THE YEARBOOK OF BALKAN AND BALTIC STUDIES

VOLUME 4

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RELIGIOSITY, IDENTITY AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE BALTIC AND BALKAN CULTURAL SPACE IN HISTORY AND TODAY

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Contents

II National and Confessional Features of Festivals and Holidays

III Spirituality, History and Religious Practice

IV Book Reviews

INTRODUCTION

This edition of the Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies focuses on discussion and ongoing research presented to an academic community of scholars in Balkan and Baltic Studies at a conference held on 9-11 June 2020 in Riga, Latvia, organized by the International Society of Balkan and Baltic Studies. This annual conference was hosted by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia and was jointly supported by the Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian Academies of Sciences, the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies; the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum, the Estonian Literary Museum and the Lithuanian Institute of History. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held over Zoom. In spite of the physical distance that had to be maintained, however, academic discussions were vibrant and fruitful, resulting in this joint edition of the Yearbook. Scholars from various countries and academic schools presented their research on spirituality, religion, identity and culture in the Baltic and Balkan regions and analysed the dynamics of religious and national transformations. The conference also examined the impact of globalization on religious communities and spiritual processes, and touched on aspects of social and cultural transformations in the modern era and their challenges. This necessitated a focus on migration, transnationalism, secularization and the search for the new spiritual means and models. Our academic community also analysed developments regarding the place of belonging and transformations of the historical memories of religious communities in the Baltic and Balkan regions.

The research presented at the conference covered not only global processes and the dynamics of specifically European processes, it also provided insights

into situations of what Michael Herzfeld has called 'cultural intimacy' and the place of belonging. The researchers and experts in Baltic and Balkan studies assembled at the conference were able to provide new answers to very traditional questions: How is history being interpreted and re-written? What is the situation regarding ethnic and religious communities? What changes and conflicts are currently underway in the religious landscapes of both regions? What new dimensions in spirituality are emerging?

We are honoured to present this research in this new edition of the YBBS, no. 4.

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I

Identity, Symbols and Place to Belong

PLACES OF MEMORY: HOLOCAUST MEMORIALS IN VIDZEME AND THEIR SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

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Abstract: In analysing the symbolic language of Holocaust memorials, the author uses the concept of lieux de mémoire, elaborated by the French historian Pierre Nora. Nora highlights the essential differences, even rupture, between history and memory and the growing importance of lieux de mémoire, places of memory that lie between memory and history. The task of these places is to return the event to the present, reviving it in both the individual memory and the memory of society. Therefore, a memorial can also be considered a lieu de memoire. Moreover, the memorial is a more complicated case with material, symbolic and functional significance, a lieu de mémoire and a historical text with changing relations between them.

The paper will briefly describe the basic principles of Holocaust iconography and the history of the development of Holocaust memorials as a new genre of commemorative art. The author will look at the development of this genre in Latvia using the example of memorials dedicated to victims of Nazism in Vidzeme. The monument's symbolic language and whether it has been influenced by the specific place and events or whether artists have followed a specific iconographic canon will be explained. The examples will also be considered from the point of view of the dialectics between a place of memory and a historical text, mentioned above.

Keywords: Holocaust memorial, Pierre Nora, lieux de mémoire, Harold Marcuse, Holocaust iconography

Introduction

Among the dark legacies of the twentieth century that have an important place in the cultural memory of European and Latvian society is the Holocaust. The American historian Dominick LaCapra, best known for his work in European intellectual history and trauma studies, has very precisely pointed out the essence of the Holocaust as 'a complex phenomenon at the intersection of history and memory with which we are still trying to grapple' (LaCapra 1998: 1). As elsewhere globally, dozens of memorials in Latvia also mark sites of the Nazi persecution and the mass murder of the Jews. 'The design and content of Holocaust memorials reflect national differences in historiography, ideology and culture as well as a variety of styles and traditions of public art and sculpture. Many sites reflect local events or specific aspects of the Holocaust' (Milton 1991: 9). Such memorials might be the most significant movement in the remembrance of the Holocaust. There are several reasons for this. Memorials are primarily located in the places where the events of the Holocaust took place. Therefore, on the one hand, to create a monument, the artist needs the local community's involvement. On the other hand, the memorial's message not to forget past events and their victims in this community is unambiguous. 'Despite the specificity of each site and despite national differences in perspective and emphasis, these memorials collectively preserve for posterity the public memory of Nazi mass murder' (Milton ibid.).

In analysing the symbolic language of Holocaust memorials, the author of this paper will use the concept of lieux de mémoire, elaborated by the French historian Pierre Nora. According to Nora, lieux de mémoire are places where 'memory is crystallised, in which it finds refuge' (Nora 1997: 1). Nora emphasised that in these places, a 'residual sense of continuity remains', and what is even more important – these places 'exist because there are no longer any milieux de mémoire, settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience' (ibid.).

For Nora, in many respects memory and history are opposites. If memory is life, if it is remembering and forgetting, if it can sleep for years, only to wake up suddenly with new power, then history is only a reconstruction, always problematic and unfinished, because it tries to reconstruct what is and will remain the past. Showing the irreconcilability of these opposites, Nora admits that 'society living wholly under the sign of history would not need to attach

its memory to specific sites any more than traditional societies do' (Nora 1997: 3). However, we should agree with LaCapra when he points out that 'Nora feels that something essential has been lost, and – whether or not the loss is itself imaginary – the very opposition between history and memory serves to commemorate and assuage it' (LaCapra 1998: 19). Lieux de mémoire have a growing importance in these problematic relationships between memory and history because they lie between them. They do not allow an event to become just a thing of the past. The task of these places is to return the event to the present and revive it in the individual memory and the memory of society as well.

Nora stresses that memory situates remembrance in a sacred context (Nora 1997: 3). Mention may also be made here of the Jewish historian and essayist Saul Friedlander's argument that memory 'reinterpreting the past through representation allows one to see hidden forms and new levels of discourse, and to try to exorcise the evil of this past' (Friedlander 1993: 18). Also, according to LaCapra, the memory may be informative 'not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object's often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both participants in events and those born later' (LaCapra 1998: 19). However, being phenomena of emotions, memory and remembrance are fragile, especially because memories of the tragic call for silence: 'Silence itself is more accurate or truthful or morally responsive' than testimonies of history (Lang 2000: 9).

Nevertheless, silence also limits the representation of the past event and can turn this event into absence. We see so many memorial places overgrown in the grass, and we can no longer say anything about them and the events about whom they have ever told! 'Absence' may indeed be gradually becoming 'a word associated with memory which is largely a negative form of memory' (Feinstein 2005: xxii). It is a memory that has ceased to be present at all.

For the event to be an event again, it must be known. When memories become absent, when no one remembers them, they can only be reborn by history. Therefore, history can be viewed as the transmission of critically tested memories. That does not involve a direct survival of the 'true memory ' but is a cultural product compensating for the absence of memory. The new memory is memory integrated into history. LaCapra finds that history is its 'own variant of the form of memory work and working – through that is embodied in mourning, a process that may be called for with respect to victims of traumatic

events' (LaCapra 1998: 20). The Holocaust, which belongs to the dark legacy of humanity, is undoubtedly such an event.

Returning to Nora's lieux de mémoire, it should also be mentioned that the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur characterises such places as 'contemporaneous with memory seized by history and not rebellion with respect to history' (Ricoeur 2009: 403). Ricoeur refers to Nora's conclusion that places of memory are granted remarkable efficiencies, 'the capacity to produce "another history". They draw this power from the fact that they partake of the orders of both memory and history ' (ibid.: 405).

From this point of view, memorials also should be lieux de mémoire because they are the 'betweenness ', that is, they are between memory and history. At least we can evaluate memorials according to whether they are only topographical marks of historical places or also lieux de mémoire. However, a memorial as a symbolic object of memory is also an essential instrument of historical work that is not to be forgotten. Even if we recognise one or another memorial as a specific place of memory, we must not forget that each memorial is more complicated because of its material, symbolic and functional significance. 'The first anchors the places of memory in realities that can be said to be already given and manipulable; the second is the work of the imagination, and it assures the crystalising of memories and their transmission; the third leads back to ritual, which history nevertheless attempts to dismiss' (Ricouer 2009: 405). Besides, no matter how contradictory and complicated the relationship between the three parties may be, the importance of memory places lies in representing the 'maximum possible meaning with the fewest possible signs' (ibid.). Therefore, a memorial is at the same time a place of memory and a historical text with a very complex dialectic between them.

Holocaust memorials as a new genre of commemorative art

According to the American professor of German history, Harold Marcuse, Holocaust memorials are a new genre of commemorative art:

> they are addressed to transnational audiences; they often explicitly represent multiple meanings; and they use a new repertoire of symbols, forms, and materials to represent those meanings. By the time they emerged as

a distinct genre around 1960, Holocaust memorials tended to be complex experiential spaces, usually going beyond mere documentary markers to include significant didactic accoutrements. (Marcuse 2010: 54)

There are several essential highlights in this quote from Marcuse, which should be considered before we take a closer look at the Holocaust memorials in Vidzeme.

First, we can only talk about Holocaust memorials as a specific genre from the 1960s. An American scholar of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, Sybil Milton, points out that during 1950

the first European memorials fell into one of two broad organisational patterns. In Eastern Europe the memorials were usually seen as forms of symbolic politics under the direction and financial patronage of the central government. In Western Europe the memorials were usually left to private and local initiative and thus developed in an ad hoc and piecemeal fashion. The ambivalences and inadequacies of this initial phase in the institutionalisation of the Holocaust were irreversible and provided the context for all subsequent developments. (Milton 1991: 21)

Holocaust monuments and memorials before that time reflected selected aspects of national style, religious tradition, public expectation and artistic skill. Most of them were derived from either classical funeral monuments (obelisks, tall pylons, stelae in classical geometric forms) or traditional war memorials.

Sometimes, the monuments were used simply to mark a mass murder or a burial site as meaningful but without specifying that meaning. Nevertheless, even simple preservation of these places as such, even without additional monuments, was an act of memorialization (Milton 1991: 16). It turned these places into meaningful and impressive lieux de mémoire, which were at the same time easy-to-understand general historical messages about the tragic events that had taken place in these places, but without specific details.

The early memorials were created using predominantly Christian iconography commemorating heroism and patriotism usually associated with military victories or losses. Therefore, their symbolic language was inappropriate for the victims of the Nazi massacres and significantly changed the emotional background to their places of memory.

The early memorials were created using predominantly Christian iconography commemorating heroism and patriotism usually associated with military victories or losses. Therefore, their symbolic language was inappropriate for the victims of the Nazi massacres and significantly changed the emotional background to their places of memory.

Furthermore, Milton argues that the 'linkage of liturgical and didactic elements in most memorials is reflected in an ideologically diversified fashion in various changing national historical memories that are concerned as much with the past as with the present and the future' (Milton 1991: 15). In many cases, the memorials' focus was not the commemoration of the victims but a celebration of the anti-fascist resistance. Marcuse points out that the traditional form of memorial indicates that the survivors had not yet derived a specific meaning from the experience they wish to represent (Marcuse 2010: 58). Simultaneously, as seen in some examples of Soviet-era monuments in Latvia, post-war monuments with their laconic generalizations perfectly correspond to the need to deprive the victims of their individuality. They are all the same and are anonymous. This specific is also indicated by Milton, who that

> *many European memorials do not mention Jews explicitly, thereby reflecting the ideological views of Communist regimes, which emphasise political resistance: similar approaches in non-Communist countries in the West are not common knowledge. These national memorials are often self-serving, attributing a national identity to the victims not granted to them in their lifetimes. Thus, the posthumous acknowledgement transforms Polish Jews into Poles and French Jews into French. (Milton 1991: 19)*

In the socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc, there were also figurative memorials in the style of socialist realism, often depicting groups of people to express international solidarity as a movement. The Jews were only one group among several others. A consideration of both memorials in Eastern and Western Europe indicates that specifically Jewish symbols were problematic in the early memorial iconography. The six-pointed Star of David, a menorah or the five-pointed communist red star were used to specify the categories of victims that were commemorated on the monuments and nothing else. The anonymity and isolation of individuals caught up in the machinery of mass murder tends to be emphasized (Marcuse 2010: 55). The concealing of Jewish victims stands in sharp contrast to American and Israeli memorials, where the reverse exclusion

applies. According to Milton, this peculiarity developed mainly because the most significant impetus and financing for memorials in those two counties had come from Jewish survivors (Milton 1991: 19). an issue of national identification, touristic attraction and local branding. The discussion brought in some parallels of the transformation in the traditional holiday meals in other European countries, partly because of the trend towards vegetarianism, healthy food, and restrictions on eating bread. It is seen as a conflict between generations, when grandmothers want to make their grandchildren eat traditional "unhealthy" calories – rich food such as pork and bread, and the youngsters protest against it.

The specific Jewish dimension of the Nazi genocide began to emerge in the public sphere in the 1950s. This milestone was primarily because the understanding of the Nazi genocide as a programme distinct from the atrocities committed during World War II began to emerge only in this period.

According to Marcuse, the international competition for a memorial for Auschwitz-Birkenau

> *marks a transition to a wholly new genre of the memorial: more expansive, complex, mostly abstract, avant-garde sculptures that create or incorporate experiential spaces with multiple symbolic elements. Although "the Holocaust" in its specifically Jewish meaning was not a prominent event of public commemoration also in the 1950s, a symbolic language of specific Holocaust memorials, the iconography and aesthetic traditions of its later representation did emerge during that decade. (Marcuse 2010: 89)*

For example, the symbolic meaning was given to materials used for the memorial. There were stones from concentration camp quarries, such as the granite in the Mauthausen memorial in the Pére Lachaise Cemetery in Paris (1958). the marble used in the Jewish memorial at Dachau (1967) came from Peki'in in Israel, which is believed to have had a continuous Jewish settlement since biblical times. Numerous Holocaust memorials incorporate containers of human ash or 'blood-soaked' soil from Nazi concentration camps and sites of mass murder (Marcuse 2010: 56). Religious symbols and references to the ancient history of the Jews as 'witness people myth' (Haynes 1995: 8), the belief that whatever happens to the Jews, for good or evil, is an expression of God's providential justice and, as such, is a sign for 'God's church', are also gaining in importance.

This newly created symbolic language varies essentially from earlier memorial traditions of war-related mass deaths. Marcuse points out that the need for this new symbolic representation is predicated on the absence of what is symbolised (Marcuse 2010: 58). However, that is just one of the reasons: the use of symbolic language for the message of Holocaust memorials, which is addressed to everyone, is no less important.

In this context, Marcuse's assumption that the establishment of specific Holocaust memorials after the 1960s was very often determined not by the place where they were located nor by events that had happened in this place should be considered. Although the events undoubtedly gave rise to a specific iconography, Marcuse emphasizes the more crucial role of the agents, the groups of initiators behind the memorials and their intended audiences. He admits that 'in fact, some of the core event-sites of the Holocaust, including Babi Yar, Belzec, Chełmno, Sobibor, and Treblinka, were not memorialised at all until the 1960s when agents and audiences emerged who took an interest in transmitting their memory' (Marcuse 2010: 55). That is, these places of memory were not initially chosen due to their links with past events: they became places of memory due to political preferences.

The development of similar processes in Latvia was hindered by the Soviet regime, which found memorials dedicated to the Holocaust unacceptable. They also had no target audience. Specific Holocaust memorials were discovered mainly after the collapse of the Soviet regime at the beginning of our century.

Symbolic language of holocaust memorials in Vidzeme

Vidzeme, literally meaning 'the Middle Land', is one of Latvia's historical and cultural regions, situated in north-central Latvia, north of the Daugava River. In the southwestern part of Vidzeme is Riga, Latvia's capital. In Vidzeme, outside Riga, 2,500 Jews were registered in 1935 (Bediķe 2000), in which year 43,672 Jews also lived in Riga. Most of them were killed in the Holocaust in 1941.

Of the thirty memorials in Vidzeme and eleven in Riga that mark Holocaust-related places, the most typical and the most original memorials will be described in this article.

Many of the memorials that were erected shortly after the war on the sites of the deaths or mass burials have not survived. As elsewhere in Europe and Latvia, these post-war Holocaust memorials primarily served as memorials

to the dead. According to the information we have, they were mainly simple wooden or, in some cases, stone slabs with laconic inscriptions about the place of the killing or mass burial of victims of fascism or Soviet patriots. Those who put them up were mainly the relatives of those who had been murdered or themselves survivors of the Holocaust. It should be emphasized here that the surviving part of the Jewish population of Latvia 'was not willing to conform to the Soviet narrative which emphasised exclusively "Soviet citizens – victims of the Nazi barbarians". They therefore shaped the alternative memory, or counter-memory, to the Soviet vision of the Second World War' (Zisere 2019: 302).

The the Soviet regime silence imposed on the Holocaust means that many sites of mass murder can only be indicated today by coordinates recorded in certain archival documents or books. Still, the sites themselves can no longer be found, and even those living close to them do not know about the terrible events associated with them. It can therefore be said that these places have ceased to be memory places: 'without commemorative vigilance, history has soon swept them away' (Nora 1997: 7).

In some cases, however, the earliest Holocaust memorials have survived both as places of remembrance and as historical text. They are designed as tombstones, thus symbolising the sorrow for the dead. However, the epitaphs on these monuments do not contain more detailed information about those for whom we are asked to mourn. Created according to Soviet guidelines on anonymous Soviet citizens who were victims of the Nazi regime, the epitaphs render this mourning meaningless and turn the memory of them into its absence. One such example is the Smiltene Forest Cemetery memorial, where in 1947 some of the remains of the two hundred Jews killed near Smiltene were reburied (here and below I am relying on data from Melers 2013). The inscription on this memorial states: 'Eternal remembrance to those fallen we build. In joint work for the future, we find strength in remembrance of heroes!' As can be seen from this epitaph, the victims to whom this monument was dedicated are anonymous. Understandably, many of them were unknown, but even when their names were discovered, the policy of anonymity continued, as it does, moreover, even thirty years after the fall of the Soviet regime.

Figure 1. The tombstone in the Smiltene Forest Cemetery. Summer of 2020. Photo by Solveiga Krumina-Konkova

In 1948 a monument was unveiled on the site of the mass murder in Ķelderleja near Valmiera. It was dedicated to all the victims who had been killed on this site (approximately three thousand residents of Valmiera). The monument is in the shape of a grey granite stele with an inscription in Latvian 'To Victims of Fascism of 1941' and a poem as at Smiltene.

This monument has not undergone any significant changes since Soviet times, but the impression it makes is different from that made by the Smiltene monument. In Ķelderleja, we can talk about complementary relations between this place of memory and the historical text. In this case, the historical text is not just a piece of historiography conveying information about the massacres in Ķelderleja in 1941-1942, but also the location of this site itself in a forested

ravine. For those who know what happened in Ķelderleja, the road to the monument itself is also a historical text. It inadvertently allows us to imagine those who were driven to Ķelderleja many decades ago and their feelings: ignorance and fear, alternating with a sudden realization of what awaited them deeper in the woods and that there would be no way back. Thus, the path tells us what we could see next. And not even what we will see, but rather feel - a depressing mourning silence. The mood of this place of memory dominates over the anonymising inscription of the monument, essentially abolishing it. Of course, it should be noted here that this place of memory is focused on individual psychology, not on the collective commemoration of the massacre.

