community has its own centres in various cities in the country. Retreat centres were built in Vinitsa (Varna), Kovachevitsa and near the village of Plana where the first Buddhist stupa in Bulgaria was built.

The stupa has now turned into a symbol of Buddhism in Bulgaria, being visited not only by the members of the community and other Buddhist communities, but by Lama Ole and various Tibetan teachers, as well. Besides being sacred, the place is also associated with an interesting miraculous story. It was discovered in 2007 and is pointed out by Lama Ole Nydahl as the place of the "loving eyes" (Chenrezig – the Tibetan name of Avalokiteshvara). After geological surveys it becomes clear that the chosen place is not *accidental* because *when Vitosha was a volcano, it was tearing lava, and de facto a deep stream came out from the ground, a tongue of lava like a hand pointing to the south ... and on the palm there was just enough space to build the stupa. And the place indicated by the lamas is right here ... and both of them – Lama Ole and Sherab Gyalzen Rinpoche pointed this place and route* (AIF I No. 511: 9–10). In the construction of the stupa on the tree placed in the centre, the colours of the Bulgarian flag miraculously appeared, and Sherab Gyaltsen Rinpoche, who sanctifies it, donated his last relict from Buddha.

For about the last ten years, the organisation has been registered as a religious community under the Religious Denominations' Act of Bulgaria. Its membership, like in other Buddhist communities, is informal, although a list of members is maintained. The principle of membership is based on the Kagyu tradition, in which initially the student "tests" the teacher for three years in order to assess whether he can fully work and *activate such a type of qualities as the teacher possesses* (AIF I No. 511: 7). In the second stage the teacher "tests" the student if he/she can cope with the requirements of the school. In case of full agreement an intensive training begins. Because *one can hardly find six years in the Western world*, here one relies on a more intense exchange of information, *but this condition still exists* (AIF I No. 511: 7).

While the Diamond Way in Bulgaria is a well-organised community, particularly the strongest example of consolidation is the sangha in Rousse, where Buddha House – a cultural and meditation centre including a complex

of gompa's (places for meditation), living apartments, a library with a café, a seminar hall was built. Lectures on various topics related to Buddhism are being delivered there weekly. The aim of the centre is *to enable people interested* in Buddhism to obtain *information and have conditions* to practice it (FnAIF No. 2919). This factor leads to the formation of one of the largest communities in the country, which is a model for the daily realisation of the Buddhist ideals – *we are gathered around this idea, to develop the centre, work for the place, support the work of Lama Ole* (FnAIF No. 2919).

The "serious" followers of the Diamond Way in Bulgaria number about 200 people, while there are many temporary members or just sympathetic ones, who don't strictly follow the practices and philosophy. At the same time, the organisational form of the community is important in order to provide *the necessary information and methods, practices, and the continuity of these teachings so that anyone who wants can begin to study them* (AIF I No. 511: 8).

As I mentioned at the beginning, the main feature of global Buddhism is mobility. Mobile are also the members of the Diamond Way. They travel not only around Bulgaria on occasions of lectures, retreats and seminars, but also around the world, including accompanying Lama Ole Nydahl in his travels. At the same time, teachers from all over the world are being invited and international seminars are organised around Lama Ole's activities. Distinctive about the organisation and the opportunities for practicing Buddhism in Bulgaria is even the disappointment of the travel of members of the community to Bhutan, where, according to them *there is no true Buddhism* (FnAIF No. 2919).

The education in the Diamond Way of Buddhism follows several stages: introduction meditation (guru-yoga), known also as Meditation of the 16th Karmapa. It is followed by the four Foundational Practices (*Ngöndro*) aimed at realising the true nature of the mind. Following meditations are practised: Loving Eyes Meditation (Chenrezig – for developing sympathy and compassion), Meditation of the eighth Karmapa (Practice of Devotion), Black Cloak (Vajra Mahakala, meditation to acquire Courage) and Phowa (conveyance of consciousness) (see more Diamond Way 2016).

There is a lot of information concerning the Diamond Way in Bulgaria, not only due to the well-organised centres and the available literature, but also because of the media participations of Lama Ole Nydahl. International events such as the New Year's Course of Lama Ole Nydahl and Jigme Rinpoche in Sofia in December 2016 are often organised in Bulgaria. All of these factors contribute to the relatively wide distribution of this type of Buddhism in the country.

"Authentic" Buddhism

Drukpa Kagyu

The most striking example of the search for *authentic Buddhism*, taught by an *authentic teacher* offering education in real Buddhism, is observed among the followers of Drukpa Kagyu. It represents a lineage of the Tibetan Buddhism and one of the eight sub-lineages of the Kagyu tradition, originating from Tsangpa Gyare (1161–1211). In Bulgaria, it is represented by the Bodhichita Foundation with president Acharya Khenpo[3] Ramesh Negi with a branch of Khampagar monastery Tashi Jong, India (Togdens 2016) in the town of Kazanlak. Bulgarians had also built an educational centre in Buddhism in Rewalsar, India.

The penetration of the Drukpa Kagyu is a result of the efforts of a psychologist for whom the Buddhism in the West is presented in a *fragmented* way through *fragmented concepts and techniques* that *have nothing in common with Buddhism* (AIF I No. 511: 24), that is a holistic, unified system. Buddhism is seen as the *only psychological science* because *Western psychology deals only with the surface of the mental functioning, conscious functioning, and does not even offer a theory of the deep layers of the unconscious*. Buddhism, on the other hand, within its 108 volumes of literature deals only with *mental processes* (AIF I No. 511: 24).

The search for authentic Buddhism begins from the "source" – in Nepal, where the head of the Department of Buddhist Studies at the University of Tribhuvan recommended Khenpo Ramesh as a specialist not only in theoretical but also practical Buddhism: *and this professor, the dean ... I told him, I know that here the Westerners are considered fools and are being lied from the station, any spirituality is here ... and because the West is pretty naive … but like in everything, in every science and in any profession, such as in medicine there are many doctors, but five of those are good ... And so I went and told him, tell me who is good, and he gave me four names, one of them was Khenpo Ramesh* (AIF I No. 511: 24).

Khengpo Ramesh holds a PhD from the University of Varanasi, India, having defended a dissertation devoted to the Heart Sutra and taught at several universities in India and Nepal. Besides being a monk himself, his father is also a Buddhist practitioner who, at 35, went into a retreat. He is considered to be a person *who completely controls the entire autonomic nervous system*, which,

according to our science is completely impossible (AIF I No. 511: 25). This "living example" of realisation of the ideas of Buddhism is also an inspiration for the followers of Khenpo Ramesh.

Hence, the group is formed by interested practitioners. Other incentives are the visits of Khenpo Ramesh in Bulgaria which date back to 2004–2005, with a frequency of once or twice a year and including the ideas of establishing a permanent residence and spending half a year in the country.

According to Khenpo Ramesh, his Bulgarian followers are people with a very different culture, but they could slowly understand Buddhism. On the other hand, Buddhism spreads in the West because of the desire of people to be happy and to avoid suffering:

> *So people are now checking and they feel the way of Buddha is very convenient, very easy to understand and it is following the truth ... So here Bulgarian people, also they are interested in Buddhism, they feel something special, they are and slowly they are listening, thinking, and then apply into mind, I think so, they will understand* (AIF I No. 511: 35).

Apart from the fact that the community relies on an authentic teacher, they managed to build a monastery as a branch of the one in India. It was registered in 2015 under the Religious Denominations' Act, presuming to attract several monks from India.

Palyul, Nuingma

Palyul tradition is one of the six sub-schools of the Tibetan Nyingma tradition and the oldest of the five Buddhist schools. Palyul monastery was founded in 1665 in the province of Kham by Kunzang Sherab. Its centre today is the Namdroling Monastery in southern India, led by H. H. Karma Kuchen Rinpoche (The Fourth Pema Norbu Rinpoche 2016). The school has various centres around the world, while the Bulgarian one is one of the few in Europe[4], officially acknowledged as its international representatives.

The Centre in Bulgaria was founded in 2011 and supported by Pema Rinpoche, who is one of the main teachers of the school in Bulgaria. Palyul in Bulgaria is an example of a school organised around the idea of systematic training in Buddhism not only by authentic teachers but also by trained local followers. It offers a training program in which anyone can join in a few periods during the year.

The Centre organises an introduction in Buddhism which presents its philosophy and development to those unfamiliar with these themes. In addition, there are courses in meditation *shine* (residing in peace) and analytical meditation, dealing with current topics such as love, relationships, dealing with anger and strong wishes, etc. Meditation consists of four main parts: acquaintance with a text given by the lama, contemplation, meditation, and yoga. The introductory course continues for about six months, after which the participants can join the annual learning cycles, meet the Lama personally and *the adept to receive the necessary to be able to start practicing in a group* (AIF I No. 511: 66). The Ngondro group, as first and introductory level, consists of six cycles, each lasting for two months, repeated annually. This cyclicity allows new people to join the school. The next level, which is not actively practiced in the centre but practiced by the members of the sangha, is *tsa-lung*[5], a secret Tibetan yoga which one can only practice with the direct guidance of an authentic teacher. Higher practises are also passed on personally to the follower by his teacher. Tsa-lung is followed by other practises to reach the so called three-year retreat that can only be passed under the guidance of a teacher.

The main event for the school, however, is in Germany, at the European Palyul Retreat Centre, where training is given annually for each of the classes. *This means that anyone who is seriously practicing and wants to receive teachings should go there* (AIF I No. 511: 66). Every summer in the last six years a summer retreat on the Black Sea coast is also being organised and a Palyul teacher being invited.

Another activity of the centre is the celebration of the so called special days: Guru Rinpoche's Day, the 10th day of the Tibetan calendar; the medical guru – on the 8th day; the day of Dakini – 25th day. Each month the three pujas are celebrated (varying on different days according to the Western calendar). An important practice is sang offering – smoke offering, a central practice for the centre. It is a basic practice of all Pema Rinpoche's centres*: it removes obstacles both in personal context and during practice, and obstacles related to the centre, the sangha, the surroundings, of any nature*. Once a month, a phowa takes place - a transfer of consciousness. Practices aimed at more specialised level, requiring higher experience, are *cho*[6] and rigdzin dupa[7].

The training, moreover, includes periodic visits of Palyul teachers for delivering lectures. They are open to both various Buddhist communities in the country and to the general public as well (advertised on Facebook, etc).

Gelug

Gelug (also known as the Yellow Hats) is a school in Tibetan Buddhism founded by Je Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) in Ganden Monastery, Lhasa region, Tibet. Thanks to the union with the Mongols, it is the largest and most influential Buddhist school in Tibet since the late 16th century, and the Dalai Lama – the spiritual leader of the country.

Gelug in Bulgaria began spreading in the towns of Vratsa (since 2010) and Sofia (since 2011) around the teachings of Geshe Tenzin Tamding (Monasterio Universidad Chu Sup Tsang 2016), a president of Chu Sup Tsang foundations, sent personally by Dalai Lama to preach Buddhism around the world. He visits Bulgaria annually since 2010.

In a centre in Spain Geshe Tenzin Tamding met a Bulgarian whose invitation brought him to the country: *After some time he invited me to go to his country, I asked him where he came from and he answered "from Bulgaria". I said, "Okay, we'll see" ... and three years passed like that. In the third year he bought me a plane ticket and took me to Bulgaria* (personal archives).

Other teachers visiting the country are Tritul Rinpoche and Geshe Lobsang Yeche, delivering lectures based on the book of P. Rinpoche "Liberation In the Palm of Your Hand" (Rinpoche 2006).

The founder of the group in Sofia tells about the history of the group in Bulgaria:

> *I had a catering company for 22 years. After that meeting, within two years, I sold my business, started practicing actively, learnt Spanish, and began translating books, the first we published in 2014. We created a group to gather once a week and study literature recommended by the teachers. We also started a program group of ten years long course in philosophy, psychology, epistemology, etc., similar to the program in the Tibetan monasteries* (AIF I No. 511: 92).

Since 2017, a course devoted to the five basic texts studied in the Tibetan monasteries began in Sofia: Tsema Namdrel - the valid knowledge (Logic), Parchin – unlimited wisdom (aimed at managing the negative attitudes), Madhyamika – the philosophy of the middle way and the Buddhist understanding for emptiness and Vinaya or Ethics (the teachings are passed by the Nagarjuna lineage)[8]. The main practices of the group in Sofia are reading the

texts delivered by the teachers and performing analytical meditations over them. Other practices for the group include taking refuge, mandala, ngöndro, repetition of mantras.

Bon Tradition (Between Shamanism and Buddhism)

Bon Buddhism is associated with the ancient religion Bon and is already recognised in Tibet as the fifth Buddhist school. According to the Bon followers, it penetrated into Tibet centuries before Buddhism when the latter replaced it in the 8th century. It is believed to be originating from a country known as Zhangzhung kingdom that was conquered and assimilated by Tibet[9]. The main specificity of Bon Buddhism is the belief that Buddha Shakyamuni is not the first to achieve enlightenment, but only one of a series of Buddhas, the first of which is Tonpa Shenrab[10], the creator of Bon.

Bon Buddhism was distributed in the West in the 1980s by Tenzin Rinpoche, the establisher of the international Bon community, whose base is nowadays found in the USA[11].

The modern Bon Buddhism, including the one spread in the West, is centred around the dzogchen teachings. In Bulgaria, Bon Buddhism is represented by a small community. It penetrated from Mexico about six years ago, through a Bulgarian lady and her Mexican husband: *at a seminar in Pueblo ... I met Lama Tenzin Wangyal and ... at that moment I saw all my quests summarized in a very rational way ... with a very good philosophical rationale and very concrete results* (AIF I No. 511: 50).

They practice every day, and after their return to Bulgaria form a small group around which the main activity of Bon Buddhism in the country is organised today. The main group meditation is held once a week, where besides *the permanent four-five followers whom one can them every time there are also incoming, we sometimes reach ten to twelve people during meditation, while on seminars we reach around thirty* (AIF I No. 511: 55).

The meditation practised in Bon-dzogchen is similar to the one of Zen, which does not deal with visualisations and symbols. It aims at achieving a state of immobility and silence, observation of thoughts and feelings and basically *recharging* at the physical and mental levels.

The numerous Bon Centres in Europe also facilitate visits by lamas – also in Bulgaria, mainly from the European Centre in France (Geshe Korden Lundrup

Gyaltsen). The lamas in Bon are *open to the technologies* and much of their teachings are also available through online seminars without any payment. Bon Buddhism attracts through its tolerant attitude, the cohesion between the lamas – *they can have different centres and each centre can be named differently but they are a very cohesive community* (AIF I No. 511: 52) and a lack of power tension.

The community is not registered under the Law of Denominations, not only due to the lack of enough followers but also because of the conviction of the Bulgarian adepts that it is not a religion, but rather a philosophy and a way of life. The lack of ideas concerning the distribution of Bon and the organisation of a stable community is based on the notion that the followers *need neither the Lama nor the Sangha nor the Buddha*. The community is necessary as a means of support, until *you can feel that you are able to do it by yourself*. This specificity allows the comparison of this particular Buddhist tradition with the new spirituality, being close to it.

Japanese Buddhism – Zen (Between Buddhism and Martial Arts)

Zen is a Mahayana Buddhism that is believed to have originated in the 7th century in China and subsequently spread to Vietnam, Korea, and Japan to enter the United States and Europe in the early 20th century. Zen began to spread to Japan in 1191 distributed by the monk Eisai, who is considered the founder of the Rinzai Zen School. Rinzai Zen ideas became popular mainly within the samurai circles and the military class that practised martial arts.

Zen Buddhism penetrated in Bulgaria namely in relation to aikido and the work of Tenzen Dozen Osho, an aikido teacher (known as Sensei Edward Germanov) and Zen priest. The history of Zen in Bulgaria is thus directly related to its founder's life path. The community is built on the ideas of its teacher Toyoda Shihan, reflecting the model of existence of the human as a versatile personality: Ken-Zen-Sho or martial art, spiritual development (Zen) and aesthetic development of the personality (calligraphy or ikebana). After completing courses in Chicago and Hawai, Edward Germanov came back to Bulgaria attempting to popularise Zen:

> *I've been trying to organize a Zen group for a very long time. However, according to the specifics of Zen practice, it is very dull for the people on the street, one doesn't notice any progress for a long time, has to deal with extremely incomprehensible things ... which are completely absurd for the standard person* (AIF I No. 511: 41).

Thus, the Zen group was formed around *core students*, and in 2013 it also registered as a religious community. Today, Zen's activity is centred around an aikido dojo. In addition, Tenzen Dozen Osho is an authorised Zen priest who can perform various ceremonies (weddings, christenings, funerals), and also possesses the title rhosi – *a bearer of the so-called dharma heredity* (AIF I No. 511: 42), Buddha's direct blood successor.

The Zen School is built on a strictly fixed and traditional program that has not changed for millennia. It includes weekly practices like *za-zen* (sitting meditation) and *misogi*; a beginners' course, which takes place twice a year and provides basic information; Seshin (twice a year) – a seven-day meditation. The practice of misogi: *misogi, this must be understood as two main activities: one is breathing, the other is sound or echo. When you learn to breathe, you can produce a sound, the sound has built, according to our understanding, all that you and we can see … Breathing and shouting alter our, so to say, inner essence* (AIF I No. 511: 43). Occasionally, practices of ikebana or calligraphy are also held.

Teachers are being invited on a regular basis, but due to the fact that the teacher is holding a very high level in the school worldwide, there is *no need to invite people every year* (AIF I No. 511: 43). Therefore more attention is paid at the various Zen activities, such as misogi (for which a Japanese teacher is being invited), *hodjo* and others.

As the community is only centred in Sofia, the main aim today is the transfer of knowledge in a narrow circle, based on personal relationships, with followers who prove themselves to be *worthy* and devoted to the idea of working *on yourself*. The lack of wider interest in the Zen practice is also conceived as a reluctance to change: *Zen is advertised on our website. However, no one has come from the website to say, I read it on the website and want to subscribe ... Look, people prefer to talk, people prefer to read and then post on Facebook. However, when you have to stay an hour with yourself, to be able to look at yourself and see both your negative and positive traits and start working with yourself for a change, then people don't like to do it* (AIF I No. 511: 44). Therefore, Zen is still largely unpopular worldwide.

Buddhism in Bulgaria: Trends and Directions for Its Future Research

Buddhism penetrates in Bulgaria in the context of the religious transformations of post-socialist space and the "opening" of the spiritual market along with a number of other eastern religious ideas. Here it evolves in line with its global distribution processes in the Western world: in pluralistic forms, as transnational communities (cyber-sanghas), around mobile and periodically visiting the country teachers, in the form of dynamic groups. The pluralist forms of Buddhism are evident in the different tendencies in the search of the "real" Buddhism in Bulgaria. They range from dissatisfaction and disappointment with its state in its original environment (in Bhutan)[12], to the vision of its simplistic presentation in the West (and in Bulgaria) (AIF I No. 511: 29). Among all its forms in Bulgaria (Karma Kagyu, Drukpa Kagyu, Ningma, Gulug, Bon and Zen), it is the "Western" Buddhism transmitted by the "Western" teacher – Lama Ole Nydahl, that turns out to be the most successful. The good organisation of the community supports this as well.

At present, Buddhism in Bulgaria is practised by relatively small communities, which does not require a special strand for its study, as is the case in a number of countries in Western Europe, USA and Australia. It can be studied, therefore, in the context of the new religious movements/new spirituality. Its specifics, however, require its serious study not only in the forms in which it is spreading in the West but also in the cultural context in which it emerges and develops (India, Nepal, Tibet). This could provide a more in-depth answer to the question of whether and to what extent a religious system that has emerged in a very different cultural environment in a particular historical context can be understood.

The practice of Buddhism in Bulgaria is considered by its followers either a great challenge (*this is a nice country with ... messed people, but this is a challenge because there is plenty of things for a person to work on* (AIF I No. 511: 45)) or a great chance. Bulgaria is a country that still *does not suffer to a large extent from the negative effects of globalisation*, which, according to Lama Ole Nidhal, is a good prerequisite for the spread of Buddhism (AIF I No. 511: 14). The financial situation, on the other hand, does not contribute to establishing large centres (except some centres of the Diamond Way) by authentic teachers, as is the case in a number of Western European countries.

Buddhism in Bulgaria can be studied as a response to specific needs of the Bulgarian society or in its functional aspect. Thus, we can gain insights regarding its influence on the Bulgarian culture, the extent to which it is modified by the local context, as well as answer the question about how universally applicable it is. So far, the study has shown that it is well received among people related to science, psychology, business, by those seeking new forms of spirituality and specific answers to questions related to happiness, lack of suffering, etc.[13]

Although this issue is the subject of further research, I could already outline some of its core functions. Buddhism, in the first place, claims to provide methods for solving specific problems faced by Western societies: over-rationalisation, selfishness, lack of values, and so on. In this context, it is presented, for example, as a complete opposition to selfishness: *egoism* [here in the West] *is very strong. Egoism is actually totally opposite of Buddhism, ya...here people believe in materialistic development ... They think, if we have too much money we are ok. Actually it's not like that. Money is needed but main thing is need you pure mind, ya, to establish the real human society we need the clear mind. Compassion comes from mind not from money* (Khenpo Ramesh, AIF I No. 511: 38).

In addition to providing specific problem-solving methods (meditations and various practices), it is also applied in the Western psychology and psychoanalysis through its methods for managing mental processes. Even psychologists claim that Western psychology borrows its basic ideas from Buddhism: *I am a psychologist ... and I know that since Hegel everything has been inspired by Buddhism* (AIF I No. 511: 24). It is not by chance that it aims, primarily through meditation, to unload the mind from stress and the constant need of the Western people to make decisions and react quickly to specific situations. The direct application of Buddhism can thus be an alternative to expensive therapies, but *understood correctly*: *here in the West they like to twist it ... some of the things ... are presented in another way. Unfortunately, quite fragmented, fragmented concepts and techniques are being taken out in the West, and does not represent Buddhism. Buddhism is a unified system* (AIF I No. 511: 24).

Buddhism is a complex philosophical-religious system derived from a radically different (from the European) cultural system, which implies its adaptation and modification when applied in a new environment. It is not widely distributed in Bulgaria, but it has a specific application and is often associated with science, psychology, art, etc., characteristic of the Western cultures spheres. All these particularities should be taken into account when analysing its functional aspects and its analysis by the humanities and social sciences.

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Notes

1 Under the term "West" in the context of the distribution of Buddhism outside the region of its traditional distribution in the modern research one understands Europe, America (North and South) and Australia as an opposition of the "East".

2 More information regarding the life of Ole Nydahl can be found in his book "Entering the Diamond Way" (2001).

3 A title awarded to the monks in the schools of Nyingma, Sakya and Kagyu after graduating a nine years' curse in Buddhist philosophy.

4 Other centres in Europe are located in Germany and UK.

5 From Tibetan: *tsa* – channels, *lung* – wind, energy.

6 From Tibetan: spiritual practice also encountered in Nyingma and Kagyu, known as elimination of the ego.

7 Esoteric lama-practice.

8 Nagarjuna (around. 150–250) is one of the six great philosophers in Buddhism, given profound comments on Buddha's teachings.

9 Possibly a region in Tibet not far from the mount Kailash.

10 According to legends he was born 18 000 years ago in the country of Olmo Lungring.

11 Founder of Ligmincha International, available at http://www.ligmincha.org/index.php/en/, last accessed on 08.11.2016.

12 Impressions of followers of Lama Ole Nydahl after their visit to Bhutan.

13 In the overall profile of the followers of Buddhism there are a variety of professions, but dominate those in the business sphere, psychology, the IT sector, education (mainly physics and chemistry). Leading figures in the organization of the groups are related to physics and psychology.

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SLAVIC-BALTIC SPACE THROUGH THE PRISM OF MAGIC BOOKS

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Abstract: In the Slavic culture, one of the remarkable places as a monument of literary texts and traditional folk knowledge was occupied by manuscripts and books which belonged to the category of forbidden (by church) literature, to the so called false, black or renounced books. Today, they are generally referred to as magical books and represent special section of superstitious and divination books.

The main problem in exploring of magical books of ancient Slavs is the absence of the so-called primary sources, and only the late, fragmented and highly subjective sources of medieval census-takers and chroniclers are available, therefore in the study we have to face the inconsistencies in some details or even distortions and mistakes.

The main part of works related to this topic is borrowings from other cultures, but later, when they began to be considered as "their own", they did not cease to be influenced by local folk traditions and continued to fulfil their goals and functions.

The most interesting variant is represented by ancient Russian magic books borrowed from the early Middle Ages up to the last centuries and influenced both from the south and the west. Parallels in other cultures indicate the existence of archetypal texts containing certain rules concerning key points.

The article offers to review the history of some magical books that reached the Russians through the southern Slavs and the Baltic regions.

Keywords: Baltic space, Magic books, Russian, South Slavs

In the Slavic culture, one of the remarkable places as a monument of folk writings / literary texts and traditional folk knowledge was occupied by books and manuscripts from the category of the forbidden (by church) literature, the so called false, black or renounced books. Nowadays, those books are generally referred to as magical books and represent the special section of superstitious and divination books. The study of those manuscripts and books is of considerable historical interest and lets us to determine the originality of the ancient Slavic and Russian culture.

Scholars of the past centuries have explored this topic and scientific field. In the middle of the 19th century N. S. Tikhonravov (1863: I-X), the researcher of the "Monuments of renounced Russian literature", singled out a hundred titles of books belonging to the category of magic books referring to the incompleteness of the list he presented.

The magic book as an object of investigation still has no precise and clear definition. In modern consciousness, the magic book unites a number of publications on magic, fortune telling, mythology, esotericism, healing, religion. For example,

> *in the category "Magic Book" is mentioned the following list of publications: books on witchcraft, shamanism, black magic (necromancy, spoiling), love magic (love spells and charms), various healing methods and practices or folk medicine, astrology, yoga, reiki, qigong, Ayurveda, Feng Shu, textbooks and self-taught books on magic, hypnosis, ways of divination, collections of conspiracies, spells, esoteric literature, Tarot books and Tarot cards, Runes, etc.* (Moskvina 2011: 99).

If we talk about the magic book in the past, first of all, we have to keep in mind the fortune-telling / divination itself which certainly represented a very important and significant part of any culture. As William F. Ryan (1999: Introduction) notes, there was a long, rich, and interesting tradition of magic, fortune-telling and popular beliefs in Russia, more so than in other countries of Europe.

Using the term "magic books", it should be noted that this study refers to those books only that were directly or indirectly related to the Slavic and Baltic historical and cultural phenomena. In fact, this literature is very rich and huge and the available sources are often mixed, complemented, or contradict with each other. Many of them represent compilation works which are associated with several books from different countries, languages, and various historical

periods, and they are composed into one. Or, it may be that the parts of one book are published as separate books and distributed among the people. And not one of them is called directly as a fortune-telling book but instead represents a set of folk knowledge and observations on all natural and life phenomena. And even if some of them are considered as "pure" Russian works, almost in every case, they are fully or partially borrowed and consist of translation works with additions, reinterpretations adapted to local traditions and concepts that by this way could be easily learned, spread quickly, and be used in practice.

The First Sources

According to the researchers, the Slavic magical tradition arose as a result of the folk processing of the ancient knowledge of the pagan Slavic magicians. Part of the magic of the Slavs was influenced by the European tradition, but most of the original ways of Slavic sorcery / witchcraft / charming practice came "from within", as a heritage of the pagan Slavic past. Unlike the European magic, the Slavic magic was almost always a purely intuitive phenomenon, with the practicioner having a special natural gift and knowledge in this domain.

Perhaps one of the discovered ancient written sources, which affirm this phenomenon as a fortune-telling among the Slavs, is connected with the Bulgarian "monk-protagonist" named Chernorizets Hrabr (maybe this is only the pseudonym of the writer). In the Slavic studies, Hrabr is one of the most significant writers and generally considered as one of the most interesting scribes of the Bulgarian Middle Ages, who worked at the Preslavskaya book school in the late 9th – early 10th centuries. In his "Story on Writings", he writes: "In earlier times, the Slavic people did not have any letters, but they read on lines and cuts, they also *told fortune*, being pagans. Later, being baptised, they attempted to write the Slavic speech without dispensation in Roman and Greek" (Deryagin). But this source does not mean that the ancient Slavs had their own fortune-telling books or some other written methods of divination. We know very well, by the casual and immediate fortune-telling, one can quickly draw symbols on the ground or on any other flatness and conduct a ritual of divination which is also practiced today.

The fortune telling came to the Eastern Slavs along with Christianity on a ground slightly touched by the culture of the ancient world and medieval Europe, but which contained ready-made elements for perception. The church

itself preferred not to pursue the Christian fortune telling, at first, finding in it a good tool for expelling pagan fortune telling. Thus, Christianity itself was a factor that tolerated, preserved (albeit in a peculiar way) the old and ancient Oriental traditions. Relations with the East, the influence of the antiquated world that was obsolete, only supported and revitalised this connection. This, together with later conditions caused the new influence of the East on Western Europe and Byzantium. As it can be seen, the ground for the experience of these ancient Oriental beliefs in fortune-telling has been constantly "refreshed" and "renewed" by new tributaries; on this base, "the old pagan fortune-telling did not die and had not been stopped, but it was only dressed in a different form, sometimes modifying it, sometimes hiding under it" (Speranskiy 1899: 6–7). Or

> *in spite of the insistence and prospections of its advanced representatives, Christianity took on the old heritage, dressed it in a Christian shell and banished from it a purely pagan element: pagan divination became a Christian fortune telling and could not be eradicated among the lower and middle classes of Christianized society, and even more among the newly converted ones. In the latter, Christian fortune telling was more easily instilled and rooted, that it became instead of their own pagan fortune telling* (*ibid.*: 2).

A hundred years after the Christianisation, there was already the first news of Christian fortune-telling in Russia (i.e. in the Ancient Rus'). This fortune-telling bears all the features of ordinary, widespread, and generally accepted divination in Europe. For example, the first fortune-telling monument can be identified from "The Testament / Instructions by Vladimir Monomakh" from 1096 (or 1099), where the first testimony of Christian fortune-telling is given and in which is written, when He (i.e. Vladimir Monomakh) having received the news, He decided to open the psalter "for a good luck" and read the verses that had fallen to him from the psalm. But in this case, Monomakh was not the first one who came to mind "to look in the future" by this way: he used the custom of seeking solution for own doubt on the psaltery that had been pre-existing for many centuries (Morgun 2011). The Psalter was the most popular book, outranking even The Gospel (which is not easily understandable for ordinary people). For an ordinary Christian, the Psalter had combined everything that a common person needed: a moral code in which he saw a book of prophetic, a poetic book with lyricism and artistic images, and the folk knowledge what

was clear and understandable. And the psalter was one of the largest sources of church service, which let it to be superb and manipulative and to be tolerant with those who were telling fortune on the psaltery.