Figure 2. Memorial in Ķelderleja near Valmiera. Summer of 2020. Photo by Solveiga Krumina-Konkova

In these examples, we see a typical feature of Soviet-era commemoration. Except for Riga, there were no Holocaust memorials in Vidzeme during the Soviet period. Most of the memory places were created as memorials to all victims of Nazism without highlighting the Jews. This attitude was justified by arguing that Jews, Roma, Latvians and representatives of other nationalities – Soviet activists and prisoners of war – were killed and buried together and were all Soviet citizens. Only by reburying the dead were the Jews, probably at the community's request, buried separately, for example, in Smiltene and Valmiera, which we will talk about next. In the case of Smiltene, it can be said that the inscription on the grave is even misleading because it hides the nationality of those of have been reburied there.

In 1985 the Brethren Cemetery was opened in Valmiera to reinter Soviet soldiers and victims of the Nazi mass murders in Ķelderleja. The remains of the Jews were reburied separately, at a place marked by a granite plaque and an apple tree, the latter giving this stie the name 'Golden Apple-tree'. The idea of creating a more monumental memorial site was not realized, and it is now difficult to consider it a place of memory at all: it can only be called a symbol of oblivion. Remembering Nora again: when 'the memorial has swung over into the historical', history begins to write its own history, and memory spaces can easily be reduced (Nora 1974: 212). The Brothers' Cemetery Ensemble is currently being renewed, and it is to be hoped that the Golden Apple-tree Memorial Site will also be restored.

Figure 3. Golden Apple-tree memorial site in Valmiera. Photo From the site: Holocaust Memorial Places in Latvia. © 2021 Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia.

In the 1960s, like elsewhere in Europe, this new genre of memorial began to appear in Latvia: more expansive, more complex and consisting primarily of abstract, avant-garde sculptures that create or incorporate experiential spaces with different symbols.

In 1967, on the site of the Salaspils concentration camp, an impressive monumental memorial was opened, designed by the architects Gunārs Asaris, Ivars Strautmanis, Oļģerts Ostenbergs and Oļegs Zakamennijs. The memorial creates a symbol of the border between life and death with a hundred-metre-long concrete wall. The visitors can read the words written on the wall – 'Beyond these gates, the land groans'. Behind the wall is a ceremonial square with a pedestal in black granite designed for laying official wreaths. The artificial heartbeat of the metronome can be heard throughout the memorial. There are also seven concrete sculptures, called respectively 'Mother', 'The Unbroken', 'The humiliated', 'Protest', 'Red Front', 'Solidarity' and 'The Oath'. Thus, the ensemble's symbolism was related more to the theme of international solidarity than to compassion for the victims of the Nazi regime. Also, it did not contain any obvious reference to the Holocaust, although this former labour correctional camp was built by Jews from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.
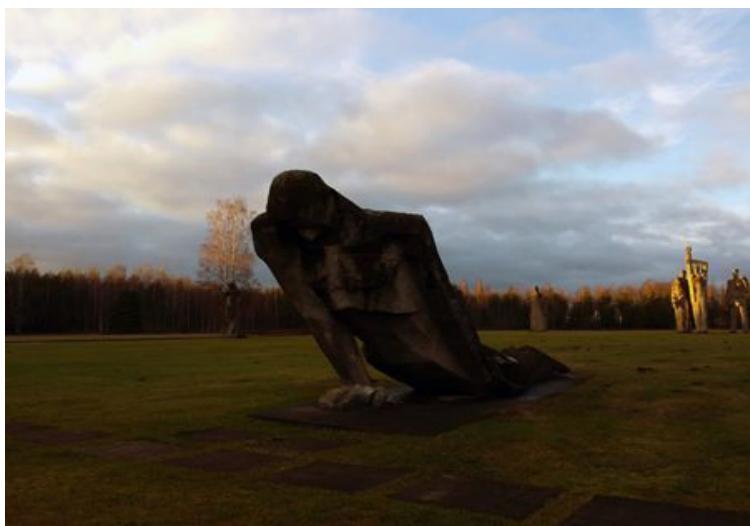
Figure 4. Salaspils Memorial Ensemble. Photo by Janis Konoshonoks.

In 2004, thanks to a donation by Larry Pik, a former prisoner of the Salaspils camp, a monument to commemorate the foreign Jews who had died there was erected. The monument bears the Star of David and an inscription in Hebrew, Latvian and German: 'To honour the dead and as a warning to the living. In memory of the Jews deported from Germany, Austria and Czechia, who from December 1941 to June 1942 died from hunger, cold and inhumanity and have found eternal rest in the Salaspils forest'. In 2018, a new exhibition was unveiled, telling the history of this memorial site.

Despite its initial reference to solidarity, the Salaspils Memorial 'possesses a clear and well-considered emotional drama' (Gaber 2021). It is an example where history allows both past events to be returned to the present and the sculpture ensemble itself, thus creating deep emotions and strengthening this memorial as an impressive place of memory and commemoration.

Figure 5. Memorial in Valka. Photo from the site Holocaust Memorial Places in Latvia. © 2021 Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia.

The symbol of social resistance was used in the memorial to the Nazi victims in Valka, in the area where the Jews of Valka and its vicinity were murdered in 1941. Despite the existence of documentary information telling what happened at this place, a monument was erected without any inscriptions. Thus, it can be said that the figure of a man depicted in the monument carried a misleading message about this place of death. The man, who is holding the flag in his hands, most likely in red, symbolizes respect for the comrades who were killed here in 1941, but this picture says nothing about the specific victims. Moreover, during the Soviet era, such monuments were seen in many parks, where this monument would probably fit more than in this place of Nazi crime.

The monument seems to have broken the trace between the past and the place where it was erected, so this place has ceased to be a place of memory. The significance of the historical text with which the memorial addresses us and creates a definite emotional experience became apparent only after the memorial's restoration. In 2008, the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia erected a memorial stone with the six-pointed Star of David, a short text in Yiddish and the actual names of the murdered not far from the Soviet monument. Perhaps at least some visitors, learning from this epitaph that whole families were among those killed at this place, might change their attitudes towards this past event, so that it is no longer just a forgotten fact of history for them.

The erection of new Holocaust memorials started in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the anonymity inherent in the Soviet era continued to exist in the first post-Soviet years as well. In 1993 a monument in the shape of a human skull (author Gvido Buls) was erected in the Smecere Pine Forest near Madona. About seven hundred residents of Madona and its vicinity had been killed there in one day, on 8 August 1941. Among the victims, 250 were Jews.

Figure 6. Memorial in the Smecere Pine Forest. Madona, summer of 2020. Photo by Georgijs Konkovs.

This monument replaced the old one built in 1960, which has not been preserved. Gvido Buls successfully forms an imposing experiential space, its shape closely linked to the terrible events with which this place is associated with the memories of local people. From the older generation's stories, we know that some of those who were shot were buried alive, and that long after the massacre moans were heard of someone trying to get out of the grave.

However, this monument was initially erected without any inscriptions on or next to it. Only after more than ten years, in 2006, was a small stone placed next to it with an inscription in Latvian 'Memorial place of the residents of Madona and its vicinity, who were killed after the invasion by the Nazi German army'. Thus, the reference to the history of this place concretizes the past event. Still, it practically does not change anything in this site's impact on its visitors, even if they know nothing about what happened there. The monument created by Buls as a symbol of the presence of death only acquires an additional connection to a specific geographical location.

If we return to the analysis of the relations between the place of memory and the historical text in the message carried by a particular memorial, then in the case of the Smecere Pine Forest memorial, it is undoubtedly the place of memory in these relations that is dominant. Moreover, it has become a convincing historical testimony of the past massacre, making one feel the event's horrors emotionally. Paradoxically, this feeling is exacerbated by the memorial's merging with the surrounding landscape and an air of abandonment.

Several monuments in Riga have experienced a similar evolution of style and symbolic meaning. For example, Rumbula is one of the largest sites of mass murders of Jews in Europe. About 25,000 prisoners from the Riga ghetto and almost a thousand foreign Jews brought from Berlin, as well as Soviet prisoners of war, were killed in the Rumbula forest during two actions on 30 November and 8 December 1941. In 1944 another two hundred men from Kaiserwald concentration camp were killed in the same place. In 1964, a memorial stone with an inscription 'To the Victims of Fascism' in Latvian, Russian and Yiddish was erected. However, during the Soviet period, there were no other signs or information related to the Holocaust in Rumbula, even though 'Jewish community activists kept organising, throughout the almost fifty years of [the] postwar Soviet occupation of Latvia, clandestine weekly meetings on the site of collective killings in the Rumbula forest' (Zisere 2019: 302).

Figure 7. Memorial in the Rumbula forest. Summer of 2020. Photo by Diana Popova.

A memorial ensemble in the new style designed by the architect Sergey Rizh was unveiled in Rumbula in 2002. It was created with financial support from Latvia, Israel, the USA and Germany, as well as some private individuals. At the road leading to the memorial, a metal construction symbolizing the force of the Nazis has been installed. According to the architect Sergei Rizh, 'Metal symbolises the atrocity of Nazism - forces that destroyed everyone who did not fit into the Nazi view of the right' (Riga Monuments Agency 2021). The road leads to the memorial's central part, shaped like the Star of David with a menorah as 'a tree of life' above it. The menorah is surrounded by uncut stones of the sort that are traditional for a burial ground in Jewish culture. On them are engraved the names of slaughtered Jews. Several cobblestones are also present bearing the names of the streets in Riga's ghetto. The symbolism of uncut stones has several meanings, the best known –being that they symbolize the cemetery. According to Exodus 20:22, and some other places of the Bible, God prefers only uncut stones ('stones cut without hands'), making such stones fit for inclusion in the altar to the victims.

Moreover, as 'living stones' the uncut stones symbolize God's innocent children, as well as shattered and destroyed lives in the context of past events in Rumbula. From here, cobblestones as artificial stones have a different meaning. They are signs of idolatry. An idol is a creation of man where he worships his own effort that leads him to evil and is not acceptable to God.

Figure 8. Memorial in the Biķernieki forest. Winter of 2019. Photo by Diana Popova.

A memorial in a similar style has also been erected in the Biķernieki forest. This memorial is dedicated to about 35,000 people who were killed in the Biķernieki forest during the Nazi occupation, 20,000 of them were Jews, including 11-12,000 from other European countries. About 15,000 were Soviet prisoners of war. A memorial to the victims of Nazism of all nationalities, also created by Sergei Rizh, was unveiled in 2001.

The paths through the 'forest' of the torn granite stones lead past stones with the names of European cities: Brno, Stuttgart, Paderborn, Kiel, Prague, Bremen, Hamburg, Dresden, and others. This indicates that victims of the Biķernieki massacre came from these places and that Jewish communities in these cities were destroyed during the Holocaust. In the middle of the stone forest rises a cross-arch based on four concrete pylons, beneath which is a black granite cube, an altar with an inscription from the Book of Job in several languages: 'O Earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place!''

Forty concrete piles have been installed over this whole forest clearing to mark the gravesites. They depict a stylised crown of thorns, the years '1941–1944', and indications of the victims' affiliation: a crown for prisoners of war, a Star of David for the Jews and a cross for other civilians (Riga Monuments Agency 2021).

Both memorials in Rumbula and Biķernieki have been designed with deep involvement in the Jewish tradition, where history is the memory of this nation, the memory in which people disappear. Simultaneously, these memorials are places of a memory that is painful for everybody, and thus they also represent the universal drama. Perhaps the impression of these two memorials is in line with what LaCapra wrote: 'The memory site is generally also a site of trauma, and the extent to which it remains invested with trauma marks the extent to which memory has not been effective in coming to terms with it, notably through the fashion of mourning' (LaCapra 1998: 10).

Although the symbolism of the Rumbula and Biķernieki memorials contains many references to the Jewish religious tradition, there are also several memorials in Riga with a symbolic language that extends beyond the boundaries of any one religion. One such memorial commemorates the victims of the Jewish genocide at 25 Gogola Street, a place where on 4 July 1941, the Riga Great Choral Synagogue was burned down with many Jews inside it. In 1988, a memorial stone with a Star of David was placed there, and in 1993 a memorial was unveiled, also designed by Sergey Rizh.

This memorial consists of the synagogue's symbolic walls and some built-in original ornamental elements found during excavations. In 2007, a monument to Žanis Lipke and other Latvian saviours of Jews was erected next to the memorial. The monument consists of a high wall twelve metres long and six metres high, which is almost falling down, which supports columns with the names of 270 saviours of Jews inscribed on them. Žanis Lipke, who saved 56 people, is

portrayed in the central column. In this urban setting, the memorial is a stark reminder of destruction and genocide ((Riga Monuments Agency 2021). The white wall, which seems to threaten to destroy all living things, also symbolizes destruction. In turn, the support columns symbolize possible salvation from death and the belief that good can be born amid evil, just as light is born in the deepest darkness.

The memorial on the site of the former Kaiserwald concentration camp has a similar symbolic message. Although at first this monument, situated next to heavy traffic, is difficult to grasp as a sign of the Holocaust, its symbolism addresses passers-by at first sight. Acquaintance with the history of this place that can be read at the foot of the monument makes it possible to understand the message of this place of memory even more deeply.

Figure 9. Kaiserwald concentration camp memorial. From the site: Holocaust Memorial Places in Latvia. © 2021 Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia.

The monument is based on a cone made out of railway bearings. There is a single metal column in the centre that widens into a metal mesh in the form of a blossom at the top. The symbolic image of the central element has several explanations: it can be compared to a sprout growing in the middle of the bomb crater, to a torch (it is illuminated in the dark) or to a metaphorical representation of the tree of life. The symbolism of the contrasting materials, the metal and glass, 'allows to combine in one overall picture the references to the railway as an allegory of the road of torture, the resistance personified in metal and the human life equated to the fragility of glass' (Riga Monuments Agency 2021). Compared to other memorials, this memorial is characterized by a very high level of abstraction. Its symbolic language addresses the universal message about death that evokes its opposite – life and survival ¬ – to a broad and very diverse audience.

Some conclusions

The history of Holocaust memorials in Latvia is like the history of these memorials elsewhere in Europe: it reflects changes in post-war political culture and shows how similar and different is the reception of the events of the Holocaust by one or other of the post-war generations. From the examples considered here, it can be concluded that the development of Holocaust memorials in Vidzeme overall repeats the formation of similar genres elsewhere in Europe after the 1960s. True, we need to talk here about a delay in time influenced by the attitude of the Soviet regime towards the commemoration of Holocaust events.

Holocaust memorials have been erected in Vidzeme in places of massacres or where the victims of these killings have been buried. Simultaneously, it should be noted that these victims are anonymised. Moreover, as in the example of Valka, the monuments' symbolic language is used to convey a deliberately misleading message. In several cases, the memorials do not fully function as lieux de mémoire and have turned into merely historical sites, for which some elements of the general public have no interest.

As elsewhere in Europe, these examples show that Holocaust memorials are becoming more impressive and more abstract. New symbols, both religious and universal, are being introduced into their iconography. Of course, the Riga memorials are mainly meant here. From the late 1990s, memorials began to be designed chiefly as signposts for the future.

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Acknowledgement

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IDENTITY OF THREE BULGARIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN SOFIA

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First of all, we are Bulgarians, then Christians, and as such we break up into Orthodox and Catholics (city-dweller of Sofia)

Abstract: This article focuses on the history and identity of three Bulgarian Christian communities from the second part of 20th c. until today. The article presents the results of ethnographic explorations between 2010 and 2020 carried out on a comparative basis among three Bulgarian Christian denominations in Sofia. The case of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church shows that believers might be desrcibed as 'believing and belonging, without behaving' (PRC 2017b). Under the Soviet regime, members of the Bulgarian Catholic Church managed to maintain their religious identity due to their interconfessional links. Their religious identity was strengthened by their witnessing repressed priests, monks and selfless members of the laity. Modern Bulgarian Christians have multiple identities, but prioritize their ethnic identity, followed respectively by their identities as religious in general terms and finally specific confessional identities.

Keywords: Bulgarian Christian denominations, Othodox, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, religious identity, Sofia.

Introduction

Religious life in post-socialist regions differs from that in Western Europe because of the unique historical, political, socio-cultural and economic situations in those regions. Post-socialist religious life has its own peculiarities in Bulgaria. Although the Church was formally separated from the state, religious life was persecuted, and religious rituals were prohibited under Bulgaria's Soviet-style totalitarian regime. Different Christian communities became sites of religious and cultural resistance against oppressive regimes in eastern Europe before the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Bulgarian Christian communities were no exception.

In Soviet-era Bulgaria, the state's relations with the various religions in the country depended on the unique historical situation, political regime, state-supported atheism, and local traditions. The totalitarian regime was negatively disposed towards religious communities and more or less mistreated all religious denominations. Their treatment depended on the status of the church-goers: they were treated as 'national', as was the case for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, or 'international' (Ballinger andGhodsee 2011). Religion mainly depended on the ethnic and national identities of the Bulgarian people. According to Petar Kanev, being Bulgarian and being Orthodox might be treated as synonymous in Bulgaria due to the fact that Orthodoxy is often comprehended not as a religion but as a national and cultural identity (Kanev 2002: 84, 78), as other researchers have also argued. As Kristen Ghodsee maintains in her survey, Many Bulgarians 'believe that to change religious affiliation is to change ethnic and cultural identification' (Ghodsee 2009: 234). James Lindsay Hopkins points out that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is a marker of national and ethnic identity, having become 'an instrument of Bulgarian geopolitism, allowing itself to get used by the government, as a necessary medium toward the realisation of its goal of national unification' (Hopkins 2008: 8). According to K. Ghodsee, Orthodoxy is closely linked to religious and national identity due to it being embedded in Church dogma (Ghodsee 2009: 235). When speaking about the relationship between the modern Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the state, she uses the concept of 'symphonic secularism, which she explains as follows:

> *Symphoneia (symphony) refers to the Eastern Orthodox doctrine that asserts that the spiritual authority of the Church should not take precedence over the temporal authority of the state, but rather that they should work together for the common good. (Ghodsee 2009: 228)*

> *In this context, religion is understood as a tool through which Tsars, Sultans, politburos or prime ministers have consolidated their power over ethnically or linguistically diverse populations, by promoting national identity through a church (or a mosque or synagogue) that instills loyalty to the state as part of its ecumenical dogma while also granting autonomy to other religiously defined communities. (Ghodsee 2009: 242)*

Today the majority of people living in Bulgaria consider being Orthodox a significant component of their individual and national identity. According to a PRC survey (PRC 2017b), 75 per cent of respondents in Bulgaria identify as Orthodox, 15 per cent say they are Muslims, 5 per cent of participants identify as unaffilliated, 4 per cent of respondents identify as other, and only about 1 per cent as Catholics (PRC 2017b). Bulgarians, who are therefore mainly Orthodox, come third in the strength of religious beliefs in eastern Europe after Poles and Slovaks (50 per cent of Bulgarians never doubt God's existence) (PE 1991: 192). Nevertheless, the neo-secularization of Bulgarian society has inevitably marked the lives of many Bulgarian Christians, especially in the past decade. The process of secularization, 'related to globalization and neoliberal paradigm, reinforces and perpetuates the prevalence of individualistic discursive practices' (Merdjanova 2021, cited in Slavov 2020: 19). In Western Europe, secularization is linked to the process of 'believing without belonging', where widespread belief in God coexists with largely empty churches and the legal regulation of religious institutions (Davie 1994). This process is related to recent changes in Western Europe ('the change from a culture of obligation to the local parish, church, or denomination to consumption in terms of religious life') (Davie 2005, cited in Liu 2005) or the process 'neither believing nor belonging' (Voas and Crockett 2005). According to a Pew Reseach Center survey, Orthodox Christians in Central and Eastern Europe are more likely to believe in God and identify with Orthodox Christianity than practice their religion (PRC 2017b). They do not perform religious practices at high levels, such as daily prayers, regularly attending church and services of worship service, so they might be described as 'believing and belonging, without behaving' (ibid.).