The first books (here we mean not only the magical books) began to appear in the Ancient Rus' from the time of Christianisation which were from Byzantium, and this occurred primarily through the South Slavic peoples, where the translations of religious, pseudo-religious, philosophical and other learnings, teachings, knowledge were already spread much wider. The books of this period amount to quite a large number and their flow would have continued, if not for the events of subsequent centuries.

> *It is entirely possible that this situation might have improved had it not been for the Mongol-Tatar invasion in the thirteenth century which completed the disintegration of the Kievan state of dynastically linked principalities after a decline which had begun in the twelfth century. Although there was some subsequent infusion of new translated literature from Bulgaria in the fourteenth century and from Serbia in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the literary sources of scientific and pseudo-scientific ideas were still for the most part low-brow Byzantine until the late fifteenth century, and the Russian culture can still be characterized as medieval (with some oriental elements) up to the end of the seventeenth century* (Ryan 1999: 10).

The subsequent period is noticeable because of the South Slavic peoples that played an important role in the distribution of books. The books, translated into their languages, began to reach the Russians and were translated into Russian.

Influences from Western Europe and Role of Baltic Region

From the Middle Ages, "new knowledge" began to spread from Western Europe through the Baltic region, namely The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and partly through the West Slavic peoples.

> *In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Byzantine encyclopedic tradition was supplemented by other texts from non-Byzantine sources. The greater part of this new material comes from the corpus of translations from Hebrew which was apparently made in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania,*

> *most probably in its Belorussian territory, and which has often been associated with the sect of Judaizers which flourished in Novgorod and Moscow at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Ryan 1999: 16).

Influence and impact from the West began around the 15th century, although the origins of this phenomenon are rooted in the century before. In the fourteenth century, the "Bulgarian Judaizers" denied church authority, communion, icons and priests. By the verdict of the church council this heresy was destroyed, and the Jews of Bulgaria were deprived of the right to own immovable property (Kaufman 2012). But the teachings and ideology of this movement had spread to other regions of Europe and through them overtook the Russians. The propagator of this ideology was a certain missionary named Zachary Scara (or Scarius, Zakharya Evrein, Zakharya-Skarya Zhidovin) who belonged to the Jewish Karaite sect, which had a wide network of organizations in Europe and the Middle East; Lithuania was a powerful centre of Karaite. In 1471, Z. Scara arrived from Lithuania to Novgorod and brought the "Books on the Secret Sciences", which included books on mysticism, astrology, cabbalism, etc. The teachings of the Judaizers included elements of Western European rationalism and religious reformism. Zachary Scara was highly educated and possessed incredible abilities, so he managed to persuade even the highest rank of the Church officials in his teachings and to convert them into his faith, i.e. into Protestantism and Socinianism (antitrinitarians). Socinianism was mostly widespread and compared to other countries, appeared earlier in the Polish State (Rzeczpospolita Polska) – the Confederation of the Kingdom of Poland and The Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The main centre of Socinianism was the city of Rakov / Rakaw (now: Ракаў in Belorussia). In 1602, a beautiful school was founded here, in which up to 1,000 young schoolboys of various faiths studied. There was also a printing house. The followers of this sect belonged to members of the noble Lithuanian clans. Subsequently, some of them even became atheists. Over time, the Socinians began to be persecuted, and the Seimas' decree of 1660 was followed by completely banishing them from the country, the Polish State. Some of them moved to Transylvania, and the others moved to Silesia, Brandenburg and Prussia.

Exceptional popularity throughout medieval Europe had "Secretum Secretorum" (in Russian it is also known under the title "Taynaya Taynykh" or for the Old Russian version, under the title "Aristotelian Gate" ("Aristotelevy

vrata")). This work goes back to the Arabic original of the 8th – 9th centuries and is a collection of worldly instructions on various issues – from politics to alchemy, which were allegedly taught by Aristotle to his disciple Alexander of Macedon. Some features of the Old Russian version of the monument let us to associate it with a translation made by the medieval author al-Harizi in the 12th – 13th centuries, although the translation does not give the exact date. The language data indicate that the translation was carried out in Western Rus'. The translator apparently was not fluent in the language into which he translated a very complex and versatile work, so in some cases the text is hopelessly corrupted. The closest thing to the transcript of the translation is the list of the Vilnius Public Library or the Vilnius manuscript, according to which the "Secretum Secretorum" was published in Russian.

One of the most popular and the largest divinatory treatise was a three-part book "Raffles", based both on astrology and on Kabbalah. In fact, in Kabbalah, figures and letters are assigned a mysterious meaning, from combinations of which they try to find the revelation and explanation of the past and the prediction of the future. The main Raffles' figure is divided into 12 schemes and additional 4, which deal with the influence of stars on the fortune of human life (Afanasjev 1869: 605). It is assumed that its authorship can also be associated with al-Harizi. "Raffles" was known in the Old Russia at the end of the 15th century. It contains a divination drawing. Its translation was made in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This book survived the defeat of heresy and in 1579 was re-published by the Pskov scribe Ivan Rykov, who made an impressive contribution of his own. Furthermore, it was subjected to processing and significant Russification (Turilov & Chernezov 1989: 283). It should be noted that translations of parts of Raffles are available in many languages, so researchers must pay attention to where, by whom and how the translation was made. For example, the meaning of each of the 16 figures was interpreted depending on the order (what is named as "house") in which it is located, with the first 12 "houses" characterising various aspects of life, and the last four "houses" were supposed to give a more general assessment of the future. Here, it was allowed to divine in various ways: with the help of geomantic figures; the expanded form of the "court" was not always taken. It was possible to divine on one figure. In particular, by this way, the divination is conducted according to the Serbian book. According to one figure, this fortune-telling is also known in the Russian manuscript. The second part of the book of Raffles containing questions

and possible answers to them can also be used in simplified divination by one figure. The comparison of Russian names of geomantic figures with names in the Serbian Divination shows that the main significance of the figures was stable, but the names of the figures in the Serbian fortune-telling practice do not reveal traces of a direct genetic connection with the Russians and represent a completely independent version of them. Or, in one version, some details are missing and the logical connection in divination is interrupted. An elementary operation of the even-number type, which underlies geomancy, lets for various ways of its implementation. In the Serbian "Divination by Samuel", the geomantic figures are formed on the basis of bibliomania and the numerical value of letters. Fortune-telling counters and beans were extremely popular in Russia during all centuries.

In some manuscripts, both a guide for compilation of geomantic figures and an indication of favourable and unfavourable days for divination are placed before the text. Available sources of information enables us to outline the history of divination in Russia, the principles of which are set forth in the book of Raffles and were widespread in Europe in the Middle Ages. This divination practice likely appeared in Russia in the general stream of fortune-telling literature associated with the heresy of the "Judaizers". Like other books of this kind, Raffles have traces of the West-Russian origin; there are also traces of the eastern source. The drawing on the frames of the Radzivilovski Chronicle (discovered in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by commander Janusz Radziwill in the 17th century) reflects a developed form of fortune-telling associated with astrology. In the middle of the 16th century, after the condemnation of the book "Raffles" by the famous Clergy of the Cathedral Church Stoglavy Sobor of 1551, this chronicle got a new processing by an author, resulting in a Christian, in this case i.e. Orthodox, character.

It is well known that the church compiled resolutions of church and secular laws for the management, which had different names like "code", "nomokanon", etc., which included moral and ethical norms of behaviour and moral texts. For example, in 1274, at the church cathedral in Vladimir, Metropolitan Kirill proposed the following texts as a guide for the management of the church: the Kormchaya (ко́рмчая: Church-Slavic кормчий, Old-Slavonic кръмьчии – 'helmsman') Book, Pidalion (Greek Πηδαλίων – 'aft paddle, helm, handle fed or steering wheel'), or Nomokanon (Greek νόμος – 'law', κᾰ́νών – 'canon, rule') translated from Greek into Church Slavonic around 1225 in Serbia (Speranskiy

1908: 52–53). Since such works were written or composed by the representatives of the church – because they were the only literates – it is understandable that all the teachings and knowledge of a non-Christian character were subjected not only to harsh criticism, but also to destruction. In this regard, special lists or indices of forbidden and black books were created, the list included all literature which somehow did not follow the church canons. The Old Russian lists were compiled on the basis of Byzantine, South Slavic texts, and from the 17th century, only the "purely Russian" list of the "Kirillov book" (1644) was published since by that time, a large body of published works already existed in Russian.

The main share of books and publications of the magic literature consist of translational products up to the 17th century; of course, they were subjected to significant processing, supplemented by new facts and received a local spirit and colour, and by this way, they became easily perceivable and understandable to readers and users where they had been translated and published.

The presence of all possible variants and parallels makes it difficult to study this phenomenon, but at the same time "similar parallels and reconstructions testify not so much to the closeness of different traditions or their common origin as to the existence of a number of archetypal ritual sacral texts containing certain formulas concerning the key moments of mythopoietic cosmogony, cosmology and anthropogeny" (Mikhaylov 2017: 292).

Till nowadays, this phenomenon is a relatively unexplored domain and requires scrupulous study of each original source and the subsequent versions both individually and as a unique cultural heritage in general and this will allow to trace their history of development and formation.

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II

Cities, Cultures, and Migrations

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FRIENDSHIP AND SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS IN THE CITY IN LITHUANIA AND BULGARIA

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Abstract: This article seeks to compare friendship bonds formed and maintained in two EU capital cities. There is an analysis of how people of various ages in Vilnius and Sofia perceive friendship, their assessments of friendship between people of different genders and how friendly bonds are maintained during leisure time and celebrations. The research revealed a similar concept of friendship in both cities. People in Sofia are more inclined to spend their leisure time with friends in the outdoors, while relatively more Vilnius-residents complain about having too little free time, which limits their opportunities to meet with friends after work, on weekends, or even during the holidays. When analysing how friends spend time together during celebrations, the greatest differences were observed in mass celebrations. State and traditional celebrations are marked in Vilnius, while in Sofia public traditional celebrations are rarely marked. In Sofia, unlike Vilnius, they are celebrated by going to the hometowns of parents or grandparents (or to villages and towns not far from Sofia if there are no older-generation family members), in this way forming and maintaining friendly relations with people originating from those places.

Keywords: friendship, gender, holiday, leisure, regional identity, Sofia, Vilnius

Introduction

In recent decades, increasingly more attention has been paid to the analysis of friendship in the social sciences and humanities. Friendship is an informal social relationship. Contrary to kinship, it is based on choice and voluntariness: friends are sought and must be won. Friendship is an acquired not an ascribed status (Beer 2001: 5805). Friendship rests on long-term and stable communication (Desai & Killick 2010: 1). The object of this article is the leisure time and celebrations spent in the company of friends, during which friendly relations are formed and maintained. Leisure time, like friendship, can be defined in various ways. There is consensus that free time and leisure time are not the same things. Leisure time with friends is usually understood as that part of free time which one does not associate with work, the satisfaction of vital needs or family obligations. Karlheiz Wöhler has distinguished "pure leisure" (from the Latin *purus*) category, understood as time free from various "impurities" associated with work activities (including housework) and obligations to one's family or partner. Resting on the theoretical legacy of A. Van Gennep and V. Turner, the author states that pure leisure is a special, ritualised liminal space that lies outside of the boundaries of regular, regulated social life (Wöhler 2006: 187–193). On the other hand, even a celebration that is made an official holiday (no working day) is not always celebrated, instead being set aside for work around the house or the satisfaction of other obligations. That is why even non-holiday leisure time with a friend can be compared to a celebration. This has prompted the ethnological research of friendship and leisure time spent among friends. The aim of this article is to answer questions about how people from two different countries understand and maintain friendly relations. To meet this aim, it shall be revealed how people of various ages from Vilnius and Sofia: 1) understand friendship; 2) how they view friendship between different genders; and 3) maintain friendly relations during leisure time and celebrations.

The main source of information for this article was the author's fieldwork material[1]. A comparative study was done based on observation and semi-structured interviews. During the research, 22 respondents aged 17–82 were interviewed in Sofia. They were all Bulgarians, 21 were Orthodox believers (there was 1 Evangelical Baptist). In Vilnius however, a more representative study was carried out. It spanned 115 respondents aged 13–83, most of whom were Lithuanians and Catholics. Many of the respondents (and all older

respondents) originally came from various locations around Bulgaria. We see the same situation among the residents of Vilnius. Respondents of various ages were interviewed during both studies, during which they described their situation in the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century (up to 2015).

This is the first ethnological research on this topic. In some aspects, the article by Dalia Senvaitytė "The collective identity characteristics of Bulgarians and Lithuanians: a comparative analysis of students' attitudes" is important to this research, where based on empirical research data from 2010, the collective identity characteristics (national, cultural and religious) of Bulgarians and Lithuanians were discussed, as well as their expression among students. The most important celebrations mentioned by Lithuanian and Bulgarian students were described as part of the study. During the research, university students both from Sofia and Plovdiv were interviewed, and likewise in Lithuania, students attending universities in Kaunas were also surveyed (Senvaitytė 2011: 476–487). Marianka Borisova compared the features of the Shrovetide dress-up tradition kept alive among Bulgarians and Lithuanians. According to the ethnologist, despite the geographical distance between two countries, their belonging to a different climate and relief, and their different history, one can find plenty of similarities in their traditional customs and rituals (Borisova 2013: 85–93). In her analysis of family celebrations in Vilnius and Sofia, Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė dedicated particular attention to gatherings amongst friends over Christmas and Easter (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 58–72).

The Concept of Friendship

I agree with Amit Desai and Evan Killick, who say that the concept of friendship is rather hard to define, and the ways in which friendship is constructed in different social worlds is difficult to understand both among the friends themselves, and among scientists studying this phenomenon (cf. Desai & Killick 2010: 1–20). Both in Sofia and Vilnius, not everyone could answer the question of what friendship was. It was mostly women who could answer this question.

We shall discuss the cases from Sofia. For example, older residents of Sofia associate friendship with obligations to one another and mutual assistance. A 67-year-old woman identified friendship as the time spent between close people, and help offered to one another. In responses from the younger genera-

tion, friendship is based more often on emotions. A 44-year-old respondent identified friendship as the feeling of love and understanding, common interests and a similar world view. Friendship as a bond bound by love was another definition given by a 23-year-old male. A 37-year-old woman meanwhile said a friend was like a mirror in which one can recognise features they liked. For a 25-year-old woman, the word "friendship" itself was associated with pleasure. According to others her age, it was time spent together and for her, it was related to hiking in the mountains. A 21-year-old woman said that friendship was the most important thing in life.

A similar situation presented itself in the experiences of respondents from Vilnius. A 72-year-old woman said that friendship was the idea of mutual duty, and that friends had to share similar ideas and hobbies. In the words of another woman of a similar age, friends were "people you share your experiences with, people you trust". Men gave similar definitions of friendship. A 50-year-old man stated that "friendship is when you get up at three o'clock and drive to your friend's place to solve a problem", or "friendship is a commitment", said another 41-year-old man. Among women in their twenties however, "friendship is when you can tell someone your secrets, you can spend time enjoyably with them, share your worries and troubles with them and expect their support", "a mutual bond, trust and love". A 22-year-old woman said: "Friendship is when people communicate warmly among one another covering all sorts of topics, they help one another and do not betray one another". According to a 20-year-old man, it was mutual consensus between people who were not relatives, or warm, close relations between people.

This shows that in both cities, friendship was understood similarly. The differences depended on people's ages. While older people usually highlighted mutual assistance and commitment when defining friendship, then among the younger generation emotions and spending time with one another were of greater importance.

When respondents in Vilnius were asked whether they had friends of the opposite gender and whether friendship between a man and a woman was possible, different answers were received. The absolute majority of younger respondents acknowledged that friendship between a man and a woman was possible, and added they had friends of the opposite gender themselves. Most of the elder respondents who related their experiences from the Soviet period stated that they did not have friends of the opposite gender, however some of them believed that this kind of friendship was possible. Nonetheless, some

of the middle-aged respondents claimed that friendship between a man and a woman was impossible. In the words of a 45-year-old woman, "a friendship between a man and woman without sex is impossible, because it still ends in the same thing, even with your girlfriends' husbands it will eventually end the same way. That's just nature. If there are feelings of mutual admiration, it is even dangerous to be friends as couples. This has been proven, and consciously, it's the same thing". A man of a similar age was of the same opinion: "A man and a woman cannot be friends. They can only be colleagues. However, spending time together as couples is not allowed". Many could justify friendship among married couples, but individual friendships between opposite genders were often seen as a threat to married family life. On the other hand, there was also this response from a single woman about the friendship between a man and a woman. "A [male] friend is someone you can count on for help, who cares for you and is interested in you. And that kind of friendship is a bonus, because your best [male] friend, unlike your best [girl] friend, would never sleep with your *boyfriend* [who you are intimately involved with, Ž. Š] who you're living with" (Šaknys 2017: 14).

An analogous situation was observed in Sofia, however there were fewer respondents denying the existence of sexual bonds between men and women. According to an 82-year-old woman, "friendship between a man and a woman was very rare", meanwhile a 25-year-old single woman said that "friendship with the opposite gender was possible, however the friendship between women was more genuine". A 23-year-old man stated that "it is more difficult for a man to be friends with a woman, but it is possible". There were more responses which identified the advantages of friendship between different genders. For example, according to a 37-year-old woman, "friendship between a man and a woman could be better than that among women, as you can exchange different views of the world. Women are more emotional, while men are more logical". A 60-year-old woman said that "friendship with men is better than with women. [Between the opposite genders] everything is open". Residents of Sofia and Vilnius alike justified friendships shared among married couples and agreed that they had gained new friends from their spouse's side after marriage. Single women also did not dismiss the possibility of non-intimate friendships with young men.

Even though the research conducted in Sofia was of a relatively smaller scale than in Vilnius, in Sofia there were more respondents who acknowledged the advantages of friendships between opposite genders. People's upbringing and life experiences had an influence on the formation of this attitude.

Regular Days and Holidays Spent Together with Friends

In many cases, spending time with friends depends on obligation-free resources for leisure time and the desire to spend this time with friends. Young people often spend a large part of their time together that is left over from school, university lectures or work, on weekends, during calendar celebrations and holidays. Once couples have children though, the amount of free time that can be dedicated to friends decreases significantly. More time must be spent with the family. People who had already raised their children and who might be retired were also found to have different opportunities for dedicating time to their friends.

When we analyse how leisure time is spent with friends in Sofia, time spent outdoors is significantly prioritised. For example, a 23-year-old woman said she would often meet with her friends after lectures at a park, at someone's garden, spend weekends in the mountains or go camping for part of her holidays. According to another university student who was two years older, she would meet with her friends after lectures at a park or a cafe, but said she had no free time on the weekends, because that time was set aside for studying. During her holidays she would go to the seaside (in Bulgaria) or the mountains. A 23-year-old male also said he spent weekends at the park, played sport or drank beer with his friends, and went with his friends to the mountains, the lakes or in the forest on holidays. A 44-year-old woman stated she usually spent time with friends during the weekends in the outdoors, and would mark calendar celebrations at home with friends. The oldest respondent, an 82-year-old woman, also distinguished weekends and calendar celebrations. On weekends she would go visiting her friends, to the theatre or take excursions.

The study of leisure time among the residents of Vilnius revealed different priorities. Even though some young people stated they go for walks after work, the most popular way of spending time with friends was meeting at a cafe, beer bar, restaurant or club. Young people prioritised going to the theatre or a concert over hiking trips or nature outings. Trips to the seaside or the lakes were more common during their holidays. This depended on the different geographical surroundings, and different leisure time traditions.

Of course, there are no high mountains around Vilnius, but it is a green city. There are numerous parks, forests and river and lake beaches for relaxation and spending time with friends. On the other hand, compared to the residents

of Sofia, relatively more residents of Vilnius complain about having too little free time which limits their opportunities to meet with friends after work, on weekends or even during the holidays.

The research material shows that these days, city-dwellers spend quite a lot of time with their friends during calendar celebrations. In both countries, Christmas and Easter stood out from the other celebrations for their duration. This means that in Vilnius and Sofia, friends would meet on the second days of Easter and Christmas. For example, the younger generation would sometimes get together at a restaurant, club or at a party organised at someone's home even in the evening of the actual Christmas or Easter day. Traditionally however, these first days of Christmas and Easter are usually spent with the family. People rarely went to the Orthodox Church with their friends. A 37-year-old woman said that she went there with her friends during the New Year, on Christmas day and on Easter Monday. In her opinion, young people these days were not very religious and did not bring "the right awareness" if they did go to the Orthodox Church. Going to church with friends in Lithuania during calendar celebrations was also uncommon. However, according to my field research data, these celebrations were not popular occasions for friends to meet anyway. In Bulgaria, as in Lithuania, the most important celebrations among friends were the New Year and birthdays[2]. In both cities, young people would usually meet with a group of friends on New Year's Eve at a restaurant or disco (sometimes they would go to the disco after midnight) or at someone's house. A necessary attribute of this celebration was champagne and salutations. A 44-year-old respondent from Sofia said that for New Year's Eve, her family and another one they were friends with would get together; the children in both families were of similar ages. They would see in the New Year by listening to the president's speech, pop a bottle of champagne at midnight and shoot fireworks off their balcony. The residents of Vilnius celebrated the New Year in a similar way (Šaknys 2014: 105–117). Birthdays were another similarly important celebration. For example, a 73-year-old woman from Sofia said how on her birthday, she would invite many friends over to her place, as well as the neighbours from her stairwell, and the most important guest was someone she had been friends with for over 50 years. According to a 41-year-old woman, birthdays were spent with family friends. Such family friends would also mark children's celebrations together, while a 25-year-old woman said she celebrated birthdays with another five friends at a restaurant, spending around four hours there. As in Lithuania, in Bulgaria the person celebrating their birthday would be lifted

with their chair into the air as many times as their age required (i.e., 21 times on a 21st birthday; for more about this custom in Lithuania, see Šaknys 2008: 21–27). According to a 16-year-old resident of Sofia, birthdays were the most important celebrations and as many as ten friends would gather at a restaurant to celebrate. Birthdays with friends were celebrated quite similarly in Vilnius and Sofia. The only feature that was noticed, was that in Sofia people very often gave books as gifts on this occasion.

The celebration of name days was somewhat more popular in Sofia than in Vilnius. The name days for Dmitrii and Georgii often coincided with popular celebrations and served as a pretext to mark them with friends. A smaller group of friends would meet at the person's home or at a restaurant for a name day celebration. For example, a 25-year-old woman said that three friends gathered to celebrate her name day, where they chipped in to get her a book and some flowers. A 75-year-old man meanwhile explained how the celebration of name days was not tolerated during the socialist years. In Lithuania, even though celebrating name days was not encouraged, it was not strictly banned either. When describing birthday and name day celebrations in 1967, ethnologist Angelė Vyšniauskaitė highlighted that the name day had no connection to religion and even had some advantages over birthdays, as everyone knew when to congratulate someone (Vyšniauskaitė 1967: 66). However, in modern Vilnius name days are celebrated less frequently than in Sofia. Even now in Sofia, certain first names are kept within particular families, thereby encouraging the tradition of celebrating name days. Yet in Bulgaria name days are not as important as birthdays. This is evident from the gifts given on such occasions. For example, a 37-year-old-woman explained how common birthday gifts were books, bijouterie and flowers, while only flowers would be given on name days. Nonetheless, some of the youngest respondents I interviewed in Sofia mentioned that they no longer had a name day, as such, there was no way of celebrating it.

The Feast of Cyril and Methodius (May 24, Day of Slavonic Education and Culture) is very important among Bulgarians (Anastasova 2011: 159–169). Such situation we can find in our fieldwork material. For example, each year six friends meet in Svilengrad at a restaurant where they share their memories. People who have graduated from gymnasium (secondary) schools in Sofia gather in this city. It is a good opportunity for people of various ages to come together – both those who have just graduated from secondary school and those who last sat at a school desk 50 years ago. The celebration is also very

important among education workers. According to a 73-year-old teacher, this was her favourite day as on that day, she and her friends would sing in a choir. In Lithuania, school teachers were more inclined to mark the first day of the academic year with their colleagues – September 1.

In Lithuania and in Bulgaria alike, occasions for friends to get together are more commonly celebrations adapted from the West – Halloween and St. Valentine's Day. According to one 37-year-old woman, Halloween is now being celebrated in Sofia. People dress up as zombies, vampires and witches. Yet St. Valentine's Day has a Bulgarian aspect to it. February 14 is also Wine Day (Трифон Зарезан), which serves as an opportunity for friends to get together over a glass of wine. In the words of a 44-year-old respondent, on this day her father would trim the grape vine leaves, make wine and treat his neighbours. Later that day, he and his friends would gather at a restaurant or at someone's home to enjoy some wine together. Yet not all respondents prioritised wine. A 25-year-old woman stated she did not celebrate this occasion as she did not have a boyfriend. Other spring festivals can also form friendly relations. In recent years, on Baba Marta Day – March 1, people wish one another well, and friends give each other *martenitsa*.

However, a distinction should be made for mass celebrations in the construction of friendly relations. In Sofia, it is only state celebrations that are marked. On the occasion of other celebrations, people usually return to the towns of their birth, to their relatives or to rural locations outside of Sofia. Quite unlike Lithuania, a complex custom called Lazaurvanstvo (*Лазарувaнство*) which is performed by young women in the northwestern Bulgaria on the Saturday before Palm Sunday is still being practiced (Koleva 1977: 284). In the past, it was a very important ritual among young women[3]. In the social sense, it is still important today. For example, according to a 17-year-old respondent, she has already celebrated Lazarus Saturday three times, going back to her parent's birthplace for this occasion. The town lies 35 km outside of Sofia and is where her grandparents live. She and her friends visit farmsteads, dance and sing, and in return for providing this kind of entertainment, they are given eggs, money, sweets and other small gifts. The respondent recalls how worried she was the first time, and how her group of girlfriends encouraged one another. Whilst learning the ritual songs and dances, she made some new friends whose parents or grandparents came from this location. A 60-year-old woman noted the importance of the costumes and jewellery used in this ritual, that were passed down from one generation to the next. It also strengthened the teenage

girl's bond with the culture of her parents and grandparents. A similar situation exists with the dress-up kukeri (*кукери*) processions. Respondents of various ages stated how they would return to their native (or their parent's native) village or town, while those who did not have relatives in rural areas would go to a town or village near Sofia for this occasion.

The residents of Vilnius celebrate most of their public celebrations in the towns of their birth. These occasions are also a time for old friends to catch up. Many people celebrate Shrovetide (*Užgavėnes*) at the Lithuanian folk outdoor museum in Rumšiškės, which is often titled the Shrovetide capital of Lithuania (Šaknys 2015: 106). Mass events organised by cultural institutions are also held in Vilnius. Children and young women also sometimes form unorganised dress-up groups, as per the Lithuanian custom (traditionally, however, this was a custom reserved for single men). Dressing up as the traditional characters for this celebration, they call on bars and cafes, and in return for a small gift (sweets or money), they promise to drive the winter away. Children sometimes even go door-to-door in apartment buildings coveting sweets, pancakes and money, all as part of the tradition (Šaknys 2013: 103–104). Friends also gather on the state holiday marking the coronation of King Mindaugas, going to Kernavė, the historic capital of Lithuania. Midsummer, or St. John's Day is also celebrated at various locations, with special events being organised in districts around Vilnius. Also popular among residents of Vilnius are the Procession of the Three Kings (January 6) organised by the Vilnius Ethnic Culture Centre, "pagan" spring and autumn equinoxes, Song Festivals and St Casimir's Fair, specific to Vilnius, having been held there since 1827 (Klimka 2009). They sometimes serve as a reason for friends to gather, yet not based on common origins, as is the case in Bulgaria.

Final Conclusions

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania titled 2013 as the Year of Dialects, 2015 was the Year of Ethnographic Regions, and 2017 was the Year of National Costumes. The cultural events planned for various celebrations were meant to form feelings of national and ethnic identity, encouraging people to maintain closer links with the places of their birth. A similar mission in Bulgaria is being implemented through calendar celebrations, during which rituals that are performed help form communities of friends based on their origins. On the other hand, this helps hold back the extinction of customs, which is unavoid-

able when celebrations are marked in large cities or museums. This is the most important difference I found during the fieldwork when analysing friendships and how friends spend time together in Vilnius and Sofia. The celebration of mass traditional celebrations in the birthplaces of parents and grandparents is an example that could well be followed among the residents of Vilnius.

Notes

1 Fieldwork material collected in Vilnius in 2012-2016 within the framework of the projects "Social Interaction and Cultural Manifestations in the City: Leisure Time, Festivals, and Rituals in 2012–2016" and "Contemporary Festivals in the Families of Vilnius Citizens in 2014–2016" and in Sofia in 2015 conducting the project "Contemporary Festivity in Bulgaria and Lithuania – from Traditional Culture to Post-Modern Transformations in 2014–2016".

2 The most popular Bulgarian student celebrations, according to Senvaitytė's research material from 2010, were Christmas (15%), Easter (14%) and the *Kukeri* (Shrovetide) celebration (17%) (Senvaitytė 2011: 484), while Lithuanian students celebrated Christmas (58%), Easter (42%), Midsummer (31%) and the New Year (23%) (Senvaitytė 2011: 485).

3 We do know of certain kinds of gatherings of young women from the early 20th century in eastern Lithuania, where they would summon the spring. However, the ritual acts performed for this custom were considerably less complex (Šaknys 2001: 60).

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COMPARISON OF CO-WORKERS' LEISURE IN SOFIA AND VILNIUS: PERSONAL OCCASIONS

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Abstract: The article deals with sociocultural interactions in the environment of *co-workers*. Comparing the *co-workers* of Sofia and Vilnius cities residents during the informal gathering of personal occasions, we analysed the leisure time of *co-workers* during the Soviet times and nowadays. The study showed that although the leisure of Vilnius and Sofia, based on the celebrating / honouring of personal occasions, is very similar, although we can observe some differences in the celebration of marriage and childbirth, and in particular, the (not) honouring of funeral occasion.

Keywords: co-workers' leisure, job and family life cycle rituals, personal occasions

Each organisation upholds its unique culture, maintained, recreated, and consolidated by means of employees' formal and informal relations, yet also influenced by a wider cultural environment in which the organisation operates. Presumably, co-workers' social and cultural context is manifested in the course of informal gatherings or informal leisure activities where colleagues communicate with fewer restrictions and can celebrate/mark certain occasions. Since

there are numerous different occasions and festivals, let us split them into two groups. Some celebrations or occasions are related to a person – birthday, name day, or certain important events in a person's life or career – for the sake of this article these occasions will be called personal. Other holidays are official and common, celebrated within the society, for example, Christmas, New Year, profession days, etc. This article will confine to the analysis of personal occasions.