In recent decades, Bulgarian Christians and their religious, national and cultural identities have become a subject of increased interest. A number of surveys have been carried out on the historical, sociocultural, political and religious aspects of Bulgarian Christians (Eldărov 1998, 2002; Slavov 2020;

Serafimova 2011; Ballinger and Ghodsee 2011; Hopkins 2008; Ghodsee 2009; Hafkes-Teeples 2008; Roberson 2008; Brown 1983; Koinova 1999a; Kanev 2002; Kalkandjieva 2011, 2014; Eade 2012; Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2018), local varieties of the family and calendrical feasts of Bulgarian Catholics and Orthodox Christians (Boncheva 2005; Jankov 2003; Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2011; Lyubenova 2018; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2019), the local treatment of religion as ban on marriage in light of its role as a key marker in constituting community identity (Boncheva 2006), and the distinctivness of the musical culture and national identity of Bulgarian Catholics (Grozdew 2004).

This article makes use of certain statistical sources related to Bulgarian Christians' religious issues, such as the Population Census 2011 (NSI 2011), prepared by National Statistical Institute, and The Eastern Catholic Churches Statistics (ECCS 2017), compiled by Ronald G. Roberson. Two sources should be distinguished from the professionally prepared statistics, namely two reports produced by the Pew Reseach Center (PRC). Both reports are part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project. The first report, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe' (PRC 2017b), analyzes religious change and its impact on societies around the world. Fieldwork for the survey was carried out by Ipsos MORI and the Institute for Comparative Social Research in Bulgaria in 2015. Following fieldwork, the survey's performance was assessed by comparing the results for key demographic variables with reliable, national-level population statistics. The second report, 'Orthodox Christianity in the 21st Century' (PRC 2017a), analyses religious change and its impact on societies around the world. It also brings together analyses of survey and demographic data from various previously published PRC reports. It also includes new analysis of the religious beliefs and practices of Orthodox Christians and historical data on the distribution of Orthodox Christians, Catholics and Protestants around the world.

Methodology of the research

The aim of this paper is to define the identity of three Bulgarian Christian communities in Sofia: the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church of the Byzantine tradition, and the Roman Catholic Church. The article is broken down into three case studies, respectively of the Holy Trinity Bulgarian Orthodox Church, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, and a Catholic church of the Byzantine rite, the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The study presents the identity of Bulgarian Christians covering the period of the second part of the 20th century and the second decade of the 21st century. The paper explores the problem of religious identity and its representation related to the experiences of these three religious denominations of Bulgarian Christians, including inter-faith relations among them. The paper focuses on the way Bulgarian Christians construct their identity. It asks the following questions: why do the members of different religious groups join their communities, and what do their religious identity and its representations consist of?

Although I have been exploring Bulgarian culture and religion for over a decade, the research for the present article is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2019–2021 as part of the bilateral international project on Festival and Everyday Culture in Bulgaria and Lithuania, as well as previous ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2010–2012 and 2015-2017 as part of bilateral international projects co-funded by the Bulgarian and Lithuanian Academy of Science.

As just noted, this paper presents the results of comparative research carried out into three communities of Bulgarian Christians, all residents of Sofia. The research sample was broken down by gender (19 females and 21 males), age (age range from 26 to 80) and different social strata. The survey was administered face to face in public spaces such as parks, mountains, churches, pilgrimage sites and respondents' workplaces.

The ethnographic material was collected by the author using anthropological fieldwork methods, such as structured and semi-structured interviews, discussions, informal conversations and methods of observation. I conducted a total of forty interviews also held informal conversations with people from various social strata: the Christian laity, priests, monks, nuns, Christian religious leaders, government officials in charge of religious denominations, scholars and politicians. The questionnaire was prepared in English and Russian. The respondents answered to my questions in English, Russian, Polish and sometimes Bulgarian.

Interviews are one of the most important methods in conducting ethnographic fieldwork. According to John Monaghan and Peter Just, interviews can range in formality from highly structured question-and-answer sessions 'to the recording of life histories, to informal conversations, or to a chance exchange during an unanticipated encounter' (Monaghan and Just 2000: 23). Such informal conversations help the researcher to understand not just the usual ideas, but also informal types of knowledge. In addition, they help uncover the whole

of a particular culture and the interconnectedness of social life. Thus, 'the key of ethnographic success is being there, available to observe, available to follow, available to take advantage of the chance event' (ibid.: 24), available to hear and understand both the usual ideas and informal knowledge.

Christianity in contemporary Bulgaria manifests itself in different denominations. In the following subsections I will present three Christian denominations: Bulgarian Orthodoxy, Roman Catholics of the Latin tradition and Bulgarian Catholics of the Byzantine tradition. Each of these churches has its own distinctive traditions of liturgy, rituals and devotions, though some of their respective traditions, rituals and prayers overlap.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The first object of my reserch is the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the oldest Slavonic Orthodox Church. It is also a local autocephal (independent) church that is in canonical unity, prayer and eucharistic communion with the other Orthodox Churches (BOC 2020a).

Historically, Orthodox Christianity dates to the ninth century in the Slavonic-speaking areas of eastern Europe. According to church tradition, two Byzantine missionaries, the brothers Cyril and Methodius from Constantinople, spread Christian faith in Europe. Orthodoxy came first to Bulgaria, Serbia and Moravia, and later, beginning in the tenth century, to Russia (PER 2017a). 'Following the Great Schism between the Eastern (Orthodox) churches and the Western (Catholic) church in 1054, Orthodox missionary activity expanded across the Russian Empire from the 1300s...' (PER 2017a).

In 864 the Bulgarian Tsar Boris I was baptised and proclaimed Christianity the national religion (Dimitrov 2002: 14). The Bulgarian language became the official language of the Church and state at the end of the ninth century (BOC 2020b). At first, the Bulgarian patriarch recognized the authority of both the Roman Pope and the patriarch of Constantinople. Later, during the Ottoman era, the Church was placed under the latter's jurisdiction.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is in agreement with other Eastern Orthodox Churches. Eastern Orthodox theology is strongly Trinitarian: it states that God exists in the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The liturgy of the Othodox church represents one of the most significant factors in the church's continuity, identity and religious knowledge. Divine worship in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church includes a variety of symbols, using 'formal

theological statements as well as bodily perceptions and gestures (e.g., music, incense, prostrations) and the visual arts' (Meyendorff 2020). The liturgy covers the total experience of believers and appeals to their emotional, aesthetic and intellectual dimensions. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church also has a very rich history of icons, which often depict Biblical scenes, Christian saints, the Virgin Mary or her son Jesus. The icons are seen as the dwelling places of God's grace, creating in the faithful a sense of the presence of God. In addition, many of the Church's calendar feasts are represented iconographically.

During the Soviet era the Church's property was confiscated by the state. In 1991, after the fall of the totalitarian regime, the Bulgarian Constitution designated Eastern Orthodox Christianity as the 'traditional' religion of the country (Roberson 2008). In 1997 the first Bulgarian Orthodox general council addressed the new possibilities that had opened to the Church in the new circumstances of a democratic society. It asked the Bulgarian goverment to guarantee religious instruction in schools, to return property confiscated by the Soviet-era regime and 'to begin a process of renewal of church life, including the development of catechetical programs and theological formation, the setting up of a large program of social action, the strengthening of the role of laity in Church, and the renewal of monasticism' (Roberson 2008).

In 2020 the Bulgarian Orthodox Church had thirteen local and two foreign dioceses, with about 2600 parishes attended to by 1500 priests. In addition, there were about 120 monasteries with 400 monks and nuns (VLE 2020). According to the statistics of the 2011 national census of the Bulgarian Republic, 4,374,135 citizens (about 60 per cent) of Bulgaria's total of 7,364,570 declared their religion as Eastern Orhodox Christianity (NSI 2011). However, only about 10 per cent of them regularly attend religious services or actively practice their religion. Other sources indicate that about 40 per cent of the Bulgarian population is atheistic or agnostic (Roberson 2008).

I now focus on the Bulgarian Orthodox church of the Holy Trinity (Храм Света Троица) in Sofia, which is situated in the residential district of that name (see Fig. 1). It is a highly peopled parish served by four priests. This Bulgarian Orthodox church is known for its concerts of religious music, which are constantly being held there. One of the priests is a composer of Orthodox chants, thus keeping the culture of religious music alive there. Children are introduced to musical culture by means of socializing. Parish children are able to attend piano classes for free, a piano having been bought for that purpose.

The parish of Holy Trinity also organizes excursions to different monasteries and holds educational classes.

The Holy Trinity church recalls the history of the parish. The last wave of Bulgarian refugees settled down in the region of the church in 1920. They had come from the city of Gevgelija, on the frontier between Macedonia and Greece. In their hometown they had had a Holy Trinity church and decided to rebuild it in their new place of residence in Sofia. The local authorities assigned them a plot of land, where they built a temporary church which started functioning in 1928. With time the former name of the district, Rasadnik, was changed to 'Holy Trinity'. The local people remember that in the beginning the temporary church had no tower, no pillars and no bell tower. Later, after 1960 a tower was built and in 1969 a colonnade was attached to it.

Many residents of the district had come from southwest Bulgaria, where people were very religious and nourished a deep veneration of St. Clement. According to the priest of the church, it was there that the first spiritual seminary in Europe was established (III/22). Old religious traditions that worshippers continued nourishing in the newly founded parish are still alive there today. Those who came to live in the district contributed to strengthening Christianity.

The priest pointed out that the believers who settled there in about 1960 have retained the old tradition of religiosity. 'Even their children and grandchildren stop playing football when they see a priest – they approach him and kiss his hand. After the spiritual father blesses them, they continue playing' (III/22).

The Orthodox priest noted that the residents of the district are not rich, but they have retained their living faith. Their religiosity has also had influence on other people. He remembered the case of a Macedonian woman who went to live to the USA and a short time later sent US$10,000 to support her parish. He shared his own experiences as follows:

... about the year 1950, no one went to church in my native northwestern Bulgarian village, while in this parish people are used to baptising their children and getting married [in church]. Sometimes the only inscription in the book of [baptismal] registration is the name 'Mary', with no second names: in this way, the parents of the baptised child escaped state repression. In Soviet times there were a few rare weddings when newly-weds used to go to monasteries and secretly get married there. (III/22)

The Orthodox priest who worked in the parish as a choir leader and a composer confessed that motive for entering the seminary was his desire to become not a priest but a conductor (III/21). While still young he was fascinated by the personality of Roberto Bianchi, which induced him to become a conductor. After the seminary he continued his studies in the spiritual academy of St. Clement. Then he worked as the conductor of a youth orchestra in Sofia and in 1985 returned back to the priesthood, at the same time working as the leader of the church choir. He recalls his path to the priesthood by saying:

> *I worked as a musician for 35-36 years and had no close ties with the Church. Then I decided to read the whole New Testament for the first time. The image of Christ emerged in its greatness before my eyes and took possession of me. In 1990 I became the leader of the Holy Trinity church choir and a year later started working as a priest. I used to conduct the choir and, seeing the priests baptising and getting people married, I started wishing to do the same. Maybe it happened because the person of Jesus Christ acquired a new concept in my mind, maybe because my uncle is a priest. I started the work at the age of forty, although before I thought I would return to the activity when a pensioneer. (III/23)*

> *The priest emphasized that Christianity is not a philosophy, but a way of life:*

> *Christian life is religious practice following Christ. Faith without deeds is dead. Christ taught his followers that the most important thing in Christianity is love. It makes no difference what Church we talk about: Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant. (III/23)*

On the one hand, the parish priests share quite a broad view of Christianity embracing different Christian confessions and accepting different manifestations of their religious identity. On the other hand, parishioners' strong faith and respect for the church ministers inspire the priests to look for new forms of evangelization and of the expression of religious identity, such as concerts of Church music, free piano lessons for poor parish children, various means of education, and pilgrimages to different religious sites.

Figure 1. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity in Sofia. Photographer unknown. Source: http://www.hramove.bg/hramove/temple_45.html , last accessed on 19.02.2021.

The Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is the fourth largest religion in Bulgaria after Bulgarian Orthodoxy, Islam and Protestantism. According to the latest national census of the Bulgarian Republic, held in 2011, 48,945 citizens (0.7 per cent of the population of 7 million) identified themselves as Catholics (NSI 2011). According to the statistics of the Eastern Catholic Churches, 'The Apostolic Exarchate of Sofia had 10,000 Catholics in 16 parishes, cared for by 1 bishop, 1 seminarian', 13 religious priests and 4 secular priests, with 15 other monks and 27 nunsin 2017 (ECCS 2017: 8).

Historically, after the Great Schism in the Christian Church of 1054, the Christian world was divided between the Eastern (Orthodox) churches and the Western (Catholic) churches. The main dividing issue was a dispute over recognition of the Roman Pope as Head of the Church and of his authority. The Western Church, the Roman Catholic Church, claimed that the pope's re-

ligious authority over Christians was universal. The Eastern Church, known as the Eastern Orthodox Church, disagreed, in their case 'investing their highest religious authority in various patriarchs across the Eastern Orthodox world, with the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople traditionally holding the title "first among equals"' (PER 2017a).

The Catholic Church in Bulgaria consists of two components: the Western (Roman or Latin) Church and the Eastern (Byzantine/Greek) Church. The Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church is a Byzantine rite Church in full union with the Catholic Church. It falls 'under the direction of the Vatican dicastery, known as the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, whose head is chosen by the pope' (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 28). It accepts the Roman Catholic faith, keeps the seven sacraments, recognizes the pope as head of the church, but retains all other characteristics of the Byzantine rite: 'liturgy, spirituality, sacred art, and especially organization' (EB 2021).

The second case study in my research for this paper is the parish of the Cathedral bearing the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (see Figs. 2-3). It was built in 1924 in order to meet the religious needs of Eastern-rite Catholics in Sofia. Two years later, in 1926, an Apostolic Exarchate was established in Sofia with the support of Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, who was Apostolic Visitor in 1925-1931 and later the Apostolic Delegate (1931-1934) to Bulgaria. Archbishop Roncalli also supported the opening of an inter-faith seminary in Sofia in 1934, which was conducted by Jesuit monks until 1945, when it was closed (Roberson 2008).

In 1941, the Uniate or Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church parishes came under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Exarchate in Sofia. Despite this the Church was not officially suppressed in Soviet-era Bulgaria, but it had to function with numerous restrictions. The Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church especially suffered repression in the early years of communist rule. A large number of priests were imprisoned, and the Byzantine Catholic bishop died under mysterious circumstances in 1951 (Roberson 2008).

The inhabitants of Sofia remember that in Soviet times, when people were arrested, one Uniate church avoided outright repression. The parish of the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was turned into a battlefield. One Bulgarian woman remembered this difficult period of parish life as follows:

> *In the evening the officers of the forces of repression used to come to this church and conduct a search. They had weapons which they would leave in the church. Guns were hidden under the altar. In the morning they would return for another search and would arrest the 'guilty' priests. At noon people would look out of their windows and see a noisy 'theatrical show' being made of taking weapons away. They did their best to provoke press comments with sentences announced in the newspapers, followed by short films about the events. Uniate parishioners were scared of repression. Therefore they chose to go to the Roman Catholic church, where they felt more at ease. Also, some Roman Catholics went to their church to pray in order to support the parishioners of the Uniate church (II/9-10).*

Psychologists emphasize that 'religious groups are promoted to create a friendly environment for integration and support of their own members' (Giorgadze et al. 2017: 77). In such circumstances the support of the members of different confessional groups was very important, because it helped them create closer social networks and interconfessional links in what was a precarious society suffused by Soviet atheist propaganda.

Today, since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian Catholic Church of the Eastern rite is on good terms with the Roman Catholic Church of the Latin rite. The priests of both churches quite often celebrate Mass together or substitute for each other in case of need. In the evening they pray the rosary together with the Roman Catholics of the Latin rite. The monks of both rites also have meetings together. The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is assisted by sisters of the religious order of the Holy Eucharist, that is, by Carmelites who live in the outskirts of Sofia, about (seven km away.

Today the parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary hosts 3000 believers, though not all of them attend church. On Sundays some 100-200 people take part in the liturgy, mostly Bulgarians, but also Ukrainians, Romanians and those who were originally Macedonians. Often the members of the parish are closely connected with the identity of the ethnic group they have been closest to since childhood. In these cases ordinary lay people have a stronger sense of the church beeing truly theirs (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 19).

Some believers attend Holy Mass every day and are engaged in worshipping the Holy Sacrament. Some young people attend morning Mass on their way to work and commit themselves to attend church on a special day for nine months

in turn. Although they belong to the Church of the Eastern rite, some of them seek spiritual guidance from Roman Catholic priests and attend charismatic prayer schools, such as Mary's school. Such movements allow young Christians to share their spiritual experiences and to enter into deeper relation with God. One young female parishioner stated:

> I had adevotion to the sacred Heart of Jesus. It is closely connected with the Eucharist. I decided to go to Holy Mass every day. Six years ago Carmelites changed the direction of my spiritual life so that I had a closer relationship with God. At first, I suffered for two or three years, but God helped me to change. The Eucharist is of great help. (III/ 4)
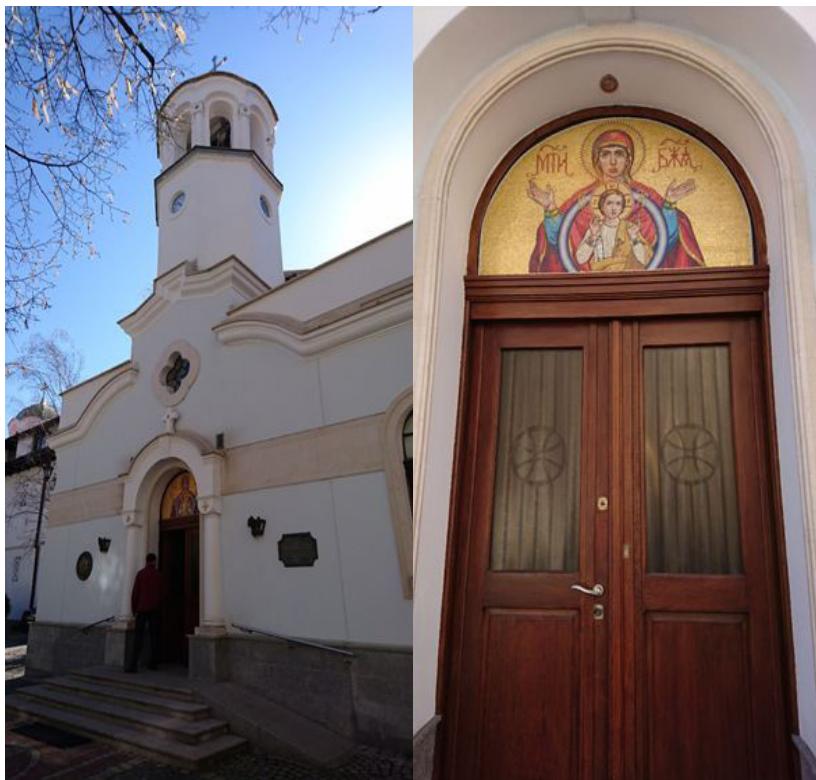
Figures 2, 3. The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sofia. Photos by Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2017

This religious involvement and a deep relationship with God is associated with deeper inner peace. Religious involvement enables the individual to avoid emotional or physical crises, 'especially when a person suffers a heavy loss during serious illness or as a result of death of the beloved ones' (Giorgadze et al. 2017: 77).