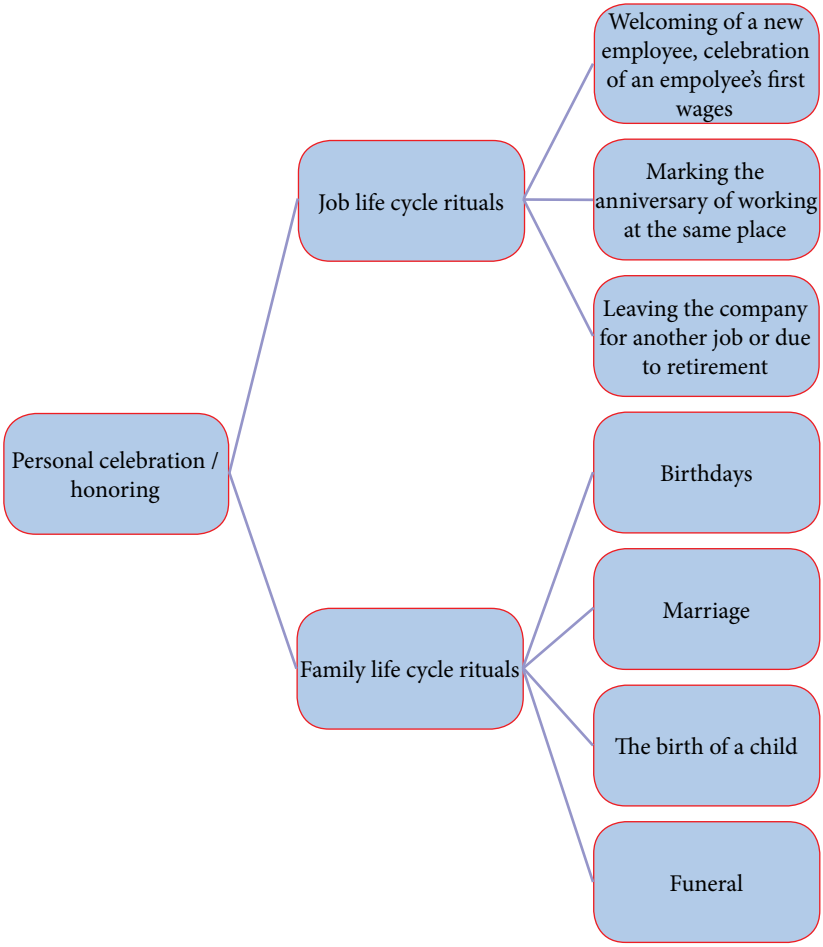
The two cities selected for the research – Vilnius and Sofia – are favourable for comparative analysis as they are capitals of two states (Lithuania and Bulgaria) and, despite significant differences in population, related by their common Soviet/Communist past. On the one hand, people and organisations working in these cities have in a way undergone comparable political and economic changes and are under the influence of similar global processes. On the other hand, they differ in their cultural context (ethnic, religious, and other aspects), therefore it is important to understand how different cultural contexts manifest in co-workers' communities in the two cities. These contexts will be disclosed through the comparison of co-workers' leisure activities in Vilnius and Sofia and analysis of the celebration/marking of different occasions within groups of colleagues. Here celebration is understood as congratulating one another on different occasions (orally or in writing), at times organising a joint festive table, wining and dining (in a modest or solemn way) together. On certain occasions people would receive presents/financial or other kind of support. Research objectives include exhibiting the role of Soviet-time and nowadays' celebrations in co-workers' environment and comparing the manifestations of personal occasions in the environments of Vilnius and Sofia citizens. In the article, celebrations are understood as an occasion to unite the collective together to express the collective (civic, ethnic, professional or other) identity, to construct or strengthen social relations in the collective.

Topics related to co-workers' leisure activities were analysed in the article "Topography of Concepts in the Analysis of Co-workers' Leisure" by Irma Šidiškienė (2014b), whereas other articles of the author were for the most part focused on issues related to profession days (Šidiškienė 2014a; 2016). Ivanka Petrova of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences researched co-workers' celebrations (studies published in Bulgarian and German languages) in privately-owned companies in the city of Sofia (2001), travel agencies in the city of Belogradchik (2015), etc. To date, no comparative analysis of co-workers'

celebrations in Bulgaria and Lithuania have been conducted, though Dalia Senvaitytė's comparative analysis of collective identity is worth mentioning. The research was aimed at comparing the practices of student celebrations, based on the questionnaire survey of first-year students of Sofia and Plovdiv universities in Bulgaria (50 first-year students at each university were surveyed) and Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania (Senvaitytė 2011), however, this shed little light on festivals and occasions typical of co-workers' communities.

Results of Soviet cultural policy that were obvious at the end of the Soviet era can still be felt today, therefore it is important to analyse the introduction of new festivals. Scenarios of such celebrations were described in the methodological guidelines issued by the State Science and Methodology Office of Cultural and Educational Work (later renamed to the Council of Folk Traditions). Books published in the 1960s (Čepienė 1966 n.d.; Petronytė 1966) just like the latest one – "Civilnės apeigos" (*Civil Rituals*) (1979) promote active involvement of co-workers in various events and celebrations, including family occasions. Celebration traditions in Bulgaria established during the Soviet period were discussed in Diljana Ivanova's (2015) article, though the question of which of these occasions were marked together with co-workers remains unanswered.

The field research conducted by the author in Sofia[1] was the first step in the perspective of further investigation[2], and comparison of its data with that of the citizens of Vilnius allows detection of certain social and cultural peculiarities characteristic of co-workers in Sofia. In the course of the field research in Vilnius and later in Sofia, employees of different organisations attributable to different age groups were surveyed with the help of the semi-structured interview. The respondents were asked whether/how they celebrate certain designated occasions with their co-workers and whether there are other celebrations that had not been named. Various festivities and occasions were included in the survey, however, in this article we will dwell on personal celebrations only which have also been split into two groups – occasions for the most part related to certain events at work – job life cycle rituals (celebrations related to the welcoming of a new employee or him/her receiving their first wages, job anniversaries, employee's leaving the company or retiring) and those related to family events – family life cycle rituals (employees' birthdays, weddings, child naming, funerals). These occasions are structured in the figure below:



Groups of personal celebrations/occasions.

Involvement of Co-Workers into Personal Celebrations during the Soviet Era

In the Soviet times all organisations were bound to follow the orders of the Communist party, therefore in the introduction of new Soviet rituals, organisations were not only utilised to implant such rituals as marking of graduation from educational institutions, welcoming of new employees and organising celebrations with fellow students or co-workers on other occasions, but also attempts were made to react to employees' family events, such as marriage, birth of a child, or funeral. It was believed that celebrations in the public environment of co-workers/fellow students (alongside private family celebrations) retaining the structure of the celebration as well as substituting certain symbolic acts with the new ones that had no religious connotations[3], could help modify people's behaviour as desired, i.e. distancing them from church rituals and accustoming to the new ones. Books and booklets on civil funeral (Čepienė 1966), marriage and civil naming ceremony (Čepienė & Gudelis n.d.; Petronytė 1966), civil rituals (Čepienę & Giedrienė 1969), and the supplemented edition of "Civilinės apeigos" (Čepienė & Giedrienė 1979) issued by the State Science and Methodology Office of Cultural and Educational Work[4], tasked with the development and promotion of new festivals, reveal how groups of co-workers were encouraged to participate in their colleagues' personal celebrations. For example, once a child is born and registered at the Civil Registration Office, civil ceremony of naming the child is discussed with the parents and

> *two weeks before the naming ceremony the Civil Registration Office* [...] *sends to the parents' employers notification-invitation to participate in the ceremony and congratulate the parents* and at the registration office *a notice about the naming ceremony is put up so that the public is informed* (Čepienė 1979b: 9).

Similar actions are expected on the occasion of marriage (Čepienė & Gudelis n.d.: 18, 19); moreover, public organisations were encouraged to organise wedding anniversaries and *inform the employers and farm managers of those celebrating the anniversary as well as public organizations and participants of the ceremony* (Giedrienė 1979b: 31) (children and grandchildren) about the celebration. To tell the truth, these anniversaries were successfully adopted and

became popular in the Soviet times. Particular attention in the abovementioned publication was bestowed on funerals and honouring of the deceased. Here the role of co-workers is particularly important:

> *Civil funeral is arranged by public organizations, farms, companies and institutions of which the deceased was a member. Co-workers of his/her family members also contribute to the arrangement of the funeral. When a person dies, representatives of the organization visit his/her family, express their condolences and offer their help in arranging the funeral* (Giedrienė 1979c: 61).

The said publication points out that not only prominent figures deserve public honouring:

> *The memory of a humble person is honoured by his/her colleagues and friends. Nowadays death anniversary is more of a family occasion, yet colleagues and friends should not be excluded.*
>
> *Co-workers, public organizations, and members of the funeral committee help the family arrange and decorate the grave.* [...] *portrait of the deceased person put up in the red corner of the meeting room is to remind the co-workers of the sad anniversary* (Giedrienė 1979c: 74).

It is worth mentioning that in the Soviet times organisations of leisure and promotion of designated occasions based on age groups was bestowed particular attention as there were attempts to introduce initiation[5] occasions and their celebration (transition from one age group to another: childhood, receiving the first passport, seeing off to the army, retirement), not to mention promotion of working-class festivals and introduction of profession days. Although these new festivals were the focus of attention[6], not all of them gained popularity at workplaces.

Thus, in the Soviet period the new government-initiated political celebrations were actively promoted and compulsorily observed, and the old family traditions and rites of the ritual year were substituted with the new ones; in addition, attempts were made to discourage people from celebrating certain occasions in the closed family circle, i.e. the custom of the community's participation in certain episodes of family celebrations (wedding, baptism, funeral), typical of rural communities, was being adopted in the city as co-workers were encouraged to take part in such events. On the one hand, this was a prerequi-

site for the formation of citizen communities, but on the other hand, it helped monitor fellow workers whether they had distanced themselves from "bourgeois prejudice", abandoned religious rituals, etc.

In the period of the Communist rule in Bulgaria, special attention was also bestowed on the modification and governing of the festive culture. According to Diljana Ivanova, alongside mandated meetings and manifestations "people preferred organized holiday banquets associated with the New Year's Day, Babinden, and St. George's Day, while formal dinners and casual entertainment was for the most part associated with personal holidays, such as birthdays, name days, and retirements" (Ivanova 2015: 335). Unfortunately, Ivanova's article does not shed light whether these celebrations were organised within the family, with colleagues or friends. The conducted investigation suggests that the obligatory public holidays and most of the abovementioned occasions were celebrated with co-workers.

Personal Holidays as Celebrated among Co-Workers in Sofia and Vilnius

In the group of personal occasions, job life cycle rituals are directly related to the formal culture of an organisation. However, despite the effort of Soviet ideologists, in the course of the investigation it became obvious that both – surveyed senior citizens of Vilnius and Sofia could hardly remember job life cycle rituals, such as welcoming at the organisation as a new employee (and celebration after receiving the first salary) or congratulating on the fact of working at the same place for a number of years, with the exception of formal honouring of the so-called high achievers and veterans of work.

Vilnius and Sofia citizens witness that occasions related to job life cycle rituals were usually marked in a passive way[7] and exceptionally when the employee himself/herself mentioned that he/she had received the first salary or was approaching a work anniversary. Colleagues would cheer and orally congratulate their co-worker and sometimes the hero of the day himself/herself would invite colleagues to have a cup of coffee. Similar behaviour is observed in the case of the termination of work agreement, though sometimes the farewell becomes a more solemn occasion. Thus, it can be stated that the said stages of the job life cycle were fragmentary and unexceptional in the respondents' memories. However, in present-day organisations, especially those that actively

uphold formal management culture, employees' loyalty is highlighted: those who have worked for the company for 5 or 10 years receive acknowledgement letters and souvenirs or such additional benefits as health insurance, etc., yet on the informal level passive marking of colleague's work-related occasions prevails – a Bulgarian respondent born in 1990 maintains that after receiving the first salary "you treat your colleagues to a bar of chocolate, a bag of crisps or something of that kind". Pompous farewell gatherings in honour of employees who were about to retire were best remembered of all job life cycle occasions. It was the retirement in both Vilnius and Sofia that – subject to the retiring employee's will – was usually celebrated formally when all the arrangements were on the organisation, or informally when the employee himself / herself would organise the farewell gathering at a restaurant. Co-workers would normally bring a decent gift – phone, watch, a piece of jewellery, dinner set, souvenirs, or paintings. Of late, modest and informal farewell gatherings on the occasions of retirement become increasingly popular among Vilnius citizens where the retiring employee organises a modest treat including chocolates, cake, and coffee and receives a symbolic gift.

Both formal and informal observation of family life cycle rituals with co-workers was particularly popular in Lithuania in the Soviet times. As it has already been mentioned in the period in question every effort was made to integrate fellow workers into the celebration of each other's personal occasions. Even today colleagues in Vilnius usually greet each other on such occasions as birthdays (jubilees in particular), birth of a child, or wedding. Birthdays are particularly popular among colleagues because, according to Žilvitis Šaknys, they had spread around Lithuania since the 1950s as a natural result of modernisation (Šaknys 2018). In the Soviet times and by the end of the 20th century Vilnius citizens would collect money for a birthday present and would give their colleagues various items of limited supply, household appliances, pieces of jewellery, or books, whereas starting with the restoration of independence, presents became rare on the occasions of ordinary birthdays – co-workers would organise a treat to the hero of the day or invite him/her out to lunch.

Meanwhile in Sofia, though the bigger part of research findings suggests of a similar situation, certain distinctive aspects can be observed. The interviews in Sofia would normally be started with the question: Do you celebrate your birthday together with co-workers? All the answers were positive and the conversation would continue in an emotionally elated manner. Therefore, it

became obvious that birthdays in Sofia, just like in Vilnius, are the most popular personal (family life cycle) occasion to be celebrated with co-workers. Today, Bulgarians, particularly those working in smaller organisations, continue to collect money for presents. Selection of presents is subject to the preferences and needs of the person whose birthday is celebrated – this information is collected by means of asking those who are in closer contact with the person or the person himself/herself. If the person is not sure what he/she would like to get, colleagues give him/her money instead of the present – "You don't have to buy what the person doesn't need" (fem., b. 1960). Usually something useful for the household, a piece of clothing or jewellery, a book, a souvenir, or even an icon would be bought. In case of jubilees, presents would be more substantial, e.g. a watch. Moreover, each year the way of celebrating should differ, e.g. colleagues would go to the movies, have a meal and a conversation there. In bigger organisations money for presents is seldom collected, at times birthdays are marked in a passive way, i.e. the hero of the day would bring a bag of crisps or a bar of chocolate and offer to the colleagues at his/her workplace (fem. b. 1990). Just one respondent mentioned that it is unusual to celebrate birthdays among her co-workers with the exception of those who want to mark a jubilee and invite his/her colleagues (fem., b. 1953).

The reaction of respondents in Sofia to questions about funerals and partially also to those about weddings was a little unexpected. Here are a few examples. A young respondent was perplexed by the question about weddings – she could hardly relate such personal occasion as marriage with co-workers, therefore asked what kind of research was being conducted. Others just shrugged it off – few people are getting married these days – was their answer. Older respondents remembered that earlier only the closest colleagues would congratulate the newly married couple if they were invited to the wedding (there were cases when all co-workers were invited but not all could attend), then money for the joint present would be collected from all the invitees – "People like socializing and celebrating" (fem., b. 1965); whereas today co-workers tend to act in accordance with the initiative of the bride and the groom: if the newlyweds bring a cake and chocolates to their workplace, it is a sign that they are organising a party at work, in which case colleagues collect money for a more decent present, but if there is no party, there is no present (fem., b. 1990). Thus, the celebration of personal occasions is reserved to the private initiative of the newly married couple. In Vilnius quite the contrary – in the

Soviet times co-workers would certainly come to congratulate the couple at the marriage registration office or at work when the bride/groom returns after the wedding and brings some treats. Today, though it has been long since the registration office notifications-invitations to co-workers' weddings have last been sent, citizens of Vilnius tend to congratulate their colleagues by gathering at the marriage registration office or the church or at times express their congratulations when the bride/groom returns to job after the wedding and organises a party for the colleagues. Recently marriage has been observed to lose importance among young people (fewer are getting married), therefore the newly married colleague shares his/her impressions and shows photos, thus marking the occasion. At times, a similar situation is observed in case of the birth of a child – colleagues also passively mark the event. Earlier co-workers would arrange with the mother and visit her and the baby at home. Several colleagues, mostly women who were in closer relations with the mother, would visit her but the present would be given on behalf of the whole team.