Since Soviet times, the Eastern (Byzantine) Church has been deeply affected by the process of secularization, whose negative results are seen in the decline in sacramental practice. The annual statistics of the parish reveal six or seven weddings, twenty baptisms and fifteen to twenty funerals. During the period of change, from 1989, there used to be 120-150 baptisms every year (II/16-19). The secularization of Bulgarian society is related to the growing spread of neoliberal ideas and increasing individualistic practices. According to the parish priest:

> *Today cohabitation is wide spread in Bulgaria. People do not get married in church nor register their marriages officially, making the excuse that weddings are costly events. In Soviet times very few people lived together unmarried – the state did not tolerate cohabitation. (II/16-19)*

In Soviet times the Catholic priests of the Eastern rite could choose to get married, but at present it is no longer the custom. Nowadays priests and parishioners are engaged in social activities, such as taking care of the disabled. In 2017 members of both Churches organized a journey to Fatima in Portugal with the participation of 250 pilgrims.

The Bulgarian Catholic Church of the Eastern rite has a profound liturgical tradition. The iconostasis and liturgy of the Church of the Eastern rite is similar to that of the Orthodox Church, though the prayers and some festivals are identical to those in the Catholic church of the Latin rite. The believers pray the rosary not only at home with family members, but also before every Mass. The service of the Church is unimaginable without icons, as they contain pictures of Christ and the saints: 'they are kept at hand and handled with loving gentleness' (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 19).

The Bulgarian Catholic Church of the Eastern rite and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church have the same rite, one that differs from that of the Latin Cchurch. For instance, the Orthodox Church allows childen under the age of seven to receive the Holy Communion without any preparation, while the Uniate church has no such tradition. Children are prepared for the sacrament of the Holy Communion by cathechists and nuns, while adults are assisted by

priests (II, 16-19). About 95 per cent of festivals coincide with those celebrated in the Orthodox Church, for example, the feast of circumcision, celebrated on January 1. On March 25 believers take flowers to the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and kiss it, although this is not a strict rule.

The priest of the Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church of Sofia pointed out that some traditions are closely connected with the liturgy. People follow the tradition of taking grapes to liturgical celebrations, especially when celebrating Jesus' transfiguration on August 6. They say a special prayer asking for a successful harvest, and country people living in mountainous areas bring grapes to give thanks for a good vintage. Town dwellers buy grapes in grocery stores. (II/ 8)

The tradition of taking grapes to liturgical celebrations has been followed not only in the Bulgarian Catholic Church of the Eastern rite, but also in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. It is popular not only with the rural population, but also among city-dwellers.

In conclusion, the Bulgarian Catholic church of the Eastern rite is distinguished by its great liturgical and spiritual tradition. 'Theology in the East tends to focus on relationships – God and the believer, the individual believer and the Church community, and so on' (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 21).

Figure 4. The interior of the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sofia. Photo by Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2017.

The Roman Catholic Church

The last object of my research is the Roman Catholic Church. Today Roman Catholics live in the larger cities, such as Plovdiv, Sofia, Ruse, Varna and Burgas, and villages in southern and northern Bulgaria. The largest concentration of Catholics live in Plovdiv and the surrounding area.

The Catholic Church has deep roots in Bulgaria, extending back to the baptism of country in the ninth century, which was followed by a short-lived union between the Bulgarian and Roman Churches under King Kaloyan in the early thirteenth century.

Catholicism in Bulgaria is linked to the missionary activities of Catholic orders and congregations, such as the Passionists, Capuchins, Franciscans, the Resurrectionists, Assumpsionists, Benedictines and others who have come from Bosnia, Italy, France or Poland (Koinova 1999b). Between 1878 and 1944, many new missionaries arrived in Bulgaria. New churches, Catholic schools and colleges were built. Catholic orders and congregations organized some schools in Bulgaria, the most active being the French and Italian orders. 'According to data of the late 1920s, the French Catholic schools were based in six major towns of Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Sofia, Bourgas [Burgas], Yambol, Rouse [Ruse] and Varna, and were separated for males and females' (Zaimova et al. 1992: 295-8, cited in Koinova 1999b: 26). The most famous of them 'were the "St. Augustinus" college in Plovdiv, the schools for females of the "St. Joseph" sisters in Sofia, Plovdiv and Bourgas and of the Assumpsionist sisters in Varna and Yambol, as well as the college for boys of the "Brothers of the Christians Schools" in Sofia' (Assenov 1998: 129; also Koinova 1999b: 26). Catholic shools and colleges delivered a high-class education and were much appreciated. Also the Catholic Church had four small seminaries for Catholic priests. Catholic education was interrupted in the period from 1944 to 1989. The French Catholic colleges were closed down in the late 1940s. 'While the very limited numbers of Orthodox clerics continued to be educated in the higher education Orthodox seminary in Sofia, Catholicism was not taught at all. [...] In 1989 there were only about 40 Catholic clerics in Bulgaria' (Assenov 1998: 135; also Koinova 1999b: 27).

During the communist regime (1944-1989) Bulgaria entered the sphere of political influence of the Soviet Union. 'With its doctrinal atheism, communism declared religion harmful to the development of a new socialist identity, based on the cleavage of the social classes' (Koinova 1999b: 9). The main goal of the

communist regime was to destroy its most influential bishops and priests, who opposed the sovietization of Bulgaria and the removal of religion from the public sphere (Chureshki 2004; Kalkandjieva 2011: 140). All religions, including the Orthodox Church, a traditional presence in Bulgaria, suffered restrictions on their activities, including the closure of religious schools, newspapers and other religious organizations, but the Catholic Church suffered more than the Orthodox Church (Koinova 1999b: 9). The fact that Bulgarian Orthodox Church, like the Muslim denomination's officers, received state pensions, and that their clerics received subsidies from the state (Koinova 1999b: 11), demonstrated their particular loyalty to the regime. On the other hand, it also shows discrimination against the Catholic Church.

The Catholic and Protestant Church 'were persecuted not only as religious institutions but also as spies of Western Imperialism. They [...] were presented as enemies of the Bulgarian nation in the past or [as] instruments of anti-communist propaganda' (Kalkandjieva 2011: 144). This negative attitude towards the Catholic Church was particularly strong in the first years of communism. Historical studies of religion published in Bulgaria under the communist regime were also marked by Soviet-style propaganda and atheistic ideology. 'This created a distorted picture of Bulgaria's religious history, overemphasising the role of the Orthodox Church at the expense of the other religious communities considered as alien to society' (ibid.).

Between 1944 and 1949, Catholics experienced a lot of jail sentences. All the Catholic Church's real estate, lands, schools, colleges, and hospitals were expropriated in 1948 under the Collectivization Law. All the Church's social and educational institutions were closed and monopolized by the state, depriving priests and the religious of their main sources of income (Koinova 1999b: 11). One 1st March 1949, a new law was passed whereby all expatriate clergy and religious individuals were expelled from the country. This affected the Latin-rite Church much more than the Eastern-rite Church (Brown 1983: 312).

However, the formal restrictions on the Catholics did not satisfy the totalitarian regime. At that time, all the churches suffered brutal persecution. According to Janice Brown, there were one hundred and twenty arrests of Catholic clergy and laity (Brown 1983: 312). In September-October 1952 the regime held a series of fabricated trials against some 55 Catholic clerics (Koinova 199b:12). Twenty six priests, two sisters and eleven members of the laity were accused of a wide range of crimes, and four members of the clergy were condemned

to death (ibid.). Among them was Dr Eugene Bossilkov, Bishop of Nikopolis, 'generally regarded as the most energetic of the bishops and the one who could have been the focus of resistance' (ibid.). He was shot a few days after the trial, on 3 October 1952, but the Vatican did not learn the facts of his death until 1975. In August 1952, the arrested clerics and other Catholics numbered seventy (Tsvetkov, 1994:34; citated from Koinova 199b:12). Many of them were sent to jail for between ten and fifteen years, while others were sent to communist concentration camps (Tsvetkov 1994: 103-4, cited in Koinova 1999b:12).

Between 1944 and 1989, the totalitarian regime banned all religions due to its doctrinal atheism, but Catholicism suffered even more than the traditional Bulgarian Orthodox Church. According M. Koinova, 'Control over the Catholic Church was impossible first of all because Catholic clerics refused to collaborate with the regime, and second, because the regime did not have the political means to control a denomination subordinated to its center in Rome' (Koinova 1999b: 31).

I now focus on the Roman Catholic parish of St. Joseph, which is the part of the Diocese of Sofia and Plovdiv. According to the statistics of the Eastern Catholic Churches, in 2017 'the Apostolic Exarchate of Sofia had some 10,000 Catholics in 16 parishes, cared for by 1 bishop, 1 seminarian, 4 secular priests and 13 religious priests, with 15 monks and 27 nuns' (ECCS 2017: 8).

The co-cathedral of St. Joseph is located in Sofia's old town, opposite the ruins of ancient Serdica. Its long and complex history started in 1875. The incentive for increasing the number of parishes were foreign Catholics (Croatians, Germans, Austrians, the French) visiting the Bulgarian capital. During World War II the Cathedral of Saint Joseph suffered from Allied bombing raid and was destroyed. The cathedral was rebuilt only sixty years later, in 2006.

The parish of St. Joseph can be described as the religious, pastoral and cultural centre of Roman Catholics in Sofia. The parish is very active, composed of Catholics belonging to different ethnic groups (Bulgarians, Croats, Poles, Italians, French, Romanians, and others). Nowadays about seven hundred Catholics attend Holy Mass at the St. Joseph Co-cathedral every week. Sunday service attracts around one hundred parishioners, ranging from regular Bulgarians to foreign diplomats speaking different languages. Its multicultural and multilingual character singles the parish out among other Bulgarian parishes. While the church is attended by 80 per cent of Bulgarians, its members include foreigners (Poles, Croats, Austrians, French, Italians, Romanians, Arabs, Filipi-

nos, Lebanese, Vietnamese), those who come from different backgrounds and make different contributions (Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2018). Some communities, e.g., the French, include elements characteristic of the liturgy celebrated in their own country. Members of the Italian community prefer the midday Latin Mass, while the Polish community attends the Polish-language service, which incorporates distinctive elements of the Polish liturgy.

Parish life is enlivened by organ concerts, and its catechism course, which run for two or three years, enjoy great popularity among adult parishioners. Besides, the parish organises piligrimages to various sacred places in Bulgaria. Catholics in Bulgaria have a longstanding tradition of celebrating the Marian feast in May in the mountains, where they celebrate Holy Mass, pray the rosary, and sing chants and litanies venerating God's Mother. Also, the parishioners have a tradition of participating at the Road of the Cross on the hill of Vitosha during Holy Week.

The parish priest, a Polish Capuchin, emphasized the strong faith and moral values of Bulgarian Catholics: 'Every day they attend the Holy Mass and obey the moral rules and ancient traditions. With the help of grandmothers and grandfathers, Bulgarian Catholics saved their faith' (II/3). Thus the commitment and the continuity of traditions and Christian values, and maintaining the religious inheritance and handing it on to new generations, could be enumerated as factors defining the religious identity of Bulgarian Catholics.

The parishioners affirmed that 'catholics consider it is important to maintain their faith and spiritual belonging. Catholic priests are important people in our life. Catholics who had no priests lost their faith and became Orthodox' (II/7).

There are some tragic stories about the level of hostility towards the Catholic Church during the totalitarian regime. As mentioned earlier, a lot of priests, bishops, monks and nuns, as well as members of the laity, were executed for their faith. Most churches and monastaries became empty and were closed. The Catholic Church struggled to survive against these enormous odds. In such conditions, 'faith became the subject of intense pressure by Communist ideology no matter whether the person had inner faith or not' (Giorgadze et al. 2017: 78). Some parishioners recalled this period as follows:

In 1949 the Catholic Church was declared illegal. [Catholic ....] seminaries were closed and there was no possibility to study... Thus Catholics went to

study in Sofia. There they were allowed to stay for two days, and on the third they had to leave. (II/8)

People were afraid to go to church under the Soviet regime. In the provinces, however, they felt freer. The faithful used to go secretly to church once or twice a year. They started attending it after the political system changed. (II/13)

One Catholic man from the provinces remembered how local Catholics still loyally attended church in his childhood in the 1960s, despite the prevailing atheistic propaganda and the blacklisting of church visitors.

Figure 5. The First Communion at the Roman Catholic parish of St. Joseph in Sofia, 1966. Photographer unknown.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, when the situation started changing, many Orthodox believers turned to the Catholic Church. One parishioner, a woman, stated:

> *Perhaps Orthodox priests are not those people would have as their spiritual leaders. In Soviet times they would accept disobedient and not very intelligent candidates. Nowadays the former graduates educate the faithful. 'Ignorance educates ignorance'. People search for true things, they ask lots of questions.*

> *The church of St. Joseph has lots of neocatechists who come from Orthodox families, but are not baptised – their parents were afraid to get married in church and thus to baptise their children. (II/13)*

Parishioners from St. Joseph Church emphasized the interfaith relations between Roman Catholics and the Bulgarian Catholics of the Byzantine Tradition:

> *Spiritually we had close ties with members of the Uniate Church. They used to come to our church. The Uniates enriched our calendar with some saints from the Church of the Roman rite. We prayed the rosary together. The Orthodox have the Acatist, a chanted prayer, which could be compared to the rosary, though it's quite different. (II/9)*

Another parishioner, born in Sofia in 1959, who was asked about Bulgarian identity, said that 'First of all, we are Bulgarians, then Christians, and as such we break up into Orthodox and Catholics' (II/1). Her words explain how Bulgarian Christians define their identity: they prioritize their ethnic identity, which is followed by their overall Christian identity and finally their specific confessional identity.

A survey of Catholics reveals that the Catholic community became the site of religious and cultural resistance against the oppressive regime in Bulgaria. In summary, one can agree with J. Brown that 'Bulgarians have a long tradition of resilience, tenacity and resourcefulness under persecution, going back to Turkish times. No group has demonstrated this better than the Catholics' (Brown 1983).

Figure 6. The Cathedral of St. Joseph in Sofia. Photo by Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė, 2017.

Figure 7. Statue of St. Joseph. The Cathedral of St. Joseph in Sofia. Photo by Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2017

Conclusion

In this paper, the multiple identities of Bulgarian Christians has been revealed with reference to three different cases. The example from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church shows that Orthodox Christians in Bulgaria more likely to believe in God and identify with Orthodox Christianity than practice their religion. They do not perform religious practices at a high level, so they might be desrcibed as 'believing and belonging, without behaving' (PRC 2017b). The case of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity testifies to the strong faith of the parishioners, as well as their respect for the church's assistants, inspiring priests to look for new forms of evangelization and of the expression of religious identity, such as concerts of sacred church music, pilgrimages, free piano lessons for the poor parish children and various means of education.

The Bulgarian Catholic Church of the Eastern rite is characterised by a profound liturgical and spiritual tradition. During the totalitarian Soviet period members of the Church managed to maintain their religious identities due to their spiritual unity and inter-faith links with the Roman Catholics, who helped to create a friendly environment and close social support networks.

During that period, the religious identity of the Roman Catholics was strengthened by their awareness of repressed priests, clandestine monks, nuns and selfless members of the laity. The modern religious identity of Bulgarian Roman Catholics is related to their everyday commitment, their nourishment of Christian values and the continuity of Church traditions, thus ensuring that this religious inheritance is passed on to younger generations.

In summing up the insights of the research material, it should be emphasized that modern Bulgarian Christians have multiple identities, but prioritize their ethnic identity, following that with their overall religious identity, and ending with their specific confessional identity.

Notes

[1] For example, only 5 percent of Orthodox Christians in Bulgaria say they attend a service of worship at least weekly, while 21 percent of Orthodox believers in Romania and 12 percent in Ukraine attend such services weekly. (PRC 2017b).

[2] The Pew Research Center (PRC) is a non-partisan fact-finding centre that informs the general public about the issues, attitudes and trends that are shaping the world. It does

not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social-science research. Available at https://www.pewresearch.org/about/ last accessed 07.11.2021.

[3] Conversation is an ethnographic method with a 'varying degree of formality, from the daily chitchat, which helps maintain rapport and provide knowledge about what is going on, to prolonged interviews... ' (Kottak 2010: 49).

[4] The concept catholic originated from the Greek term katholikos, meaning 'universal' or 'general'. It was first applied to the Christians in Smyrna c. 107 by St. Ignatius of Antioch. As a title in Christianity it denotes a characteristic communion and a unity of dogma or doctrine and belief, held by the entire Christian Church in all places and and all times, as opposed to local usage. 'Applied to the Eastern Churches, Catholic almost always means the Churches in communion with the See of Rome, as opposed to Orthodox or Apostolic Churches not in communion with Rome' (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 31-2).

[5] The Byzantine Tradition refers to the Christian way of life which originally developed in Constantinople (now Istanbul), capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (often called the Byzantine Empire) from 330 to 1453. This Tradition spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean to eastern Europe, followed by the Orthodox Church, and by many Byzantine Catholic, or Greek Catholic Churches (Hafkes-Teeples 2008: 32).

[6] Dr Eugene Bossilkov, the Bishop of Nikopolis, was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 15 March 1998 as a martyr for the faith. Bosilkov studied in Belgium, Holland and Italy, where he defended a Ph.D. thesis on the History of Bulgaria. He spoke thirteen languages. Bosilkov was very charismatic, much trusted by the common people (Koinova 1999b: 15). His personal friend Tzanov described him as 'highly cultured, kind and generous, a fearless preacher of the truth' (Brown 1983: 319). In 2002 three Assumptionist priests who had been condemned to death together with him were also declared martyrs for the faith.

[7] Author's note: During the period from 1944 to 1989, all four Catholic seminaries were closed in Bulgaria, so Catholicism was not taught at all. Maybe the respondent is referring to an undergound Catholics seminary in Sofia (similar underground Roman Catholic seminary existed in Lithuania during the period of the Soviet Union's totalitarian regime (for more, see Streikus 2002; Streikus et al. 2015).

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THE CROSS-CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND MODERN TRANSFORMATIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS OF LITHUANIAN IDENTITY

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Abstract: Traditional symbols and codes are very powerful elements of culture. In modernity they have become connected with the paradigm of intertextuality: being actual because of their modern and contemporary treatment, at the same time they are associated with intracultural communication, the national historical background and ethnic traditionalism, as well as having a lot of intercultural features. Paradoxically serving to define cultural boundaries and uniqueness, they also can testify to historical processes of cultural globalization.

The aim of this research is to contextualize the iconicity and contemporary meaning of modern national visual symbols (a rue, a six-petal rosette; a sun with wavy rays) and uncover the main differences and similarities between their ancient historical and folkloric meaning and actual modern interpretations based on art, folk art and art-historical, historical, archaeological and folkloric data. This interdisciplinary approach is based on semiotic (i.e. ethnosemiotic), ethnological interpretation and contextual analysis of the function and meaning of visual symbols as elements of culture.

Vytautas Tumėnas

The study clarifies how these ornamental signs of national identity, which are related to cultural heritage, but with intercultural historical origins, come alive and come to be newly interpreted by the social imaginary, influenced by scientific concepts in modern religious, spiritual and cultural life and their representations, and how these signs are prevalent internationally. It also analyses how, as logos in highly symbolic forms relating to mythical paradigms, these visual signs are involved in processes of the auto-communication of culture, its transmission, creation and memory, and how they are related to the boundaries of semiotic space or the semiosphere (Lotman 2005: 210; 2009: 131-142).

Keywords: rue; six-petal rosette; sun with wavy rays, iconicity, visual culture, Lithuanian identity signs, ornament symbolism, logotype, religious symbols.

Introduction

The geometric patterns – the rue, a six-petal rosette and a radiant sun with wavy rays – which serve as signs of Lithuanian cultural identity are popular in advertising and the representation of cultural and religious organisations and ideas. Although they are interpreted as a phenomenon of modern national/regional or spiritual culture, they are derived from the cultural past of the folk, where they were connected with a mythological world-view, and at the same time they have a very wide intercultural context. This strange contradiction between local and national identities, the historical, mythological and religious background of these signs and their intercultural universality and role in modern folk culture and religious and spiritual movements in the context of regionalization or globalization is the main object of my investigation.

These visual symbols are closely related to cultural tradition and folk cultural heritage, which are usually interpreted as a source of knowledge and an inspiration for contemporary culture. They are often associated with the ideology of local identity and autonomy. Their meaning can be perceived as a medium that can be read differently over time as circumstances change. Consequently, such a message can also become an arena for confrontation and competition that is not constant or unchanging (Graham and Howard 2008: 2-5; Robertson 2008: 144-147). On the other hand, symbols of identity, despite being based on tradition, usually had quite different mythological meanings in the past. Therefore, following Guibernau (1996), it might be said that identity defines the paths along which the past and heritage, language, religion, ethnicity and nationalism are harnessed in order to create a narrative of inclusion and distinction that

describes the communities and means by which their features, uniqueness and differences are determined. The recognition and acknowledgement of otherness can help to bolster self-identity, but it can also lead to distrust, avoidance and exclusion or isolation (Graham and Howard 2008: 11).

Analysing modes of the interpretation and actualization of traditional signs and the acculturation of their universal aspects in the process of modernization and intercultural communication, Benedict Anderson's theoretical insights about what he calls 'imagined communities' are relevant. Describing the modern concept of 'nation' as an imagined community, invented and formed through the culturally mediated imagination of people threw mass media (Anderson 2006: 9–36), he draws our attention to the relativity and subjectivity of the concepts and phenomena of modernization. From this point of view, the same mechanism works in the process of the adaptation of ancient signs in modern communities.

According to the concept of Charles Taylor, the 'social imaginary' is 'the way ordinary people imagine their "social surroundings"'. Imagined by the society, entities are brought into existence by the power of the social imagination. They might not be real in the strict sense, but they are real in their consequences (Taylor 2007: 171, 176–211).

Analyzing the social imaginary, J.C. Alexander explores the notion of collective representations. Defining the representative iconicity in contemporary life, he states that

> *Icons allow members of societies to experience a sence of participation in something fundamental, to enjoy the possibility to control despite being unable to access the script that lies beneath. Icons are cultural constructions that provide belief-friendly epiphanies and customer-friendly images. There is then historical continuity of cultural orders. The icon has proven to be a powerful and resilient cultural structure. The contempory icons occupy a wide range of cultural registers. (Alexander 2010) Conventionally they are associated with visual emblems from evocative architectural constructions [...], yet the sensuous surface effects of contemporary icons actually range much more widely to popular songs, [...] brands and logos. It is because they galvanize narratives that icons are not only aesthetic representations but also become full citizens of public discourse. (Alexander and Bartmanski 2012: 6-7).*

The explanation of the cultural meaning of signs by structuralist and post-structuralist approaches and the ethnosemiotical viewpoint is based on the treatment of culture as a system of signs and of meaning as derived from the differences between the signs that form the system. Culture as symbolic order can be described as a system of codes and differences.

However, Castoriadis opposes this approach rising the idea that the choice of symbolism reflects the more positive determinations of the social group, rather than a negative demarcation from other groups. For him, meaning arises as more than the result of differentiation (Castoriadis 1998: 136).

Therefore, I seek to include both attitudes in my research : to analyse the positive determination and also the differentiational aspects of the iconicity of modern meaning-making by social imagination in the field of traditional signs, ornaments, images, emblems and logos.

The image of rue (rūta)

The Lithuanian name for the herb Ruta Graveolens is rūta, the name of the rue herb in Middle English, roe, as well as Old French and Latin ruta, Greek rhute and Ukrainian ruta (рута).

The natural habitat of the rue is limited to the mountains of southern Europe, the Mediterranean coast and the Crimea. Growing in the wild and in gardens from antiquity, the rue was known in southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East as a healing herb, also being used to stimulate menstruation and induce abortions. Rue was used as an anti-spasmodic and to strengthen eyesight, as well as being a remedy for snakebite (Dioscourides AD 50-70).

In Lithuania, the rue acquired a specific cutural, mythic-poetical meaning. The image of the rue and the rue wreath, its erotic symbolism in traditional Lithuanian folklore and customs, and it historical traces have been analysed by T. Lepner (1744) (Lepneris 2011: 163), J. Baldauskas (1935: 236), S. Matusas (1959), A. Vyšniauskaitė (1964), D. Šeškauskaitė (2000) and others. The rue narative tradition and its changes in literature have been investigated by J. Sadauskienė (2010). However, transformations of visual images of the rue in modernity and contemporary culture have been poorly investigated thus far.

According to Matusas, rues appeared in Lithuanian flower gardens as early as the fifteenth century. He links the wearing of a flower wreath as a symbol of girls' virginity with Christianity, based on the regulations of the municipality of Riga, Livonia, in 1450. In his opinion, rues spread from the monasteries.

The oldest mention of the ruta herb in Lithuania in the inventory of Rokiškis church and rectory, which reports that rues and marjoram were sown and planted alongside vegetebles (Matusas 1959: 142).

Despite some obvious Chistian folk explanations about the origin of the rue from Jesus' blood during his martyrdom (Višinskis 1964: 165–166; Kibort 1893: 156), in general the image and customs associated with the rue connote more universal moral values in Lithuanian folk culture.

Sadauskienė defined several aspects of the semantics of nineteenth-century Lithuanian folklore about girls' rue gardens as a place for the self-perception of the virgin: here rue is a symbol of vital, reproductive powers in a sacred, magical space. She also distinguished several symbolic aspects of rue gardens: as a model of the mythological world centre, a representation of vitality, a magical place suitable for divination and fortune-telling, and a place of worship and exaltation. She admits that the image of the rue is associated with the folk mythico-poetical tradition, which is not identical to the Christian symbolism (Sadauskienė 2010: 147-150).

The image of the rue in Lithuanian traditional culture was closely related to the rites of matrimony. In the Christian tradition it was associated with the idea of virginity: the rue was one of the most important attributes of a girl's life before she married. Every maiden was expected to cultivate a rue garden in her homestead and to use rues to make wreaths for her wedding eve and wedding day.

Before the wedding eve, and also before going to the wedding ceremony, the bride went to her rue garden to mourn them, to say farewell to them in lamentation (virkauti) with her rues and their garden. This action expressed the bride's farewell to the community of her youth and to her maidenhead as well. The rue wreaths for a wedding ceremony were presented to each other by the bride and bridegroom on the first day of the celebration. The image of a wreath of rue is more symbolic in nature, as rues would be woven into the bride's wreath with other herbs, would be used to decorate the top of a crown, or a small wreath of rue would be attached to the bride's head-covering. And a rue branch (as a symbolic rue wreath) was used to decorate the bridegroom's cap (Vyšniauskaitė 1964: 489–92).

The mythico-poetic image of the rue, or of a wreath of rue, is particularly common in Lithuanian folklore as a symbol of the girl's or bride's virginity, of pure matrimonial love, of youth and of the intention to marry itself. Mytho-

poetic Lithuanian folk songs from the Easter period depict a stereotypical image of a young girl who is sitting on the chair in the rue garden. A strong northern wind blows her rue wreath into the sea. She asks three fishermen, who are also brothers, to retrieve her wreath from the water. They agree, but they ask for a gift in return. She agrees to give a golden ring to the first, a silk scarf to the second and a promise of marriage to the third.[1]

The loss of the wreath when it is blown off the girl's head by the north wind thus signifies her marriage and her farewell to maidenhood and her youth. Normally, married women would no longer grow rue in the Lithuanian tradition. A wreath of rue would sometimes be kept in a small chest as an amulet symbolizing a successful marriage. The usual image of the rue is directly associated with a girl's youth and beauty in Lithuanian folklore.

Rue in Lithuanian folklore is also associated with other symbolic flowers, namely lily and mint: 'I sowed the rue, / I sowed the mint, / I sowed the lily, / I sowed my young days, / Like a green rue' [2]. This triple and complex image is a reference to the archaic mythico-poetic sphere of love, maidenhood, youth and beauty: symbolically rue stands for medicine and feminine fertility, mint stands for fragrance (aphrodisiac sphere) and the lily stands for the most perfect, highest beauty. In other words, these qualities in mythical thinking are typical of the mythical worlds of Aušra (Lithuanian), Aphrodite (Greek) and Venus (Roman).

The image of the rue, often coupled with mint, is also a common symbol of a girl's virginity, beauty and youth in Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian folklore. It is similarly associated with the ideas of maidenhood and weddings. It is known in Balkan Slav folklore as well (Малаш & Мажэйка et al. 1981: 205-26; Дей 1963: 387; Цивьян 1989: 66-7). Parallels between rue and mint images and their meanings in Slavonic folklore with Baltic-Lithuanian folklore allow us to agree with T. Civian (1989) and make conclusions about the archaic mythological origins of this coupled motif.

It is important to note that the rue emerged as symbolic image of modern Lithuanian identity in the second half of the nineteenth century, when it became a very clear ethnic, national, cultural and spiritual symbol. Its name started to be used to denote many Lithuanian cultural societies in various countries in the late nineteenth century. From the early days, the rue name was associated with Lithuanian cultural activities and connected with patriotic Lithuanian

academic youth communities and Catholic clerical student organizations. In other words, Christian values were treated as very close to folklore traditions.

The authorities in the Russian Empire did not allow clergymen to study at universities abroad at the end of the nineteenth century. But despite that restriction, most Lithuanian clerical students attended the Catholic University of Fribourg in Switzerland, as it offered the possibility to study under a pseudonym. Initially, Lithuanian students joined Polish student societies such as Kółko Polskie and Philaretia. However, after disagreements on national questions, and despite the claim that Lithuanians and Poles were inseparable nations, united by a common history, the Lithuanians established their own society, which they entitled 'Rūta' (Rue) (1899–1915) (Katilius 2016). It is significant that the name 'Rūta' was given to this religious university's national, ethnic and cultural youth associations (Katilius 2015: 497-508). In 1913 the 'Rūta' association at the University of Fribourg obtained property that had been transferred from another organization that had been closed, the Lithuanian Catholic Students Association of Leuven University – Society 'Lietuva' (Lithuania) (1909-1913). Later the 'Rūta' society was renamed 'Lituania', part of which grew into the national Catholic youth association 'Ateitis' (Future) (from 1910 till now).

The name of Fribourg University's 'Rūta' association was chosen because of the association with this ethnic herb, the most popular and richest in terms of its aesthetic and spiritual symbolism, rather than because of a desire to oppose the Poles' completely different kind of organisational titles.

The obverse of the flag of the 'Lituania' (formerly 'Rūta') Society represents the heraldic symbol of the Lithuanian state, or Vytis (1922) (Petrilionis 2019). The ignorance of rue image and the preference for the heraldic Vytis testifies that the rue came to be interpreted as an inappropriate symbol too closely related to folk culture than to the idea of the revival of the Lithuanian state. Indeed, the former 'Rūta' society clearly declared its non-involment in questions of the political revival of the Lithuanian state (Katilius, 2015: 502-504).

Another young Catholics society also chose the name 'Rūta' for as a branch of the ',Ateitis' ('Future') organization in Moscow, the 'Rue' Society of Moscow Lithuanian Catholic Students (1910 – 1918) (Makauskis 1959: 456). This was established in clear opposition to the anti-clerical newspaper that carried the Lithuanian folk-mythological name of 'Aušrinė' ('Morning Star'). For this purpose, the Catholics chose a rue as another popular folkloric image of virginity that was close to Christian values.

Figure 1. The rue image as a visual element: a) in the composition of the flag of the Marijampolė branch of the 'Future' organization (about 1918-1940); b) in the logo of the LNOBT; and c) in the balcony stage decoration of the pandemic concerts of the singer S. Jančaitė (21.03.2021, photo by G. Umbrasas).

In light of this historical background to the evolution of later organizations, we can understand the logic of the emergence of a rue motif in the flag of the Marijampolė branch of the 'Future' association (Figure 1a).

Another form of social imaginery associated with the rue was its choice in former pre-war Germany. It was associated with a similar understanding of moral values in folklore, but interpreted in the framework of feminine and theosophical spirituality and its synthesis with the ideals of the Lithuanian national culture revival.

In this part of Germany (Lithuania Minor, part of East Prussia) a quite different type institution associated with the rue image and Lithuania was established. This was the the famous self-publishing enterprise Rūta, which operated as informal society (1904–1938 in Tilsit, Germany) for publishing and distributing the works of the Lithuanian writer, philosopher, organizer of choral, musical and theatrical activities, and cultural activist Vydūnas (Vilhemas Storosta) (1868 – 1953) (Figure 2a). The title of the society derived from 'Rūta' , the nickname of his muse, lifelong friend and intellectual collaborator, writer and public figure, Morta Raišukytė (1874 – 1933) (Figure 2b), was the head of this society. Vydūnas' world-view absorbed theosophy and oriental mysticism together with Lithuania's spiritual and folkloric traditions. Having a background as a Protestant priest, he mainly dedicated his life to the moral, spiritual and cultural revival of the ethnic Lithuanians of Lithuania Minor.

The logotype of the 'Rue' publishing house consists of only the word 'Rūta' with the specific letter 'Ū' introduced by Vydūnas instead of common letter 'Ū' (Figure 2 c,d,e). The cover of special book written by Vydūnas dedicated to the memory of M. Raišukytė, *Roses and Lilies* (*Rožės ir lelijos*) is also symbolically decorated with rues, in line with its association with the nickname and ideals of this outstanding, socially active woman (Figure 2 e). Another interpretation of rue image in Vydūnas' design for the book cover represents the rue as an erotic folk-cultural symbol in his novelette *Hero of the Village* (Figure 2 d).

In our days one of the best known symbolic images of the rue is present in the logo of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theater in Vilnius (from the second half of the twentieth century). It is unfortunate that this institution does not provide any information about the date or author of this logo[3] (Figure 1b).

The rue image was probably chosen based on tradition, because the most impressive musical events in re-established Lithuania at the beginning of the

Figure 2. Rue image in Vydūnas' publications: a) Vydūnas (1930); b) M. Raišukytė (Rūta) (1902); c, d, e) Covers of books published by the 'Rūta' editing house: *Our task* (1921, Tilsit), *Hero of the Village* (1914, Tilsit), and *Roses and Lilies* (1933, Tilsit).

twentieth century were organized by the well-known Association of Lithuanians of Vilnius 'Rue' (1909 – 1914), which organized performances, concerts, lectures, literary evenings, musical performances and commemorations. It had a choir and a circle of actors and was noted most for its contribution to the development of Lithuanian theatre. In total 'Rūta' staged about fifty plays (Būtėnas 1940).

It is obvious that the rue in this logo is treated as a symbol of a national herb. At the same time, it is associated with the prehistory of musical theatre in Vilnius. On the other hand, the links of the rue image with the spheres of art, beauty and hedonism are very similar to the sphere of the mythological archetype of Aphrodite, which, as already noted above, is similar to folkloric images of virginity and the rue in Lithuania.

The strong association of opera with the rue image in Lithuanian culture is obvious in recent stage decorations of philantropic pandemic concerts from the private balcony on the third floor of a private apartment block in Vilnius, performed by the professional singer Skaidra Jančiatė (Figure 1c).

Nowadays Lithuanian girls no longer cultivate rues in their flower gardens, and the ideal of virginity is not so relevant, but this flower is still sometimes used as a decoration at weddings. Indeed, the rue is becoming a national and traditional symbolic element of the visual culture of wedding rituals (for example, in the decoration of the wedding ring box). In the modern world, the symbol and sign of the rue often become a formal element of Lithuanian tradition that has been stripped off its direct links with the genuine ancient semantics of the rue as a symbol of maidenhood.

This decline in the traditional sacralised symbolism of the rue in modernity can be explained not only with reference to the weakened tradition of the maidenhood of the bride, but also by the influence of the above-mentioned assumption, disseminated by several researchers, that the rue was a quite new plant of Christian origin in Lithuania (Balys 1952; Matusas 1962). Thus, the 'Ramuva' neo-pagan movement, which aims to nurture and revitalize Lithuania's national traditions, does not tend to view the rue as an archaic Lithuanian traditional plant, and thus uses field flowers for bridal wreaths instead.[4]

The closest analogies to rue patterns in modern logoi can be traced in folk embroidery on the collars and shoulder straps of women's linen shirts and kerchiefs (Jurkuvienė 1993: 38-52) (Figure 3 a,b,c), in pottery decorations (Figure 3 g), and patterns of traditional decorations of Easter eggs (Figure 3 d,e) and in popular elements in Lithuanian blacksmithery – rues decorated the tops of the serpent-like rays of iron crosses and suns (Figure 3 h) – and in the Life Tree images of Lithuanian interior folk furniture (Figure 3 f). It is clear that these motifs and patterns served as the basis of tradition in modern interpretations.

Thus, the popularity of the rue motif and its modes of application in modern times are subject not only to trends in theories regarding its origin, but also to the knowledge and observance of its tradition in visual culture, in which

it is associated in a modern way with the invcentory of symbols of imaginary national identity stemming from traditional weddings.

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Figure 3. The rue pattern in Lithuanian folk art: a) embroideries on the collars of women's linen shirts (artel 'Rūta žalioji' [https://www.rutazalioji.lt/]); b, c) (Jurkuvienė 1993: 53, 59; Šakiai r., Lithuanian National Art Museum, LA 4847; Marijampolė r., LNAM, LA 2137); d) Lithuanian Easter egg decoration; e) Life Tree image on sideboard (1863, drawing of 1957, Joniškėlis region, LNAM, PB 1024); f) jug decoration (Galaunė 1959; Kuršėnai, Šiauliai r.); g) blacksmith-made cross (19th c.; Šimonys, Kupiškis distr., Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum).

The multi-petal star as a polysemous symbol of folk artists, neo-pagan movements, and heritage

The multi-petal rosette or multi-pointed star in a circle is one of the commonest patterns in Lithuanian folk wood-carving. It is typified in the decorations of wooden furniture, household items, weaving instruments, exterior house ornamentations, dowry chests and pottery. In modernity, this symbol has preserved its value in transformations of professional art in 'the national' style, but above all it has become a unique logo for contemporary folk art and craft institutions, relating to representational symbolism of the national identity.