In Sofia the occasion of the birth of a child not everywhere and not always was "noticed" by fellow workers – after the birth of a child only the closest colleagues would go to visit the mother in 40-days' time: usually "it would be only women who would see the child, other colleagues would not meet him/her before he/she is 1-year-old" (fem., b. 1957). However, in contrast to the traditions observed in Vilnius, in Sofia the child's father would take a bar of chocolate or a box of sweets to the workplace of his wife. This treat was called "to the health of the child". The mother's colleagues would give the father presents from the co-workers' team. There are cases when prior to the mother-to-be going on maternity leave a party with colleagues is organised and presents are given to the leaving colleague.

As it has already been mentioned, most Bulgarians were surprised by the question about funerals. All the respondents confirmed that co-workers do not attend their colleague's funeral or that of a colleague's relatives, with the exception of those who were close with the person and were informed about the funeral. A respondent's reaction suggests that this is a sensitive issue, as she got irritated once she heard the question and was eager to end the interview saying – that's all, I'm in a hurry – but standing up from the bench, the woman added: "You go out of work [to attend the funeral] and you have to do everything yourself. They say "We're so sorry about that" and that's it. The sorrow is yours. That's it" (fem., b. 1960). It is hard to tell whether this is related with the

result of the cultural policy of not interfering into the private family space or with the issues pertaining to the dissemination of information. A respondent in Sofia suggested the idea that there were few ways to learn about the death of a former co-worker: "As far as I know in your country and elsewhere obituaries are published in newspapers so that everyone can be informed, but in our country there is no such tradition" (fem., b. 1957). Interviews and observations around the city revealed that other people can learn about a person's death from a notice written on a sheet of paper and put up on the door or gate of the house where the deceased lived or on a tree next to his/her cottage. The date on the notice indicates half year or a year from the person's death and the text invites to pray for the deceased. It appears that information about the deceased is only available at his/her former residence to those who live nearby or accidentally pass by the place.

Data collected in the course of the field research in Vilnius suggest that none of the respondents claimed that he/she had not attended their colleague's funeral. In the Soviet times, following the death of a co-worker or his/her close relative, not only the person's co-workers were informed but the organisation would contribute financially. Today, representatives from the person's company would also come to the memorial service or the funeral bringing flowers or a wreath. Co-workers who wish to support the affected family financially, donate some money handing it over to the relatives, representatives from the organisation attend the memorial service or the funeral.

Thus, in Sofia co-worker's marriage and birth of a child are marked only subject to the initiative of the newlyweds or parents of the new-born, whereas in case of funerals, only those colleagues with whom the deceased was in close relations honour their colleague's family if they happen to learn about the loss.

Conclusions

The research revealed that the urban culture of post-Soviet capitals was characterised by similar processes. The inquiry into co-workers' leisure exhibited common trends in the celebration of most festivals, especially those related to work life cycle rituals, and formation of unique cultural aspects typical of co-workers' communities. The new practices introduced in the Soviet period would also make an impact on that. Civil rituals developed in Lithuania were integrated into the lives of city dwellers through the encouragement of co-

workers to become a part of them. On the one hand, an attempt was made to transfer the customs of traditional cultural communities into the city environment, thus creating urban communities, but on the other hand, the Soviet authorities sought to indirectly control the introduction of new festivals into the family environment. In Bulgaria festivals were also modified and their celebration monitored, however, in contrast to Lithuania, this did not affect family occasions and their integration into co-workers' communities. Celebration of such occasions spread among fellow workers to the extent to which they naturally manifested in every-day practice. As a result, we can observe certain distinctions. In Sofia co-workers hardly ever participate in funerals and rarely mark their colleagues' weddings, and the birth of a child is usually celebrated "in absentia", i.e. without the mother and her child. In Vilnius, however, the said occasions are usually marked (always, starting from around 1970s).

The first comparative analysis of the two cities suggests that the official cultural policy of the country has an impact on the cultural manifestations among co-workers (and city dwellers in general) – direct on the formal and partially on the informal. Changes in the cultural policy at the end of the Soviet era resulted in changes in the intensity and intentions of celebrations (marking of occasions), yet the informal celebration remains more or less unaltered.

Notes

1 When taking part in the Ethnology and Folklore Project of the Lithuanian Institute of History and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Contemporary Festivity in Bulgaria and Lithuania – from Traditional Culture to Post-Modern Transformations (2015–2017).

2 For more information, Šidiškienė 2016.

3 State Science and Methodology Office of Cultural and Educational Work was in operation in Vilnius issuing various methodological guidelines for the new festivities. These events were supervised and organised by the regional Councils of Folk Traditions which were also tasked with booklet publication and similar activities.

4 Called "iniciatyvinės" in the books most probably due to improper translation from the English word "initiations".

5 Based on the data from literature index item *Festivals, Traditions, Customs, and Rituals* in Adomavičienė *et al*. 1988, most articles and publications were dedicated to the introduction, discussion, and promotion of the new rituals, i.e. in the Soviet times, until 1985, the number of articles on new holidays exceeded that on the old holidays ten times.

6 Passive marking of the occasion includes oral congratulations, handshakes, greetings sent by e-mail or written on a post card at times followed by a treat to a bar of chocolate or sweets organized by the hero of the day.

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ETHNOCULTURAL BEHAVIOUR OF MIGRANTS IN POLYETHNIC CITY (EXAMPLE OF THE TAJIKS OF KAZAN)

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Abstract: Basing on the analysis of various sources (statistical, written, and author's field materials), the features of ethnocultural processes among the Tajik migrants in a large Russian city (Kazan) are considered.

The Tajik diaspora in the Republic of Tatarstan is a young and rapidly growing one. They are attracted to the Republic mainly due to its economic stability and availability of jobs, as well as by the large percentage of Muslims in the population (50%). The main adaptation problems are related to the insufficient language competencies (poor knowledge of the Tatarstan official languages – Tatar and Russian), and the tendency to live in rather closed community. At the same time, a certain part of the Tajik migrants is socially active; they participate in various events, both municipal and organised within the Tajik community. An important ethnocultural characteristic of the Tajiks is a high level of religiousness, which determines the main aspects of their lives. This factor is reflected in many aspects of their food culture, which we interpret as a combination of nourishment system with various manifestations of social interaction. In general, the obtained data make it possible to assert that, under the dominance of closed/lock-in cultural environment, the Tajik migrants tend to preserve the traditions brought from the previous place of residence.

Keywords: culture of food, migrants, Muslims, polyethnic city, Republic of Tatarstan, the Tajiks

Introduction

Diasporas play an important role in the modern society. Diasporas – old and young, large and small – change the ethnic and social structure, bring new elements of culture, and come into various contacts and interactions. The Republic of Tatarstan (further – RT) – one of the subjects of the Russian Federation founded on the ethnic principle – and its capital Kazan for several centuries have been the territories with a diverse ethnic structure of the population. Together with the major ethnic groups (the Tatars and the Russians), it contains many diasporas differing in languages, cultures, and confessions.

The Tajik diaspora in the RT is relatively young. According to censuses, the first Tajik migrants, permanently living in the RT, were registered in 1970 (88 people). Since then, their number increased manifold; according to the 2010 census, the Tajiks in Tatarstan hold the 12th position by number (5659 people) out of 122 distinguished ethnic groups (Itogi 2013: 5–6). The overwhelming majority of the Tajik migrants (about 75%) live in cities; men twice outnumber women. Out of 4351 urban Tajiks registered by the 2010 census, 1589 people (1172 men and 417 women) live in the RT capital – Kazan (Itogi 2013: 7). The main reason for migration is the search for employment and financial assistance to the relatives in Tajikistan. The main occupations are small business (trade), services, construction, public catering, transport; this explains the gender-age misbalance of the migrants, the majority of whom are men of working age.

The objective of this paper is to show, by the example of the Tajik migrants in Kazan, the means and features of their adaptation, the forms of ethnocultural behaviour, including interaction with the poly-ethnic environment. This issue is topical due to the overall situation associated with global migrations and population transfer; complications occasionally arising between the new-comer and the receiving community; the need to propagate the positive practices of migrants' adaptation. When writing the paper, we used documentary sources (statistical data, official documents) and author's materials obtained when developing a project on studying the food culture of the Tajiks in Tatarstan. Within the project implemented in 2017, we polled 300 respondents using a specially designed questionnaire; 30 more respondents underwent in-depth interviews.

Historiography of the issues referring to diasporas includes many areas (see, for example, Thomas & Znaniecki 1920; Tishkov 2003; Djatlov 2010; Avdashkin 2015). We are, first of all, interested in the research focused on ethnocultural components, which makes a large bibliography (for example, Asribekova 2012; Astvacaturova 2003; Korovushkin 2006; Mahmutov 2009; Savchenko 2002; Starovojtova 19874; Jagafova 2015). As for Tatarstan, the researchers' interest towards migrants and different ethnic groups significantly grew after the disintegration of the USSR, due to the increase of the migrants flow and the growing importance of the issues of interethnic interaction in the new ethnopolitical environment. The Tajiks in Tatarstan also got into the focus of research and were studied by sociologists (Sagdieva 2010; Gabdrahmanova & Sagdieva 2016), political scientists (Omorova 2014), and ethnologists (Diaspory i soobshchestva 2013; Diaspory i soobshchestva 2014; Diaspory i soobshchestva 2016). Major attention was paid to such issues as political-legal status of the migrants, socio-economic aspects of adaptation, identity within diaspora, etc. All these works are united by a similar feature: they are structured according to the principle of transiting from general phenomena and processes to specific examples, the latter being the Tajiks in Tatarstan as a group or as individuals. Our research is structured according to the opposite principle: its starting point is a specific element of culture of the Tajiks, namely, their food culture; around it, various collisions and manifestations of the general ethnocultural processes are formed. This approach is possible due to the multiplicity of roles which food plays in culture of any people and its links with the environment.

Motives of Migration and Ethnocultural Description of the Tajik Migrants

Prior to analysing the food culture *per se*, we consider it necessary to make a number of preliminary comments.

The rates of the Tajik migration to Tatarstan testify to the presence of motives attracting the migrants to the Republic. Apparently, the first waves of migration, as early as in the Soviet times, were the form of social mobility: people moved within the country in search of jobs, mainly seasonal, and, having worked for some time, returned to the place of their permanent residence. After the disintegration of the USSR and due to the complicated situation in the former Soviet Republics, including Tajikistan, the migrants started to pursue another

goal – the search for a long-term employment for financial assistance to their family members and a probable change of place of residence and citizenship. For the Tajiks, as well as for other migrants from the Central Asia, Tatarstan was a rather attractive option. According to the migrants, their choice of the region was due to several motives. First, RT is one of the donor regions in Russia, with a steadily high level of economic development, capacious labour market and favourable prospects of employment. Second, the social background in RT (standard of living, income rate, cost of living) is good enough for various social groups. Third, Tatarstan has a steady image of a problem-free region in terms of interethnic and inter-confession relations, and tries to maintain it by state regulation measures. This factor played an important role in distribution of migrant flows in post-Soviet states, when the interethnic and inter-confession conflicts aggravated in many regions. Finally, and this is obligatorily emphasised by the Tajik migrants, it is essential for them that a half of the RT population are Muslims, and the Tajiks feel comfortable in such conditions.

As has been stated in a number of studies (Sagdieva 2010; Stolyarova & Maddahi 2012), the Tajik migration to Tatarstan is greatly facilitated by the social networks, which are formed by the principles of kinship and country-fellowship. These networks provide information about the employment prospects and the residence conditions. The new-comers first of all turn to their fellow-countrymen, try to find accommodation close to them, obtain necessary information and assistance from them.

Adaptation of migrants takes place in several stages. The first stage – legalisation – is establishing direct personal links with the fellow-countrymen, obtaining a permit for living and working. The second stage is "accommodation" to the new conditions of a large city, adaptation in the working place, broadening the social environment. The third stage is participating in the public life of the city, an attempt to become "a native". The first stage is necessary and obligatory for all migrants. The second and third stages are, as a rule, undergone by those who are satisfied with their new position and are planning to live there long-term.

The majority of the Tajiks arriving in Tatarstan are men of working age. In case of their successful legalisation, other family members come to some of them – wives, children, sometimes senior family members. The summarised ethnocultural description of the migrants, based on a number of researches (Omorova 2014; Diaspory i soobshchestva 2016), is as follows: they adhere to traditional way of living (preferring the traditional elements of culture in

clothes, food, dwelling interior, family relations); they prefer speaking their native language; they prefer having their fellow-countrymen as milieu; they are Muslims, and their confessional identity prevails over ethnic identity. The formulation *"first of all I am a Muslim, and only then I am Tajik"* is characteristic of our respondents.

Culture of Food of the Tajik Migrants as a Part of Ethnocultural Behaviour

Food is one of the primary needs of a human. During the long period of evolutional development, the ethnic cultures formed the so called ***nourishment system***. Nourishment system is usually interpreted as a set of consumed products; techniques of their acquisition, processing and storing; kinds and content of the dishes prepared from them (national cuisine); utensils used for storing, cooking and serving food; nutrition regime. A broader conception – ***culture of food*** – comprises the nourishment system elements with various manifestations of social interaction (Stolyarova *et al*. 2016).

The nutrition of the Tajiks – ancient tillers and cattle-breeders – is based on vegetable and meat products. The main rules, regulating all processes related to food and nutrition, are contained in the Quran and other Islamic sources. As our research showed, for the Tajiks, the instructions of Islam are an essential factor influencing the food culture. This is especially apparent when comparing the Tajiks with another Muslim group of Kazan – the Tatars.

In Islam, the main rule, forming the whole way of life, is the principle of permissibility. Distinction between the permitted, the allowed (*halal*) and the unpermitted, forbidden (*haram*) exists in all spheres of life, including culture of food, – from products to rules of behaviour. The notions of *halal* and *haram* were familiar to each Tajikrespondent of our research, regardless of their gender and age, and the absolute majority of them (100% of respondents) try to eat only permitted food. Under certain circumstances, for example, during grave illnesses the respondents, by their words, also would not use the forbidden (*haram*) products and medicines. Even in an extremity, under the threat of death, only one of the five respondents (19.8%) would use the forbidden products, though under such circumstances Islam does not insist on strict observance of the rules. For comparison, the Tatars show different results. The terms *halal* and *haram* are less familiar to the Tatars, than to the Tajiks:

68% and 72% of the latter confirmed knowing these terms, respectively. Thus, the notion of *halal* is slightly more familiar to the Tatars than the term *haram*. This is especially vivid among the youth: the term *halal* is familiar to 60% the respondents and 15% know nothing of it; while for the term *haram* this ratio is 50% to 25%. There are also differences in gender-age groups. In general, the Tatar women know the notions of *halal* and *haram* better than the Tatar men (81.6% and 77%; 71.2% and 63.8%, accordingly); the younger the respondents, the lower these values. As for using the forbidden products during illnesses or under the threat of death, over 60% of the Tatar respondents were ready to use them.