The ancient symbolism of this sign has been analysed by Lithuanian scholars. J. Perkovskis (Perkowski) briefly investigated a multi-pointed star in Samogitian folk art, its origin and inter-cultural symbolism in pre-Classical Europe, Greco-Roman civilization, Medieval European art and all-European folk art as related to the solar and celestial bodies (Perkovskis 1999: 24-6, 64, 94-8, 178-81). Its celestial bodies, and light, solar and even cosmological symbolism of the World Tree have been identified by researchers into the Lithuanian mythical world-view (Vėlius 1983: 39-40; Vaiškūnas 2005; Gimbutienė 1994: 22, 32–3, 41–2; Dundulienė 1988: 76-89, 33-5, 42). The segmented star is interpreted by E. Usačiovaitė (1998: 44-5, 122) as a Christian symbol of light.

Other semantic aspects of the sign related to the symbolism of the thunder god in the Baltic and Greco-Roman traditions have been subjected to a thorough analysis by the author in other article (Tumėnas 2016).

Analogues of this pattern from a historical and inter-cultural perspective make it possible to attribute this pattern to the group of signs denoting stars, celestial bodies, the sun and celestial light. As R. Eisler has pointed out, the motifs of celestial bodies in ancient civilizations were associated with the sovereign and his protection and power (Eisler 1910: 60-1).

One of the Ancient Babylonian reliefs - the tablet of Shamash (9th c. BC) depicts the worship of sun god (in ornamental form) on a throne by three priests in front of the Babylonian king Nabu-apla-iddina (Figure 4 a). The composition of geometric representation of the Sun god is very close to the eight-pointed rosette pattern: the star in the center of circle has 4 points in horizontal and vertical direction and in diagonal direction it is complemented by triple wavy rays which serve as indication of the sun. It is amazing that this ancient multi-pointed star with wavy rays pattern as religious symbol still is alive in Lithuanian folk iron cross tradition (Figure 3 h; 7; 12).
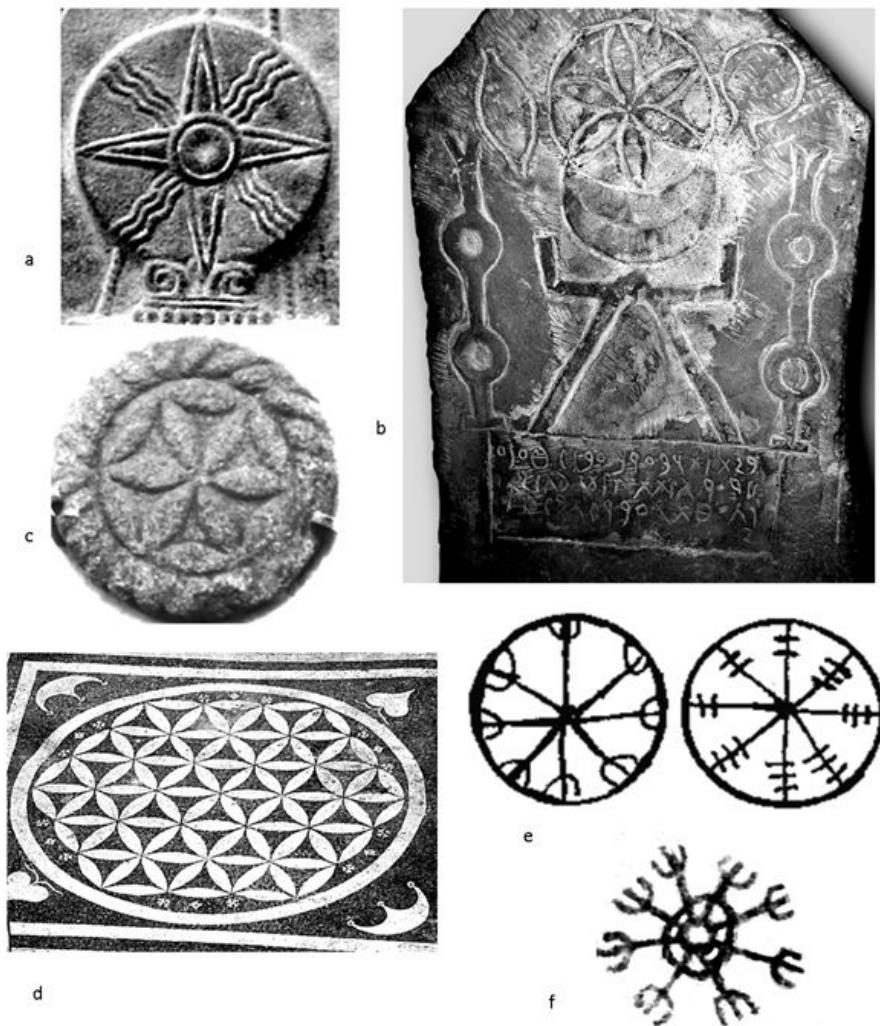
Figure 4. Multi-petal star in ancient traditions: a) Sun god Shamash in a fragment of the 'Tablet of Shamash' from Sippar (Tell Abu Habbah) (9th century BC), Neo-Babylonian Empire, British Library, room 55; b) Phoenician funeral stele from Carthage (about 5th c. BC), Bardo National Museum, Tunis; c) stone carving from the Castro de Santa Trega (6th -3rd c. BC), Archaeological Park of the Castro Culture, Lansbrica, Galicia, Spain; d) mosaic fragment from terrace house floor, Curetes Street 1a (1st – 2nd c. AD), Efesus, Turkey; e) Holy Pentacles of King Solomon from the occult book 'Clavicula Salomonis' (14th -15th., Italy); f) Pentacles sign in the Qur'an manuscript from Mindanao, Philippines (University of Virginia Library, MSS 13296).

In Sumerian culture, according to ancient sources, the Goddess Inana was connected to the rosette sign as an astral symbol. Similarly the identity of the eight-pointed star sign as a symbol for the star-divinity Inana–Ishtar and the flower/rosette sign were commonly used in Mesopotamian art. According to M. Compareti, the image of a divine figure dressed with a 'garment of heaven' can be found in Babylonian texts specifically referring to a Goddess (Compareti 2007: 206).

The geometry of such representations of the Sun god in multi-pointed star-rosette form is very similar to the Sun symbol above the Moon as a Phoencian and Punic attribute of Mother Goddess Tanit (aquivalent to Ashtarte/Ishtar and similar to Asherah) (about 5th c. BC) found at Carthage (Tunis, Morocco) (Christian 2013: 179 – 205) (Figure 4 b). This iconographic tradition of the depiction of a lunar symbol together with a sun or star sign above it was known in Greek antiquity and may also be traced in the Lithuanian 'cross-sun' blacksmithery (Figure 17b; 20; 22b).

The six-pointed star sign was very popular in the Castro culture of Galician Celts (6th-rd c. BC), usually being carved as a single interior decoration with an apotropaic function (Figure 4c).

The rosette/flower representation has also been used in Anatolia as a star or sun symbol within the religious sphere since very ancient times. It was later accepted in ancient Greece, particularly among the Hellenistic kingdoms. In Hellenistic cultures, astral symbols (especially the star) had apotropaic properties (Compareti 2007: 206).

The sophisticated six-petal rosette of the multilevel net compositional structure in popular modern interpretations of the Jewish tradition is called the 'Flower of Life'. A similar sophisticated six-petal rosette pattern is found in a mosaic dating from antiquity (1-2nd c. AD) of the floor of a terraced house in Efesus, Turkey (Figure 4d).

The magic Qabalistical symbolic signs – holy Pentacles, similar to the multi-pointed rosette – are spread in the Judaic tradition (known from the book the *Key of Solomon* written anonymously in the 14th – 15th c.) (Mathers 1889) (Figure 4e).

Similar signs are also known in the Islamic tradition. For example, the eight-pointed star that is the symbol of 'King Solomon's ring' is depicted above a prayer text in a manuscript of the Qur'an from Mindanao, Philippines (Gallop 2019) (Figure 4f).

The seven-pointed star, combined with its complicated and sophisticated compositional form, also is known in Romanian folk wooden architecture (Figure 5a). The six-pointed star as a decoration for silver amulets with surrounded by an inscription of prayers in Arabic for the well-being of their woman wearers waiting for motherhood, are known from Sudan (Wallis Budge 1930: 75).

The six-petal rosette was popular in decorations of cross beams in folk architecture of the Lviv (Ukraine) region of former Galicia (now in Poland and Ukraine) as a protective symbol.[5] It is significant that some adjacent carved inscriptions probably have the Lithuanian origins, for example, the text 'DIE 8VA', which can be read as Dieva[s], 'God' in Lithuanian (Figure 5b).

It is obvious that the most general symbolism of the blessing and protection of celestial bodies plays the most important role in perceptions of the multi-petal rosette in Lithuania. This is once again suggested by the abundance and variety of such symbols not only in the traditional wooden household environment, mostly on sacralised interior furniture (towel holders – *rankšluostinės*) (Figure 5c) and decoration of weaving instruments (distaffs – *verpstės, prieverpstės*) (Figure 5d), as well as in the decoration of archaic stringed instruments with an ancient ritualistic function (*kanklės*) (Figure 5e). In the modern period this type of pattern has become very strongly related to a particular national-cultural symbolism.

As a highly popular and recognizable symbol of folk art tradition, promoted to the level of a symbol of national identity, the multi-petal rosette started to serve as the basic element of the logo of the Association of Lithuanian Folk Artists (Lietuvos tautodailininkų sąjunga) (Figure 6a). Later the Community of Lithuanians of Estonia (founded in 1990) (Figure 6b) adopted a multidimensional segmented star consisting of seven hexagonal stars and interpreted in modern angular forms as their logo. It was based on a range of symbols of national identity, in which this common element of Lithuanian folk art was perceived as a symbol of the Lithuanian national community abroad. However, a comparative view would suggest that the chosen structure of the sign is rather similar to the symbol of the Flower of Life in the Hebrew tradition.

Furthermore, the World Congress of Ethnic Religions (WCER), founded and held for the first time in Vilnius (1998),[6] adopted the organization's logo, which was designed for this occasion. It consists of this local and at the same time universal symbol of a petal rosette incorporated into the net structure, the petals being transformed into leaves similar to oak leaves (Figure 6d). This
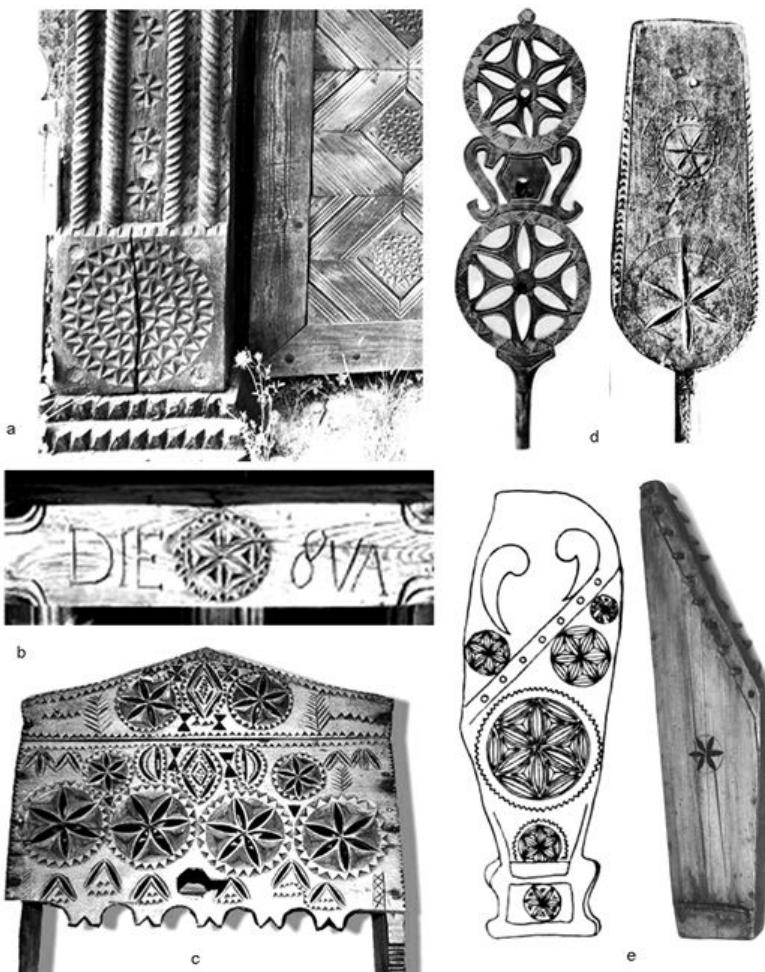
Figure 5. Petal rosettes in folk woodcrafts: a) a seven-pointed star in a fragment of a gateway arch in Romania (beginning of 19th c., Curtişoara settlement, Gorj County, National Village Museum 'Dimitrie Gusti', Bucharest); b) six-petal rosette in crossbeams in Galicia (Lviv region, Ukraine); c) characteristic Lithuanian decoration of towel-holder; d) Lithuanian spinning distaff; e) multi-petal rosette on a *kanklės*, a string instrument of Lithuania Minor (19th c.; Boetticher 1897: 57-9), and Samogitia.

logo served as the basis for a later, simplified design of the logo of the European Congress of Ethnic Religions (ECER),[7] which consists of the same six-petal rosette combined with seven hexagonal stars (Figure 6e).

Later, a modern pagan Czech NGO, the Slavic Circle (Slovansky Kruh), engaged in an investigation into and dissemination of original knowledge about Slavonic tribes with the aim of restoring local traditions and spreading spiritual knowledge among the people, adopted a similar pattern, with a simple hexagonal star, as its logo[8] (Figure 6f).

In analysing the spreading of this sign in modern times, it is important to distinguish its applications not only as religious symbol, but also as the mark of cultural heritage and a kind of wisdom of traditional knowledge. A very similar sign was adopted as the logo of the highest category certificate of Lithuanian Nation Heritage products (Figure 6c).

The same signs are used as logos for folk or national museums in East Europe, such as the Shevchenkivskyi Hai Open-Air Museum of Folk Architecture and Life (Lviv county, Ukraine) (Figure 6g) and the Slovak National Museum (Figure 6h).

Thus, the very similar and even code-like marking of the phenomenon of Lithuanian folk art with the six-petal rosette is more or less logical, suggesting a visual stereotype that is well rooted in the culture. One the other hand, like similarly repeated logos, this signification lacks creativity. At the same time, it is obvious that in modern Lithuanian culture the segmented star has been stripped of its archaic association with a celestial body or thunder god and today is only used to express a scientifically generalized concept of its exceptional popularity in traditional folk art. Thus, its present-day logo-based symbolism speaks of the modernistic conception of national identity, defined through the prism of the nation's folk art. However, the intercultural presence of variations of this sign suggests the relativity of the idea of its uniqueness to Lithuania when it represents local ethno-cultural and 'ethno-pagan' identities. On the one hand, the initial local ethno-cultural recognisability of the sign seems logical, while on the other hand, the universal, 'ecumenical' features of this sign as the mark of a modern European pagan identity seem to be based on its wide geographical spread and archaic religious roots.

Figure 6. Six-petal rosette logos as a heritage symbol: a) Logo of the Lithuanian Folk Artists' Association; b) Logo of the Community of Lithuanians of Estonia; c) Lithuanian Nation Heritage Product certification mark; d) Logo of the World Congress of Ethnic Religions (WCER) (1998); e) logo of the European Congress of Ethnic Religions (ECER); f) logo of the modern pagan Czech organization, Slovansky Kruh; g) logo of the Shevchenko Gai Open-Air Museum of Folk Architecture and Life; h) logo of Slovak National Museum.

The radiant sun-cross with snake-like rays

Like the multi-petal rosette, the sun-cross or cross with sun-rays as an ornament was very characteristic of the iron crosses in traditional Lithuanian folk art (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Iron crosses of Užventis churche (Kelmė r., 19th c.). 2019, photo by the author.

In the modern period, a radiant sun with snake-like rays started to serve as a true symbol of Lithuania's cultural and specifically Christian identity, as well as being a sign from more ancient Baltic spiritual traditions. At the same time, this pattern was associated with conspiratorial Christian resistance against the ideology of Soviet atheism in the second half of the twentieth century.

The old symbolism of Lithuanian iron sun-crosses has been studied by P. Galaunė (1930: 229), A. Rūkštelė (1957), J. Perkovskis (1999: 26–30), M. Gimbutienė/Gimbutas (1994/1958), A. Mažiulis (1951), Ž. Mikšys (1959), Grinius, J. (1970), Kontrimas (1991), J. Zabulytė (2003) and others. Galaunė and Gimbutienė emphasized their ancient pre-Christian origins, while Rūkštelė and Mikšys derived their forms from Catholic Baroque monstrances.

My investigations into the historical traces of the particular form of this sign – a sun with wavy rays – reveals its origin in Christian Gothic and Rennaisance art, as well as emphasizing its archetypal similarity to more ancient art forms.

One of most ancient compositional schemes related to the sun–cross sign can be recognized in the Neo-Babylonian Empire representation of the Sun god Shamash (nineth century BC, analysed above in the context of petalled rosette): this combines a vertical-horisontal four-pointed star with the diagonal wavy rays (Figure 4a).

Another important example from ancient cultures, the Phoencian sign consisting of a star and crescent mentioned earlier (Figure 4b), has a very similar composition to the Lithuanian sun-crosses (Figures 7, 8).

An analysis of changes in the Lithuanian metal-cross tradition in the twentieth century helps us to trace the path of the mental-visual symbolization of iron cross-suns into the arsenal of modern Lithuanian national symbols. This happened in order to incorporate a national-local approach to what was otherwise a global Christian symbol, based on folk cultural and pre-Christian spiritual traditions. The strong need to develop national-local visual symbols was based on cultural, religious and national resistance to tsarist russification and later to the anti-religious and atheist Soviet regime's prohibition on nurturing the Catholic religion and crossing it with tradition.

This modern interpretation of the symbolism and meaning of crosses in the blacksmiths' world view was inspired by the works of the anthropologists J. Basanavičius (1912) and especially by comparative research by the American archaeologist and anthropologist M. Gimbutienė (Gimbutas, 1958). They have both examined and the archaic pre-Christian elements in traditional Lithuanian Christian crosses, which they interpret hypothetically.

In 1959, the Lithuanian graphic artist Žibuntas Mikšys criticized Gimbutienė's 'pagan' explanation of the sun–cross symbolism. In his opinion, the Lithuanian iron cross with the sun symbol tradition is correlated with the Christian symbolism of heavenly orbs. Although the sun symbol had been

adopted from paganism in the first centuries of Christianity, it had nonetheless been Christianized: Christ started being equated with the sun, while in Baroque sacred art, the sun motif became especially widespread in the decoration of monstrances and reliquaries, being in turn adopted in the form of iron crosses erected on the top of churches and Lithuanian memorial monuments (Mikšys 1959: 112–22).

An analogous sun-cross with wavy rays is present on a relief on the Baroque pediment of the Church of St Michael the Archangel in Vilnius (seventeenth century) and in the ceiling decor of the Gothic-Renaissance St Nicholas' Church, also in Vilnius (early sixteenth century). These motives resemble an extended version of the Christogram surrounded by the sun and decorated by three nails, this also constituting the seal of the Jesuit order adopted by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1541 (Figure 8a).

A similar sun motif is also found in Milanese Renaissance decorative painting in Italy, where it is quite typical: these sun symbols appear in the outdoor galleries of the Sforza Castle and in the ceiling decor of the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan. This sun motif in the decoration of the Sforza Castle could have carried the wider, poetic symbolism of heavenly orbs. On the other hand, associating the wavy sunbeam motif exclusively with Christian art would be an overly narrow approach. Similar circular motifs with spiral-like rays rotating from the centre are common on pre-Christian decorated stone stelas in Gotland, Sweden, held at the Formsale Museum in Visby.