The obtained data prove that the Tajik migrants not only very well know the Islamic rules concerning food, but also try to observe them in their everyday practices. Such norms as pronouncing a thanks-giving prayer before and after a meal, moderation in eating, reverence to the sources of food and to the process of eating, interrelation between eating the permitted food and doing virtuous deeds, and many others, the majority of our respondents (90% and more) recognised to be customary for themselves. From the interview: "*…I got used to it since childhood; in my homeland, every family read* namaz *[prayers] and everyone behaves as it is prescribed in the Quran*" (Field materials 2017).

Various mandatory actions related to food and having ritual character are of special significance. For Kazan Tajiks, the most important are such ritual actions as offering (including the tradition of *aqiqah*) and *zakyat*, remembrance rituals, observing the fast (*uraza*), solemn oath (vow).

In the Islamic tradition, offering is done during *Kurban Bairam* (celebration of sacrificial offering); during the ceremonies before wedding; after the return of a kin from a long journey; for healing of the ill; when buying a house or a car to remove misfortune. Another type of an offering, popular among the Muslims, is *aqiqah*. This ritual is performed on the seventh day after a childbirth for protecting purposes, and is aimed at removing illnesses and other misfortunes from the baby.

The religious vow (solemn oath) is a religious tradition, during which a person sacrifices an animal, food or valuables to the supreme forces or spirits who may help in achieving the desired goal. The most popular solemn oath is done with food, mainly by sacrificing an animal and cooking food. This tradition is more widely spread among women than among men, and in the Islamic communities it is considered to be a religious activity of women.

Another tradition associated with food is *zakyat* (donations). The main functions of *zakyat* are the following: creating a balance between the standard of living of the rich and the poor; financial support of social programs; prolongation of life; increasing well-being; protection from misfortunes. The canonical *zakyat* includes nine elements, seven of which are eatable (wheat, barley, dates, raisins, camel, cow, ram) and only two are uneatable (gold and silver). Thus, it is obvious that food plays a special role in this Islamic tradition.

The above-listed rituals are universal and are observed be many Muslim communities, including the Kazan Tajiks. The celebration of sacrificial offering – *Kurban Bairam* – is one of the main and most popular events; the Tajiks consider the ritual of sacrifice and the donation to be its most essential elements. Equally important are remembrance meals, aimed, according to the believers, both at revering the memory of the dead and peace of their souls, and at protection of their own health and well-being.

As was shown by our research, in all the above-listed segments of religious conceptions and nutrition practices connected with them, the Tajik are more competent and active than, for example, the Tatars. In particular, the remembrance rituals, *aqiqah* and *zakyat* are customary for the majority of the questioned Tajiks (about 100%), while for the Tatars *aqiqah* and *zakyat* are much less frequent even among the most religious persons of elder age groups. Besides, 40% of the Kazan Tajiks practice donating food to the needy in the case of a solemn oath violation, which is very rare among the Tatars.

Of all Islamic rules related to food, one can distinguish the norms which the Kazan Tajiks consider to be not strictly mandatory. As a rule, these are the norms of permissible and recommended character. For example, Islam allows the Muslims to accept invitation for a meal from representatives of Abrahamic religions, provided they do not eat meat dishes. Actually, not all accept such invitation (44% of the responding Tajiks). Islam also recommends composing a larger part of one's ration from vegetable food; this rule is observed by about 60% of our respondents. Not every respondent (a little more than 50%) follows the recommendation to start a meal with a small amount of salt or vinegar, which is considered to be health prophylaxis in Islam. However, these deviations are not crucial, as they do not violate the fundamental norms of Islam and are of individual or situational character. In general, it should be admitted that the religious factor plays a determining and regulating role in the culture of food of the Tajik migrants.

Participation in Public Life as a Form of Ethnocultural Contacts

One of the forms of migrants' adaptation in a large poly-ethnic city is creating their own ethnic infrastructure: enterprises of public catering, trade, services, etc., organised by the migrants and serviced by them (Djatlov 2015). The Tajiks also adhere to this rule. In Kazan, a café chain "Ashkhana Khola" is functioning, which serves halal Tajik food; there is a Public Organization of the Tajiks assisting the employment of the fellow-countrymen; regional representatives of the Centre for Migrants' Employment and Adaptation, the main task of which is to offer juridical services; a business centre for providing mobile services with special reduced tariffs, etc.

In Tatarstan, the everyday life of migrants is facilitated by the fact that the state authorities try to actively regulate it. The Law "On national-cultural autonomies", adopted in RT in 2003 (Law 2003), is aimed, first of all, at protecting the ethnocultural and language rights of the ethnic minorities. Since 2002, the Tajik diaspora has its organisation (national-cultural autonomy) within the Assembly of the Peoples of Tatarstan, which works with the migrants – fellow-countrymen, arranges ethnocultural events and participates in the overall activity of the Assembly. Annually, the community arranges 15–20 cultural events (festivals, exhibitions, concerts; publishing, scientific, enlightening activity). According to the head of the community, at any festive event in Kazan, the Tajiks arrange their own sites, where they demonstrate national clothes, music, dances, sports competitions, folk crafts, etc. Special attention is given to the national cuisine, the leader of which is, undoubtedly, the Tajik pilaf. Paying homage to the skill of the Tajik culinary experts and cooks, including in organising feasts for large number of guests, they are often invited to mass events. In particular, it is the Tajik cooks that cook pilaf for the annual *iftar* (breaking the fast during the sacred month of Ramadan) in the Republic; the tradition of arranging the mass *iftar* appeared in RT in 2011, and now this event gathers over ten thousand people.

The functioning of the Public Organization, by the words of the Tajik migrants, is very important. First, it provides assistance to its members in various issues (juridical, financial, psychological, everyday life, etc.). Second, the community performs the mediation function between the migrants and the receiving community, and regulates relations between them. Third, through

various events the community, on the one hand, consolidates its members, and on the other hand, it transmits the information about the ethnocultural image of the migrants to the receiving community. All this taken together allows the Kazan Tajiks to estimate their stay as comfortable enough. From the interview:

> *…my family feels well in Kazan. The fellow-countrymen help in everything, the relations with others are good, too. When I cook pilav, I always take some to the neighbors, people smile and thank me. I feel that I also can ask them for help…* (Field materials 2016).

The migrants emphasise that they observe the legislation and try to comply with the traditions of the receiving community.

Of course, there are certain problems. As our respondents stated in the interview, the most significant problems are: nostalgia; poor knowledge of the Russian and Tatar languages; low juridical competence, etc. Sometimes among the negative phenomena they mentioned the cases of inacceptable, in the respondent's opinion, behaviour of other people (not respectful enough attitude to the elderly, too free morals, rudeness, etc.). In general, the Tajik migrants positively estimate the contacts with different ethnic groups, mentioning Tatar, Russian, Uzbek friends. However, they generally do not approve of interethnic marriages, and prefer to spend free time with their fellow-countrymen.

Conclusion

The research carried out among the Tajik migrants in Kazan showed that their adaptation in a large poly-ethnic city takes place successfully, in general. This is indirectly confirmed by the fact that the number of the Tajiks arriving in the Republic grows annually. The destination of migration is chosen by the Tajiks consciously and is based on the information spread by the social networks. The main factors for choosing the Republic of Tatarstan are the social-economic and political stability, ethnocultural proximity to the title ethnos (the Tatars) and the high share of Muslim communities in the population. Another important circumstance is the efforts of the Republic authorities to control the interethnic dialogue and to maintain the traditions of peaceful interaction and cooperation.

The analysis of ethnocultural processes in Tajik migrants, performed by the example of the culture of food, allows making a conclusion which confirms the suggested working hypothesis on the variability of the Muslim cultures. The

obtained data testify to the more traditional variant of Islam in Kazan Tajiks, compared, for instance, with the group of ethnic majority – the Tatars, and the larger compliance of their behaviour to canonical forms. In particular, such aspect of culture as food culture displays the high dependence on religious factors, which is apparent even in comparison with the Tatars who in the recent years position themselves as Muslims. At the same time, our results confirm that under different natural-geographic, socioeconomic, historical and cultural conditions the people of the same confession form different models of life activity and behaviour.

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CULTURAL HERITAGE ABROAD: LITERACY FESTIVITIES, CELEBRATED IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF BULGARIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: The paper aims to present the role of cultural heritage in the situation of migration. The different cultural, social, and economic environment in the host country poses an influence on migrants' cultural heritage. At the same time, the latter also exercises an impact: it stimulates the integration and the consolidation processes among the immigrant community and provides grounds for the personal and collective cultural identity. The consolidation of the immigrant community in institutions, such as schools, churches, associations, folklore groups, museums, choirs, results from the activity and manifestation of this identity, as well as from the immigration policies in the host society. The paper analyses the construction, maintenance and the promotion of cultural heritage in a foreign setting through the example of the school holidays in Bulgarian educational institutions abroad. In the conditions of immigration, the education of Bulgarian language, culture, traditions and history results from the social strategies

maintained within the family and within the immigrant community as a whole. The Bulgarian literacy feasts that are celebrated in schools of the Bulgarian community abroad, holds a special place in the calendar of festive events, shapes out as feasts of the entire community, and asserts the cultural identity of adolescents in the context of immigration, giving them new perspectives and popularising Bulgarian culture abroad.

Keywords: Bulgarian schools abroad, cultural heritage, cultural identity, literacy festivities, migrant community

Ongoing throughout the entire history, migrant processes reached great scale and intensity in conditions of globalization. The political changes at the end of the 1980s in Eastern Europe, the economic consequences, and the enlargement of the European Union became prerequisites for a series of emigration waves from the countries of the former Eastern bloc to the West. In particular, the Bulgarian immigration since late 20th c. and the beginning of the 21st c. (the so called "new" migration, which is economic and more rarely educational by type and of family type as a composition) is directed primarily to countries in Western Europe (France, Germany, the United Kingdom), Northern Europe (Scandinavia), Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece), and in North America (the United States and Canada).

The Bulgarian immigrant community transfers to the respective destination, preserves, construes, valorises, transmits and promotes the Bulgarian cultural heritage in its different forms – language, history, festivity, literature, music, traditions. The different cultural, social, and economic environment in the host country poses an influence on migrants' cultural heritage. At the same time, the latter also exercises an impact: it stimulates the integration and the consolidation processes among the immigrant community and provides grounds for the personal and collective cultural identity. The consolidation of the immigrant community in institutions, such as schools, church municipalities, associations, cultural centres, folklore dance and instrumental groups, choirs, media, museums results from the activity and manifestation of this identity, as well as from the immigration policies in the host society. The aim of the paper[1] is analysis of the construction, maintenance and the promotion of cultural heritage in a foreign setting through the example of the literacy holidays in Bulgarian educational institutions abroad. In the conditions of immigration, the education of Bulgarian language, culture, traditions, and history results from the social

strategies maintained within the family and within the immigrant community as a whole. The Bulgarian literacy feasts that are celebrated in schools of the Bulgarian community abroad, holds a special place in the calendar of festive events, shapes out as feasts of the entire community, and asserts the cultural identity of adolescents in the context of immigration, giving them new perspectives and popularising Bulgarian culture abroad (Borisova & Koulov 2017).

The Bulgarian Schools Abroad

The growing number and members of the Bulgarian migrant communities leads to the growing number of Bulgarian schools abroad (2009 – 125 Bulgarian schools abroad; 2017 – more than 330 Bulgarian schools abroad) (Dikova 2017). The Bulgarian schools abroad are among the priority migrant institutions for maintaining and transmission of Bulgarian cultural heritage. The idea of creating a school came from the immigrant community itself as a "grassroots phenomenon". The schools are registered in the host country as non-profit, non-governmental organisations. Subsequently, the National Program "Native Language and Culture Abroad" (established in 2009) at the Ministry of Education and Science and the 334 Ordinance of the Council of Ministers (introduced in 2011) marked the engagement of the Bulgarian state with financial, organisational and program support of the Bulgarian schools abroad (See Borisova & Koulov *ibid.*). To be able to work under these programs, the Bulgarian schools abroad are required to have gained licence at the Ministry of Education and Science and to have their school curriculum approved by the Ministry as representing an abridged version of the curriculum for the respective school grade in Bulgaria. The disciplines taught are Bulgarian language and literature, history, and geography. These schools generally supplement the educational system in the host country and usually engage Bulgarian children on Saturdays or Sundays (rarely on other days of the week), which is a reason for their popular terming as "Sunday Schools". The name "Bulgarian Schools Abroad" is their publicly accepted and most widely spread name. Student attendance is voluntary and depends mostly on the will, support, and encouragement from the parents (See Gergova & Borisova 2018). The Bulgarian schools abroad are located in school buildings of the host state or in buildings of other Bulgarian institutions (for example embassy, cultural centre, church). In rare cases, a special building is rented, used entirely for the needs of the Sunday school.

Theoretical Basis

The methodology applied in this study includes observation, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. Inquiries were used with students at Bulgarian schools abroad (Spain, the UK, Austria, Germany, Ireland) – treating different aspects of the Bulgarian cultural heritage, among which the issue of festivities at educational institutions. The inquiries were prepared by the team of the project "Cultural Heritage in Migration. Models of Consolidation and Institutionalization of the Bulgarian Communities Abroad" and were popularised during fieldwork research.

Conceptualising cultural memory, Jan Assmann drew the attention to feasts and rituals, which – through their repetition, ensured the reproduction of cultural identity (Assman 1997: 55). Ritual recurrence – writes Assmann, provides coherence to the group in space and time. Paying attention to the feeling of community during the feast, of shared values, and of ritual repetition, the study emphasises the perception of Bulgarian educational holidays as representative ones of the Bulgarian heritage abroad. At the same time, the Bulgarian schools abroad and the educational holidays organised in them are viewed in the light of transnationalism (Krasteva 2014: 146–162; Portes 2001: 181–194), as a "grassroots phenomenon", as long as they are initiated from the immigrant community itself.

Literacy Holidays Abroad

Festivities, as an element of the Bulgarian cultural heritage abroad, are performed in various migrant consolidation forms, while the schools focus on **literacy holidays**. The Bulgarian schools abroad function as educational, cultural, and social centres of the migrant community as a whole, and literacy festivity forms the cultural identity of adolescents. The educational festivities that are celebrated in Bulgarian schools in Bulgaria and abroad coincide: they include the opening of the school year, the Day of People's Enlighteners – 1st November, the Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavonic Alphabet – 24th May, which is usually the last school day.

The beginning of the school year (Figure 1) in Bulgarian schools abroad is usually made in accordance with the time for the opening of the school year in the host state and rarely coincides with the beginning of the school year in

Figure 1. Opening of the school year at Bulgarian school "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Leiden, Netherlands. 9th September 2017. Photo by http://www.eurochicago.com/2017/09/layden/.

Bulgaria – 15th September. The aim is that students would start their education simultaneously in the two educational systems. The feast is solemn and includes a range of characteristic symbols and rituals: the Bulgarian flag, the first school bell, plenty of flowers, the small cauldron with water, which is poured in front of the students as a wish for a successful new school year. The feast repeats the Bulgarian school rituals for the first school day, creates an environment that is close to the native one, and facilitates the overcoming of nostalgia for Bulgaria. Guests for the opening of the school year include parents, representatives of the Bulgarian community, Bulgarian diplomats in the respective state (ambassador, consul) who deliver greeting speeches and wishes for a successful school year. The Bulgarian children's choir with the school "Gergana" in New York organises a festive concert for the opening of the new school year, which coincides with the annual sessions of United Nations, which are attended with delegations from Bulgaria, including the President – who come to the school as honourable guests.