The beginnings of the modern interpretation of the sun-cross as a symbol of Lithuanian uniqueness can be recognized in the emblematic interpretation of Lithuanian Catholics organisation abroad. The flag of Lithuanian students in the Swiss 'Lituania' association showed a geometrical sun symbol with the following words around it: 'Omnia Instaurare In Christo, Lituania 1899-1922'. Here the details of the sun with wavy rays recalls traditional smithy work, while only the compressed rays resemble the cross motive (Figure 8b).

It is well known that, during the atheistic Soviet era, blacksmithing crosses was deemed a conspiratorial activity, but its prohibition was not absolute, given the subjective, non-categorical attitude of government officials, who sometimes provided secret support for cultural and religious traditions.

Consequently, iron cross artistic crafting, especially of a sun-like form, survives and is a vital aspect of contemporary folk art. Today it forms a significant part of the cross-crafting heritage and is inscribed on UNESCO's intangible world heritage list (Figure 9).
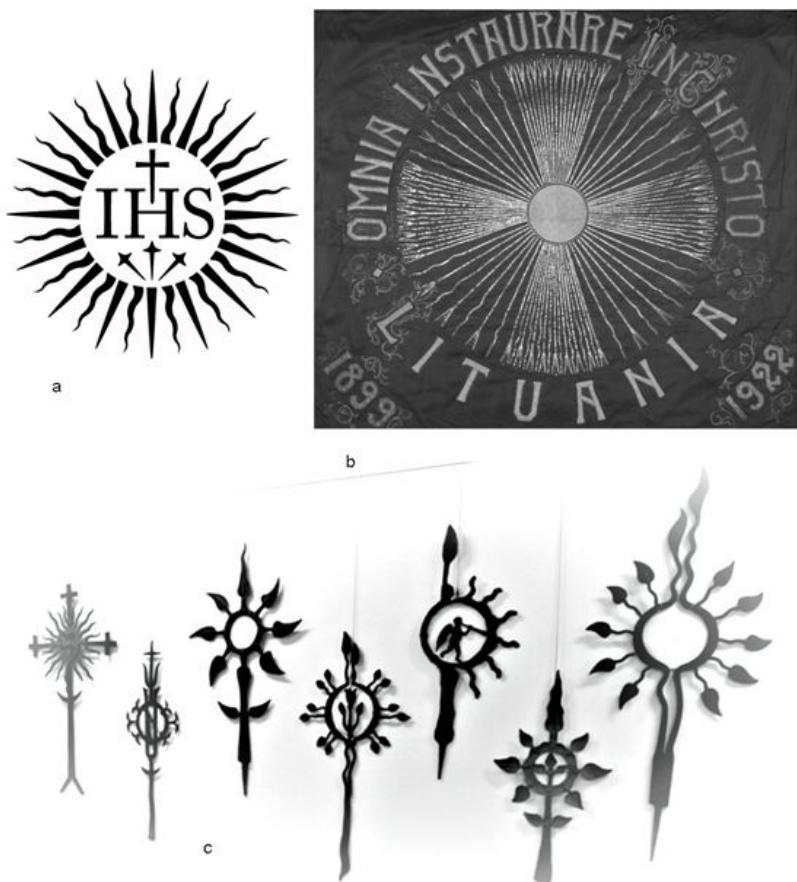
Figure 8. Cross with sun-like rays in the Christian tradition: a) the Jesuit sign, 1541; b) the sun-like cross in the flag of the Lithuanians association 'Rūta-Lituania' at Fribourg (1922; The Museum of Church Art, Vilnius); c) artistic blacksmithery crosses by V. Jarutis (2018, photo by the author).
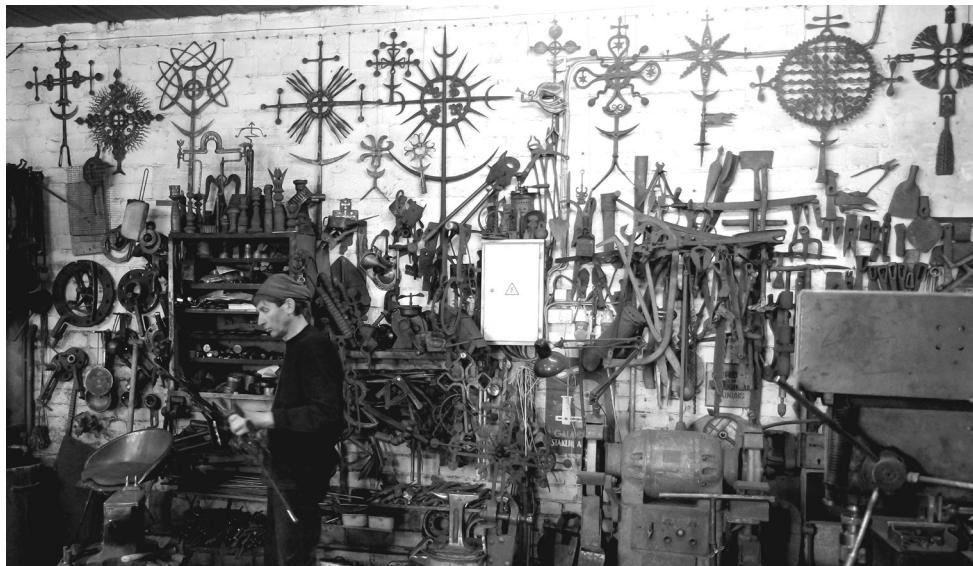
Figure 9. Sun-crosses at blacksmith V. Mikuckis' workplace (Mažeikiai region, 2017 photo by author)

Česlovas Pečetauskas (born 1946, Kėdainiai district) (Figure 10) recalls:

> We did not have exhibitions of metal crosses during the Soviet era. Most iron crosses were commissioned by private individuals for the cemetery monuments. The authorities did not pay attention to the cemeteries. Cemeteries are such a sacred thing… It would be cruel to penalize graves and monuments, or to tear them down in other ways. And when a baby was born, Christians hung a cross over the crib. Children were baptized and received their first Holy Communion in the Soviet era, but this was done in secret. [9]

It is important to note that Č. Pečetauskas, a fourth-generation blacksmith, became interested in metal cross-smithing, being inspired by the artistic activities of the Cappuccino Friar Stanislovas (A.M. Dobrovolskis, lived 1918-2005). According to a blacksmith, Friar Stanislovas was one of the most active promoters and creators of the sun crosses in Lithuania of Soviet tmes, making them not only for the churches, but also for living interiors, and donating them

Figure 10. Č. Pečetauskas wearing the crown of the King of the Blaksmiths (2018, Blacksmith's festival in Mažeikiai, photo by the author).

widely to those, very often intellectuals, who practised christianity. In Paberžė settlement (Kėdainiai region) in his residency, he emassed a huge collection of this traditional art and of new ones he himself had created (Figure 11).

According to Jolanta Antanaitienė, the organist of church where he took services, Friar Stanislovas made most of the crosses in a simplified, modernized way, by cutting shapes out of copper metal. [10]

The famous painter Aloyzas Stasiulevičius (born 1937; Figure 12), an enthusiast for the protection of folk art, who was friends with Friar Stanislovas, remembers:

"The monk together with his assistants made about two thousand crosses during his life, which he presented to couples at baptisms and other festive occasions. People liked to adorn their home interiors with his folk craft works. Friar Stanislovas keenly supported this folk art tradition." [11]

Another famous blacksmith, Vytautas Jarutis (lived 1936-2018; Figure 13; also Figure 8c) recalls the ideological environment in the Soviet era:

We made crosses in cemeteries privately. No one in authority resisted much, but they warned people against such activities. Therefore to erect or exhibit crosses in public places was impossible. We all communicated with

Figure 11. Frier Stanislovas and his collection of old crosses together with ones created by the priest (below) (1973, Paberžė, Kėdainiai r., Lithuanian Special Archives);).

Figure 12. Painter A. Stasiulevičius (2021, Vilnius, photo by O. Stasiulevičiūtė).
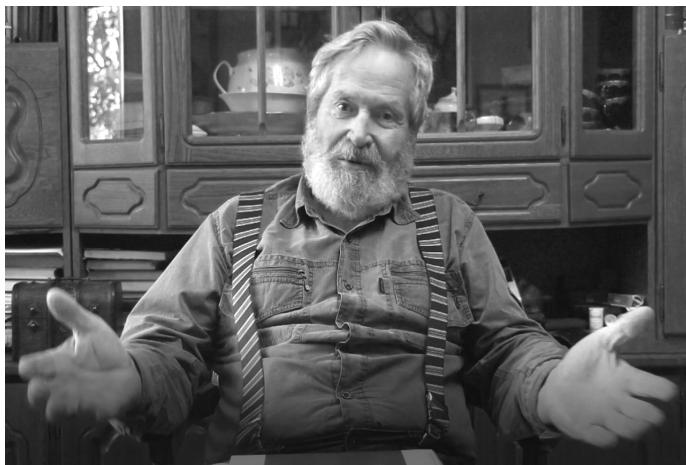
Figure 13. Blacksmith V. Jarutis during an interview (2017, Alytus, photo by the author).

the priests. Many woodcarvers made sculptures and crosses for churches in secret. But no one made them in public. And we did so for cemeteries too. No one in authority would go there to check up on you...

Those who say that we created Soviet art are wrong. That ideology that was promoted was alien to our spiritual world. We couldn't show crosses at folk art exhibitions, but we create them in cemeteries. Of course, you couldn't erect a cross in a public place, but nobody could stop you in a cemetery.[12]

The spreading of iron sun-like crosses in the monuments of cemeteries of Lithuanian Zanavikia from the seventies of the twentieth century is attested by J. Zabulytė (Zabulytė 2016).

At the same time, Lithuanian artists associate sun-like crosses with the ethnic pagan tradition. The blacksmith Č. Pečetauskas explains:

Old traditional iron 'suns' are published together with crosses in publications on old cross-blacksmithing by Galaunė, Basanavičius and Kontrimas. And I have done a similar thing. I call them 'Saulutė' (the Sun). When there is no cross, 'the Sun' seems like a pagan element to me. Because paganism in metal folk blacksmithing is associated with Christianity, the crucifix appears in a 'sun'. If the rays appear in the cross, for me it is a clear sign of the Balts. Christianity is bound up with the pagan tradition. Because

there was a transition from paganism to Christianity: not all tribes were baptised at the beginning. And if you use a 'moon' in the cross, that is paganism one hundred percent, because the moon and the sun represent the Baltic, Lithuanian tradition.[13]

Its important to note that the painter A. Stasiulevičius also traces patterns of sun-like crosses as a tradition from the period of the pre-Christian Balts.

V. Jarutis was a leader who introduced the fine craft of metal sun-like crosses into the official sphere of Lithuanian contemporary folk art in those times. He succesfully established the new and modern way of treating this symbol of the Lithuanian Christian folk art tradition in accordance with Soviet ideology. V. Jarutis shared his memories of the cultural realities of the 1990s. After positive responses from experts, art critics and ethnologists about his exhibited works, he became famous:

I called my radiant crosses made for contemporary folk-art exhibitions 'The Sun'. A headline in a newspaper article wrote about my works: 'Not a small sun, but a big sun'. Many officials asked me about my sucsess: 'Oh, you are such a great master; you must do some ideological work.' It was I who hammered the sun, together with the birds and the text on a metal board: 'Let the sun always shine'. Because at that time this popular song was widespread everywhere, throughout the Soviet Union: 'Pust vsegda budet solnce'.[14] So I said to the President of the Folk Artists Union: 'This is a patriotic work. You know, every morning the media sing: 'Let the sun always shine'. I just translated it into Lithuanian. 'Oh, very well, very well,' the President replied.[15]

V. Jarutis also described his approach to the archaic elements in the 'sun' symbol and its creation at the present day:

As an artist, I create, and obviously I avoid copying the same sun symbol in my work. I do take a deeper interest in the symbols, trying to figure out paganism. You read through a lot of material, and you have to have your own vision. For example, I read of the works by Gimbutienė back in the Soviet period. I had her book and read everything about the art of the Balts, the sun symbols, traditions, and so on. I don't have her original book, but the photocopies of all the pages. They're not even bound, just loose pages.[16]

Interviews with the most famous contemporary folk blacksmiths revealed that the 'pagan' narrative (inspired by the researches of J. Basanavičius M. Gimbutienė) predominates in their emic interpretation of the sun-cross symbolism, while by contrast the Christian explanation remains poorly developed.

Thus, 'diplomatic' compromises, along with the conspiratorial ideas that entered the iron sun-cross symbolism, were invented by the artists and promoters. This newly treated pattern of symbolism was also acceptable to the aesthetics and ideology of Soviet modernism, thereby fitting the framework of reasonable and non-conflictual identity symbols without losing traditional spiritual and community-building meanings.

Thanks to proper scientific and delicate ideological explanations, the image of a sun with wavy beams became an ambivalent symbol: in the inner self-communication of culture, it was linked to both Christianity and the older national spiritual tradition and became associated with cultural resisitance to Soviet displacement and atheism; while for government representatives and the public at large, it was presented as an aesthetic element, a poetical image of a democratic popular culture. Due to this invention of an alternative version of the message implied in sun-crosses, which was also supported by representatives of the Catholic Church, a fertile ground was provided for the survival and development of the highly artistic metal cross-crafting tradition in Lithuania during the Soviet period.

The image of the sun-cross became dear to the wider artists' community, as it still is today: it has spread to souvenir and jewellry manufacterers and has encouraged creators to explore the motif of sun-crosses as an element of Lithuanian identity (for example, the decorative wooden artefact with the amber sun surrounded by the serpent-like metal rays installed at the centre of a biomorfic oak wood frame (Figure 14a); the neck pendant of a metal sun with amber in its centre (Figure 14b); the ear pendants in the shape of a sun with wavy rays (Figure 14c); or a similar pendant of a sun-cross with wawy sun rays[17] (Figure 14d).

The analysis of sun-like cross symbols reveals how visual signs can be treated as the active element of the social imaginery. The Lithuanian blacksmithing sun-cross tradition of the twentieth century, after the loss of independence in 1940, became an ideologically moderate and sensitive, conflictual, differentiating sign of resistance and at the same time a unifying religious, spiritual, national and folk cultural symbol.
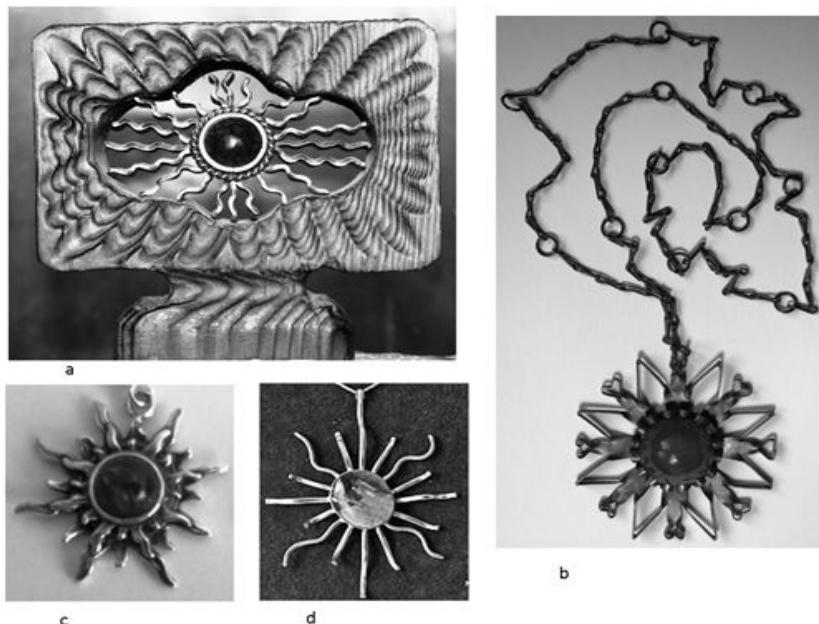
Figure 14. Sun-cross in Lithuanian national souvenirs and jewellry: a) decorative wooden souvenir of a metal sun (second part of 20th c.); b) sun with amber eye inneck pendant (about 1965, Kaunas); c) contemporary ear pendant consisting of metal sun with wavy rays; d) contemporary ear pendant by Gražvydas Kasparavičius.

Conclusions

Modern and contemporary interpretations of traditional symbolic patterns (associated with the mythico-poetical tradition) in logos, folk art patterns, jewellery, souvenirs, etc. investigated here not only stress the vitality of their forms in culture, but also inspire various echoes in the socio-cultural context: the ideologies of heritage protection and the tradition of folk-cultural aesthetics.

These modernized patterns are associated with the concept of national or regional identity, and they serve to popularize traditional world views and communal values. They are much more related to notions of eternity and longevity than to the transience, temporality and experimentalism of contemporary culture. In this respect they are similar in nature to religious symbols.

The modern interpretation of these signs initially stemmed from the aspirations of certain communities, supported by the social imagination, to create boundaries of identity and distinctiveness from other social groups. In the case of the rue symbol, this means Christians or virtuous, spiritual Lithuanians fostering national culture, and resisting the challenges of Germanization, Russification and Polonization. In the case of the sun-cross, they proved resistant to Soviet atheism and displacement. In the case of the petal rosette, they were treated as the cultivators of the native national pagan religion, the nurturers of a particular tradition of folk art and the guardians of folk cultural heritage.

On the other hand, these modernized symbols are positively associated with the most popular iconic images of folk-cultural aesthetic traditions. The rue is linked with a characteristic folklore image, as well as with traditional embroidery, Easter eggs and furniture-painting patterns. The multi-petal star is linked to the characteristic, recognizable and impressive decor of sacralized domestic artifacts, such as towels, spindles and distaffs. The sun with wavy rays is linked to the most peculiar patterns of Lithuanian cross blacksmithery.

In modern times the rue sign arose from the interpretation of the traditional folk-cultural symbolism of mythico-poetic origin, being related to notions of virginity, youth and beauty, as well as dreams of getting married. The stylization of the sign inherited from ethnographic ornaments prevailed in modernity, and the sign itself became associated with the patriotic cultural activities of religious ('Ateitis') and spiritual-cultural ('Rūta' of Tilžė) institutions, the sphere of national art and cultural management. Moreover, its original folk-cultural symbolism, which was associated with the idea of virginity, eventually became obsolete. Recognizing the greatest interdisciplinary, art-synthesis event of rural culture in ethnographic weddings, it is logical to equate such weddings with operas in urban culture. The rue as the sign of a wedding has been included in the logo of Lithuanian opera.

In Lithuanian culture the multi-petal rosette sign, widespread in ancient civilizations, appears on the most highly sacralized objects, and is thought to be associated with the symbolism of heavenly protection. In modern times it became a symbol of the Neo-pagan Lithuanian movement 'Ramuva', but at the same time it was adopted as a more universal sign of a living spiritual heritage, based on moral values. It also became the logo of the World Congress of Ethnic Religions, which was later taken into adaptations by other European national pagan associations. On the other hand, the six-petal rosette, one of the most

characteristic folk-art symbols, was initially incorporated into the logo of the Lithuanian Folk Artists' Association. The latest interpretation of this motif is its use in the logo of the National Heritage Product Certificate. The popularity of this pattern in the folk art of other countries and its connection with heritage as a traditional knowledge led to original adaptations of this sign in the logos of heritage museums in other east European countries.