The Day of the People's Enlighteners on 1st November was initiated as a state holiday, organised by the state authorities in 1922, which was a period of heavy national political and economic crisis in Bulgaria. The feast is dedicated to the Bulgarian educators revolutionaries, and cultural figures from the period of national revival. As is emphasised by Lina Gergova, "The feast was based on the memory (or the fear of losing the memory) about the heroes from the glorious

recent past" (Gergova 2015: 13). Cancelled in 1950, the feast was restored in 1992. This discontinuity in the history of the feast did not permit the day to receive a wide-ranging public prominence, although it is a day without school classes. In Bulgaria, the Day of People's Enlighteners is opposed every year to the attractive celebrations of Halloween on 31st October. The problem is not that much in the celebration of a non-Bulgarian, non-Orthodox holiday, but rather in the insufficient attention and only formal celebration of the Day of People's Enlighteners. Outside Bulgaria, this opposition disappears: celebrations for both Halloween and the Day of People's Enlighteners are often organised in the Bulgarian schools involved in the countries targeted in the project[2]. In the conditions of migration, the Day of People's Enlighteners is marked with school celebrations and lectures dedicated to the enlighteners (Figure 2). It is considered as an element of cultural heritage that needs to be preserved by the community. Portraits of the enlighteners are put at prominent places.

Figure 2. The Day of the people's enlighteners 1st November 2015 at Bulgarian school "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Barcelona, Spain. Photo by Nikolai Vukov.

The lectures and discussions as a way of noting the day indicate that the holiday is still in the process of wide recognition, hence the knowledge about it needs to be repeated and affirmed. Thus, for example, the first significant event for "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" school in Rome after moving to the building of the Bulgarian cultural institute in 2014 was the celebration of the Day of People's Enlighteners. The celebration included an open class and a lecture from the ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Vatican and Malta, Prof. Kiril Topalov (Gergova & Borisova 2015: 220). Asked to point out in the inquiries the most important holidays for the Bulgarians abroad, the children attending the Bulgarian schools in foreign countries, twice more rarely choose the 1st November than 24th May, even if they have the option of giving more than one answer. Both the fieldwork observations and the inquiries outline the Day of People's Enlighteners and its celebrations abroad as a feast in development, in gradual establishment.

The next educational feast, **24th May** (Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavonic Alphabet) is an emanation of the Bulgarian literacy festivities. It is dedicated to the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius – creators of the Slavonic alphabet and progenitors of the Church preaching in the Slavonic language. In its development, the feast passed through several phases – from a Church one through a school one, to a national and supranational one (the latter was manifested with the proclamation of Ss. Cyril and Methodius as Co-patrons of Europe by Pope John Paul II in 1980. The feast owes its popularity to the fact that it was first celebrated in school environment even before the Liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule (1878): its first celebration took place in Plovdiv in 1851. For Bulgarians, 24th May gives ground for pride due to the hospitable welcome that the Medieval Bulgarian state provided to the deed of the two holy brothers. Bulgaria's civilising role in this respect was outlined on a state level already in the 1930s. Initially held in the church and school, the feast gradually opens up into the town square, where a procession of manifesting people carried portraits of the holy brothers decorated with flowers. During the socialist period, the manifestations for 24 May were particularly sober and colourful. After 1989, the manifestations, perceived as socialist heritage, were discarded. But in immigrant environment, these are perceived in some communities as Bulgarian cultural heritage, rather than as socialist heritage, and are practised in many Bulgarian schools. Thus, in 2015, "Little Bulgarian School" in Chicago (actually the biggest Bulgarian school in this city, with more than 400 students) noted the 24th May with a festive procession. In 2017 four Bulgarian

schools in Cyprus organised in Nicosia a joint manifestation for the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavonic Alphabet, at which the Bulgarian ambassador was also a guest. In all Bulgarian schools abroad the feast is noted with festive concerts, recitals, and greeting speeches (Figure 3). In 2015, at the initiative of the Association of the Bulgarian Schools Abroad and of Petya Tzaneva – founder and director of the First Bulgarian Sunday school "St. Ivan Rilski" in Madrid, a commemoration ceremony at the grave of St. Cyril in Rome took place on the 24th May. Around 320 pupils, parents and teachers from eighteen Bulgarian schools abroad from eight European states took part in this ceremony (Gergova & Borisova 2015: 221). The host of the initiative is "Asen and Iliya Peykovi" School in Rome, and the moments of culmination is the commemorative ritual at the grave of St. Cyril and the official visit to Pope Francis on "San Pietro" Square, which ended with singing

Figure 3. The celebration of 24th May 2017 at "Paisiy Hilendaski" Bulgarian school, Limassol, Cyprus, 2017. Photo by Mariyanka Borisova.

the hymn, dedicated to the holy brothers "Go Ahead, Revived People" and with dancing a Bulgarian traditional dance[3]. The Bulgarian schools abroad noted the special day with festive concerts and processions, with participation of large audience. Almost all school inquiries outline the 24th May as being among the most honored Bulgarian feasts abroad. The special day is recognised as such not only by the people engaged in the educational institutions, but by the entire Bulgarian community. In the foreign environment, the day of Salonica brothers gained new power of consolidating the Bulgarian community and affirming the Bulgarian cultural identity through its links with Bulgarian literature and script, with Orthodoxy, and with the Medieval glory of the Bulgarian state.

The end of the school year for the Bulgarian schools abroad is also like an educational holiday as it marks the graduation of each class in the educational system. This holiday is also attended by external guests such as Bulgarian

Figure 4. Bulgarian school "Rodolyubie" (Patriotism), Chicago, USA. The Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavonic Script in the schools abroad often coincides with the finale of the school year and the diplomas' awarding. 24th May 2015. Photo by Mariyanka Borisova.

diplomatic representatives (often ambassadors), who give students their certificates for the education they have received during the year. If it is a high school, there is held a ritual transmission of the school flag to the following class (as in the Bulgarian school "Hristo Botev" in New York, USA). The festivities include concerts, recitals, and theatre performances. They show what the students have learnt during the school year about the Bulgarian language, literature, music, and dances. The holiday is often organised in the open and attracts as its guests both parents and representatives of the Bulgarian community that are not linked directly with the school. In many Bulgarian schools abroad, the end of the school year coincides with the celebration on the 24th May (Figure 4), as this happened in 2015 in Bulgarian schools "Rodna rech" (Native speech), "Rodolyubie" (Patriotism), "St. Sophia" in Chicago, USA.

Conclusion

The literacy holidays marked by the Bulgarian schools abroad are distributed in the course of the school year. The opening and the end of the year put a frame to the educational cycle; the Day of the People's Enlighteners is the culminating feast during the fall term, whilst the Day of the Bulgarian Education and Culture and of the Slavonic Alphabet is the culminating educational holiday for the entire school year. Both in Bulgaria and abroad, the school is the main host of educational festivities, as long as the educational and revival ideas that it embodies, are established first and mainly in the school environment (Gergova 2015: 10).

In the Bulgarian schools abroad, 24th May gathers as audience a significant part of the Bulgarian community in the particular town and plays a powerful consolidating role. It gathers together the representatives of different Bulgarian immigrant associations and is a community holiday, one that affirms the school as an educational, cultural and social centre in conditions of immigration.

Informal and parallel institutions by presumption, the Bulgarian schools abroad get institutionalised through their registration in the host country and in Bulgaria; they function "with clearly defined administrative frames and hierarchies, with the entire array of mechanisms for power influence, but excluding the pending obligation, on which the mandatory secular education is based nowadays" (Gergova & Borisova 2018). Through their educational festivities, the Bulgarian schools also seek additional legitimation from the Bulgarian state

officials, sharing these festivities with the official representatives of Bulgarian state institutions at the particular destination.

The dances, the recitals, the language of the school holidays, the music, and the portraits of the celebrated personalities build the place as special, outside the mainstream of the dominant host culture (Hawkins 2007: 376). The manifestation of cultural identity outlines physical space, even if it is a temporary holiday space. Literacy holidays enhance the sense of the continuity of the cultural heritage of Bulgarian community abroad, enrich the adolescent and supply them with solid cultural identity, with a feeling of roots and belonging.

Notes

1 The current text is a part of the author's participation in the project "Cultural Heritage in Migration. Models of Consolidation and Institutionalization of the Bulgarian Communities Abroad" (2015–2017), financed by the National Science Fund at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria.

2 Geographically, the project encompasses countries in Europe and North America.

3 http://www.eurochicago.com/2015/05/balgarskiyat-da-stane-maturiteten/, last accessed on 24.09.2017.

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III

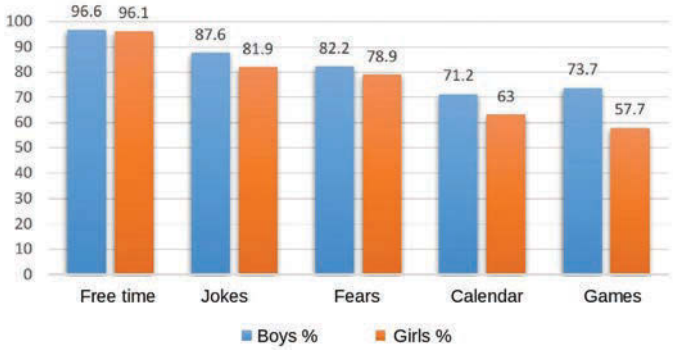
News and Reviews

COLLECTING ACTION "SCHOOL LORE 2018" EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS

The all-Estonian school lore collecting action took place from 24 February to 24 May 2018, with a record number of participants: answers to questionnaires were sent by 3717 respondents and additionally material was collected in the form of 'pupil to pupil' interviews. Answers were expected from the pupils of the 4th to 12th grades (incl. those from vocational schools), and most of them answered electronically. In addition to Estonian and Russian-language schools in Estonia, some answers were also sent from Estonian schools abroad (mainly Finland).

The patron of the project, initiated by the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum, was the Tartu City Writer Mika Keränen, and "School lore 2018" was recognised as an event of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Schoolchildren were more prone to answer questions about names (nicknames, pets' names), leisure time, fandom, as well as fears and protective beliefs.



Participation rates by topics. Statistica Joonas Tomingas 2018.

As could be expected, the most popular holidays in Estonian homes are Midsummer Day and Christmas; birthday celebrations tend to decline in importance. The descriptions of school traditions involved fascinating local traditions and intertwining with older lore.

In the answers about games played, many past favourites were highlighted; however, in comparison to the previous collection action in 2007, the importance of computer games had considerably increased.

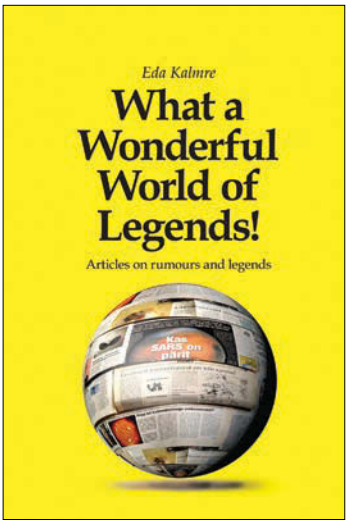
The fears brought out were a mixture of psychological, real life, and supernatural fears, with strong media influence as could be expected.

The general atmosphere of the material was friendly and positive. Although pupils described several fears, they were also aware of either realistic of supernatural ways for fighting them (with the help of protective spirits and items, charms, positive autosuggestion, supportive kin). So the obtained material yielded a vivid picture of today's youngsters' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, resulting in an expressive document of the era, offering valuable material also to future researchers.

Reet Hiiemäe

TWO COLLECTIONS FROM EDA KALMRE

"What a Wonderful World of Legends: Articles on Rumours and Legends" (ELM Scholarly Press 2018) is a compilation of researches on modern legends and rumours published by Eda Kalmre over the past twenty years.



In the foreword, the author presents a brief insight into how an everyday topic became a field of studies in academic folkloristics in Estonia and on a global scale. Each of the nine longer articles and three shorter overviews focuses on a concrete case, a special event in Estonian society or a topical theme; quite a few have taken their beginning in a newspaper article or a topic the author has been long interested in. The articles discuss legends and rumours connected with wars and the sinking of the ferry Estonia; the evolution of the heroic saga of the Voitka brothers who hid in the woods for fourteen years; the significance of Estonians' old genealogies reoccurring in the modern media, fiction, and film art in the creation of both personal and national identity; the spread of a collective supernatural belief legend and factors influencing it. The beliefs expressed by the legends and rumours are closely connected with the cultural ideologies, norms, values, and expectations of the community, which have undergone changes over time. Weighing the relationship between fantasy and reality in everyday news, the author highlights, for instance, the changed messages and ideologies of Munchausen tall tales in modern culture, and outlines the background of the alleged suspicious cases and rumours related to food.

A collection of articles titled "Pildi sisse minek: Artikleid välitööde alalt" (Entering the Picture: Articles on Fieldwork) in the series Tänapäeva folkloorist (Contemporary Folklore), No. 11, compiled and edited by Eda Kalmre (ELM Scholarly Press 2019).

The collection is a compilation of seven articles on the history of fieldwork, the formation of folklore collections during fieldwork, ideologies influencing fieldwork, problems during fieldwork in crisis areas, and today's fieldwork in different internet communities. The articles have been authored by researchers from different institutions and neighbouring fields of science: folklorists Liina Saarlo, Anu Korb, Tiiu Jaago, Mare Kalda, and Andreas Kalkun, historian Kalev Jaago, ethnologist Aivar Jürgenson, and social media researcher Katrin Tiidenberg.

Today fieldwork is conducted both in the real world and also increasingly in virtual places. One of the purposes of the collection is to give the reader an idea of the fieldwork experience gained by researchers of different domains, their fields of studies, and the way that the content of the collected material is formed in the collaboration of the researchers and their research subjects. All the articles have summaries in English.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The International Association for Comparative Mythology
13th Annual Conference

Mythology of Metamorphoses: Comparative & Theoretical Perspectives

http://www.compmyth.org

We are happy to announce that the 13th Annual Conference of the International Association for Comparative Mythology is to be held at the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia on June 10–13, 2019. The conference is organized in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and is joint with the 8th Annual Conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies. All members are warmly invited to give a paper and to participate in the discussions.

This year we have the following topics:
1. **Metamorphoses and transitions in myth**, including but not limited to the following sub-topics:
   - Metamorphosis, shapeshifting, and transformation in myth;
   - Transition and passage in myth and ritual;
   - Thresholds, borders, and boundaries: related myths, characters, and worldviews.

2. **Theoretical Approaches to Comparative Mythology**, including:
   - New theoretical and methodological approaches in the research of mythology;
   - History of comparative mythology: old and novel approaches, changes in methodology;
   - Mediascapes and digital mythology;
   - New mythologies.

3. A "free topic", i.e., any other topic you would like to propose/choose for your paper will be considered.

A list of prospective talks will be published on our website.

Please take note of the following:

ABSTRACTS

By March 1, 2019, please send, if you intend to participate, a short (300 words or less) abstract of your talk to this address: iacm.admin@gmail.com

The abstracts will be reviewed by a selection committee; the selected abstracts will be published on our website (http://www.compmyth.org)

PAPER LENGTH

The expected paper length is 20 minutes plus 10 minutes discussion.
The language of the conference is English.

The conference is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence of Estonian Studies – CEES, TK 145) and is free of charge for the participants, therefore there is NO CONFERENCE FEE. We are asking the participants to pay € 30 (€ 20 for students) to partially cover the conference dinner and reception.

Also, those of you who are not yet official members of IACM, please consider joining the association! The yearly fee is $40 (it is $15 for students and members from countries outside North America, Australia, the EU, EEA, Switzerland, and Northeast Asia).

Looking forward to seeing you in Tartu!

Yours,
13th Conference Organizing Committee, IACM