For the sun-crosses in the Soviet era, folk artists began to look for ambitious compromises while at the same time using aspects of their symbolism in a conspiratorial fashion that could meet the provisions of Soviet aesthetics and enter the circle of symbols of non-conflicting identity while at the same time not losing their hidden traditional Christian religious significance. The sun-crosses were interpreted in more universal manner and were officially presented as an element of democratic folk culture. In internal, conspiratorial cultural communications, however, it became a sign of spiritual resistance, associated with both the older pagan and national spiritual tradition and national Christianity, Its iconic value was mostly based on the paradigm of traditionalism, local exclusivity and communal mental unity. The invention of an alternative non-Christian reading of blacksmithed sun-crosses during the Soviet era provided a favourable basis for the development of the highly artistic level of blacksmithing art in Lithuania.

A wider critical intercultural and diachronic approach reveals the relativity of national, communal and spiritual identities and the meanings of the traditional geometric motifs investigated here.

Notes

[1] The Musical Folklore Archive of the Ethnomusicology Department of the Institute of Ethnomusicology of the Lithuanian Music Academy, MFA ED IE LMTA, KTR 143(9), Varėna region.

[2] Čepukienė, Anelė (singer). 1960, MFA ED IE LMTA, KF 2903.

[3] [https://www.opera.lt/istorija/992]. Accessed 18.02.2021.

[4] [http://romuva.lt/apeigos/mergvakario/]. Accessed 18.02.2021.

[5] [https://forgottengalicia.com/a-protection-symbol-for-the-home-the-six-petal-rosette-on-the-crossbeams-of-galicia/]. Accessed 15.02.2021.

[6] [http://ecer-org.eu/the-1998-wcer-congress/#more-2712]. Accessed 18.02.2021.

[7] [http://ecer-org.eu/]. Accessed 18.02.2021.

[8] [http://www.slovanskykruh.cz/en/]. Accessed 18.02.2021.

[9] Interview conducted in Užventis (Kelmė r.) at blacksmithery workshop, 'Užventis'ART', July 2017.

[10] Interview conducted by phone, 20.11.2020.

[11] Interview in interviewee's home in Vilnius, 09.11.2020.

[12] Interviews conducted in Užventis (Kelmė r.) and at intgerviewee's home in Alytus, July–August 2017.

[13] Užventis, 2017 July.

[14] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmRkAcBGC8g]. Accessed 22.02.2021.

[15] Užventis and Alytus, July - August, 2017.

[16] Ibid.

[17] [http://www.grazvydaskasparavicius.com/en/gallery/gid:1663/5]. Accessed 21.02.2021.

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LAKE MANAGEMENT IN THE PIEBALGA REGION: CLIMATE, NATURE AND CULTURE FROM THE 1890S TO NOW

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Abstract: There are many regions in Latvia with a long history and beautiful landscapes. However, of all the regions, the most beautiful landscapes and the richest culture are in the Piebalga region. Piebalga is located in the Vidzeme highlands, where the longest domestic river in Latvia, the Gauja, has its source. There are several counties in the Piebalga region, the most famous of which is Vecpiebalga, where two of the first Latvian writers were born, the Kaudzītes brothers, who are well-known for their novel The Surveyors' Time, one of the first books written by Latvians. In this study, the culture, religion and environmental management practices of Piebalga during the 19th century were studied using an extensive analysis of historical literature about the region, and compared to Piebalga in the present, which was studied using case study research. During the research it was discovered that the main influences on Piebalga culture and environmental management practices have been the Hernhutian congregations who influences had shaped the local culture and continues to do so even after being effectively disbanded. It was also discovered that the municipalities in the region are less effective at monitoring lakes than they were during the 19th century due to lacking resources.

Introduction

There are many regions in Latvia with a long history and beautiful landscapes. However, of all the regions, the most beautiful landscapes and the richest culture are in the Piebalga region. Piebalga is located in the Vidzeme highlands, where the longest domestic river in Latvia, the Gauja, has its source. There are several counties in the Piebalga region, the most famous of which is Vecpiebalga, where two of the first Latvian writers were born: the Kaudzītes brothers, well-known for their novel The Surveyors' Time, one of the first books written by Latvians.

The Piebalga region of Latvia is one of the most beautiful and economically strongest regions in the country. Piebalga is located close to the central part of the Vidzeme Highlands. The region has a rugged, undulating terrain, as well as a significant number of streams, rivers and lakes. In total, the region has more than a hundred lakes (Lakes of Latvia 2015; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga 2021; Country Traveler 2013; Celotajs 2012). The forests in the area consist mainly of pines, spruces and birches (Celotajs.lv 2012). Due to its terrain and climate, Piebalga often has fog in the mornings and snow in winter. The region is popular with skiers as a result of regular snow and natural ski runs. Although Piebalga has certainly changed since the nineteenth century, much of the region's culture and identity has survived due to its people's efforts (Country Traveler 2013).

Although Piebalga is one of the most beautiful regions in Latvia and is well known for its culture, it is one of the least populated and resource-poor regions of Latvia, which today poses significant difficulties for the operation of its municipal infrastructure (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga 2021). Travel to the region is also a challenge, as bus services are not very regular, and most of the region's railway stations have been closed (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021).

This paper examines the Piebalga region's culture, the environmental policy of its component municipalities today and the historical methods of their environmental governance, as well as works on Piebalga folklore, folk songs and local writers. This enables the region to be explored in more detail in relation to lake management and its influential characteristics in the region. This research also investigates cultural and religious beliefs during the nineteenth

century, how they have changed since then, and what were the main influences on Piebalga's distinct cultural identity, for which the region is known today.

The Piebalga region

The Piebalga region consists of two small municipalities – Jaunpiebalga (New Piebalga) and Vecpiebalga (Old Piebalga), as well as many other, smaller ones such as Dzērbene, Taurene, Ineši and Rauna(Figure 1; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). The municipalities were independent until administrative reforms during 2021, after which they were added to the Cesu region, and most of their management was taken over by the Cesis municipality. Piebalga had already been part of the Cesis municipality until the administrative re-

Figure 1.Map of Piebalga cultural region. From Jaņu seta 2015.

forms of 2009 split many of the larger municipalities into smaller ones. Now the Piebalga region is part of Cesis municipality again (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021).

The Piebalga region's municipalities are well-known for their scenery, the large numbers of lakes (more than thirty in Vecpiebalga alone) and their rich culture (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Lauku Celotajs 2013). Piebalga is one of Latvia's more productive rural regions, due to its large areas of natural pastures useful in ranching. Many local farmers are involved in raising deer and sheep, but the region's cold weather and long winters prevent intensive agriculture or growing rapeseed (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). Piebalga is a popular travel destination for tourists and contains hundreds of national heritage sites (IS „Mantojums' 2016; 'Jāņa sēta' 2015). However, the municipality suffers greatly from emigration and depopulation, which has caused entire villages to be abandoned (Lauku Celotajs 2013). The Piebalga region was the site of many battles during the Second World War, but German and Russian soldiers spared most of the historical architecture and cultural sites, something that ensured that Piebalga has more UNESCO heritage sites than most other regions in Vidzeme, and indeed in Latvia in general (IS 'Mantojums' 2016).

However, many historical buildings in the countryside have been abandoned due to depopulation in the region (Table 1, Figure 2; Lauku Celotajs 2013). In some cases, their legitimate owners are no longer in Latvia and are leaving these buildings to decay, rather than selling them or handing them over to the municipalities. Several such abandoned buildings are found near the shores of Lake Juveris, and Lake Raunaisis also has an abandoned village in its area (Country Traveler 2013;Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). The region also had several railway stations, which are now in ruins. It is possible to see abandoned farm buildings, including barns and grain silos, which belonged to the collective farms that existed during the Soviet era but are now abandoned. It is also possible to find old bunkers and trenches that have survived World War II and sometimes date back to the period of the national partisans who were active in the area (Lauku Celotajs 2013; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebala.lv 2021).

Large tracts of forests cover the region of Piebalga, more than half of which is taken up by forests. Forests are managed partially by Latvian State Forests, Latvia's national forestry company, while the local municipalities manage forest areas near settlements (Kalvite Libiete Bardule 2017; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). The forests around many lakes are also managed by

Latvian State Forests, as are some public swimming areas. Pine and spruce are the most common trees found in the region, other types of trees being rarer. Swamps can also be found within the forests as a result of the regions relief – swamps and marshlands in Piebalga are often found in any depressions deep enough if the area is sufficiently moist, or groundwater is close to the surface (Kalvite Libiete Bardule 2017).

Agricultural land takes a smaller area and is mostly found in the form of pastures, as the climate and terrain make it challenging to grow bulk crops in most parts of the region. Farmland, which is located closer to lakes and streams or in depressions, is regularly flooded, giving small areas of land in Piebalga a significant diversity of plants (Kalvite Libiete Bardule 2017).

Piebalga has a considerable number of lakes: Vecpiebalga alone has more than 30 lakes, including one of Latvia's largest lakes, Alauksts. Most other lakes are smaller, many of them more remote than Alauksts (Vecpiebalga. lv 2020). Several lakes are near villages, but many lakes do not have access roads, while others are located deep in the woods or are surrounded by swamps, making it difficult to reach them. Piebalga also the source of the Gauja River, one of Latvia's longest rivers and its longest native river, as the Daugava River starts in Russia. All lakes in the Piebalga region are regarded either as public lakes: those owned by the municipalities are subject to management and monitoring, while most other lakes are public lakes (Latvian Civil law; Lauku Celotajs 2021; Urtans et al. 2012; Benders 2021; Veidemane 2020; Zacharias et al. 2020). Most lakes in the Piebalga region are considered to be of good environmental quality (Veidemane 2020; Zacharias et al. 2020).

Piebalga is the site of many manors (at least one in every parish), a porcelain factory and various food and beverage companies (Ceļotājs. lv 2012; Country Traveler 2013). Many of these sites were established in the nineteenth century and survived both World Wars (IS Mantojums 2020). This is rare in Latvia, as many of the country's smaller settlements and rural areas were devastated during both of the World Wars and were rebuilt afterwards almost from scratch. However, many manors were burned down during the 1905 revolt, and many settlements were razed during the Second World War. Many churches in the Piebalga region have also been damaged by storms and are still undergoing reconstruction (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). The region also has a significant number of abandoned farms, villages and manors, located in areas with less traffic, as well as close to some lakes. Historically, the region was much more densely populated than it is now, with Piebagla now being one of

the least populated regions in the country (Table 1). Vecpiebalga municipality has suffered the worst depopulation, due to more severe emigration and other factors, including a lack of apothecaries (Figure 2; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020).

Figure 2. Population changes in Vecpiebalga from 2016-2020. From Vecpiebalga.lv

Municipality	Population	Land area	Municipality type
Carnikava	9276	76,0 km2	Coastal/Urban
Burtnieki	7655	652,2 km2	Rural
Liepaja	76535	51,3 km2	City/Urban
Roja	3785	197,0 km2	Coastal/Urban
Jaunpiebalga	2253	245,8 km2	Rural
Vecpiebalga	3938	515,0 km2	Rural

Table 1. Comparison of population in various Latvian municipalities in 2018. Data from the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

Vecpiebalga (Figure 3) is the largest municipality in the region by area, but it has a more scattered population and has fewer resources other than land and forests (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Country Traveler 2013). Jaunpiebalga is smaller but has more industry and is wealthier, but with fewer inhabitants (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). Jaunpiebalga is the site of a brewery, porcelain factory and some other industries, with there now being various bakeries and confectionery manufacturers. The municipality also has a furniture factory and a fish farm (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). At the same time, Vecpiebalga has established a large smoke-house and various other industries involved in the processing of agricultural products (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020). Vecpiebalga also has several schools, that in Dzerbene having a focus on music (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020). Historically the region was famous for its crafts (Kaudzite 1926). However, over time its economy and industry have weakened due to urbanization: more than half of Latvia's population lives in cities (Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs 2018). As a result, industry was concentrated in the cities, and industries in small towns and villages declined. Emigration from the country has exacerbated the problems of rural areas (Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs 2018).
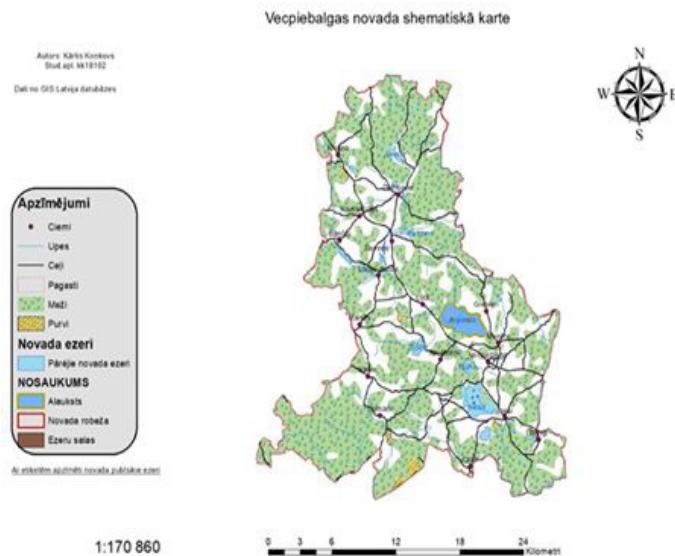
Figure 3. Schematic map of Vecpiebalga municipality. Author's data.

Research methods

Information on the current situation regarding lake and environmental governance and local culture was obtained using a case-study research methodology. Legislative documents, such as the Vecpiebalga's sustainable development strategy and plan, were examined for cultural and environmental issues. The seven public lakes in Vecpiebalga region – Alauksts, Juveris, Inesis, Kaives, Taurenes, Zobols and Tauns – were investigated regarding their current governance regimes, and the settlements near them were examined with regard to cultural events, local tales and local opinion about environmental governance. Smaller lakes, like Kaupens and Raunaisis, were also investigated.

Historical forms of lake and environmental governance, culture and beliefs were studied by means of an analysis of the historical literature and of school and museum archives in Vecpiebalga, with historical architecture studies near lakes mentioned in 'Grandfather Stories' such as Lake Raunaisis and Juveris (Slaidins et al. 2020). The public lakes in Vecpiebalga were chosen for investigation, as they are the largest in Piebalga region and had been studied as part of a another research project on lake governance (Konkovs 2020; Konkovs and Ernsteins 2020).

Within the research framework, information on local governments' activities and budgets and on companies in the region was also sought, as it was important to know how many resources the municipality was devoting to religion, culture and environmental governance. Regional planning documents and legislation, as well as existing businesses in the region, were also examined in order to investigate the overall goal of managing the historical district (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021).

Sources of information

The sources of information used in this study include various historical accounts, folk tales and archive materials gathered for more than 150 years (the 1870s to 2020) by local historians and scholars. These materials are available on the internet but in most cases need to be translated into English (Kaudzite 1926; Latvian folklore repository 2020; Latvian stories and tales 2013; Dzerbene museum archive 2014). Information about Piebalga in English is somewhat limited and is mostly intended to inform tourists about places of interest rather than local cultural customs or beliefs (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv

2021). The information available to tourists covers sights, accommodation and restaurants, as well as brief descriptions of local cultural events and natural sites, but this information is minimal and not suitable for a detailed study of the cultural and natural environments of the Piebalga region. Therefore, for this study, sources of information consisted of archives, books and folklore repositories, where information about the Piebalga region is much broader and more diverse than that available to tourists.

Examples of such materials include folk songs, biographies and memoirs of Piebalga's inhabitants, historical archives and various novels, such as Surveyors' times, written by Matiss and Reinis Kaudzites (Brothers Kaudzite 1879). This novel depicted the times when the peasants were given private land for themselves and how the various characters went about claiming it, as well as various other events. The book portrayed the turbulent times of the late nineteenth century in Vidzeme very well and provides significant insights into rural 'life in Latvia more than a hundred years ago (Brothers Kaudzite 1879). In many cases, though, the depictions of characters and events in the book are somewhat exaggerated. This was the first novel to be written in Latvian by Latvian authors, rather than in German or Russian. Matis Kaudzite, the younger of the two brothers, also wrote several books about historical Latvian municipalities, including Vecpiebalga, where the brothers were born. This particular book contains detailed descriptions of local villages, lakes and other points of interest, many of which can no longer be found on modern maps. It also contained a large amount of data on local folklore, including stories about the creation of Lakes Zobols and Tauns, among others (Kaudzite 1926). The book is not available in English, and examples of it are rare and hard to find in paper form. However, this book is available in digital format, and it can also be viewed at the National Library of Latvia.

Folk tales in Piebalga are harder to find and are usually about the region's lakes, hills, and other areas. However, there are also a significant number of ghost stories about local manors, churches and cemeteries. Some stories were about landlords during the nineteenth century, while others are about animal that were commonly found in the region, such as foxes, wolves and bears.

A large amount of information is available on the website of the Dzerbenes school museum, including various memoirs and historical texts written by people who lived in the parish during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Such texts include the autobiographical story collection 'Vecteva

stasti' ('Grandfathers stories'), in which the author wrote in detail about how the parish was managed during the nineteenth century and after, as well as various folk tales and urban myths of Dzerbene (Dzerbene museum archive 2014). The stories were published in 2020 in the book Stories of Dzerbene's Grandfather, which contains many more stories than those available in the Dzerbene school archives (Dzerbene Museum archive 2014; Slaidins et al. 2020). The book contains both autobiographical accounts of the text's author, those of his grandfather, and various stories and descriptions of Dzerbene's inhabitants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book is just as much an autobiography of Janis Slaidins, but it also narrates his grandfather's stories, some of which provided deep insights into life in the county during this period and into the changes that occurred over generations. The book also contained ghost stories and lessons in hunting and fishing, as well as stories that have been passed around Vecpiebalga by oral tradition from the nineteenth century till today (Slaidins et al. 2020). The book was written and published with the support of the Latvian Cultural Fund but was written and illustrated by local artists (ibid.). It has already won considerable popularity, especially in the Vidzeme region (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021). Various authors, including Reinis Kaudzite, wrote research papers and books about the Hernhutian congregations, including their culture and activities in the Piebalga region (Kaudzite 1926; Kaudzite 1877; Krūmiņa-Koņkova S. 1995).

Research results: Local culture, religion and customs in Piebalga during the nineteenth century

The Piebalga region can be shown to have had interesting qualities regarding culture and environmental governance in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. The region had a much greater level of literacy than most parts of Latvia (or the Russian Empire) as a result of the influence of the Hernhutian preachers active in Vidzeme at that time. Piebalga's inhabitants developed a journal culture, thanks to which they recorded important daily events, as well as their thoughts about religious or other situations. These journals were passed on to their children so that the next generations could learn about the experiences of their predecessors. This also allowed information regarding socio-political matters, including the governance of natural objects such as lakes, to be better preserved than in other regions (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Country Traveler 2021).

The local peasants formed a very knowledgeable and intelligent population who were active in writing down their experiences and knowledge for future generations. This also resulted in the local community being very knowledgeable about nature and very protective of their lakes, rivers and forests, since their ancestors had written large numbers of detailed accounts about the region and the lifestyle of the people during those times. Thus, under the influence of the Herrnhut congregations, the nature and landscape of the region were considered a gift from God because of its beauty (Slaidins et al. 2020). These accounts gave something for the current generations to compare to today, causing people to see that now everything regarding nature is worse than in the past, namely the rarity of animals and mushrooms, and fewer and weaker streams, not to mention the fact that there used to be many more villages than there are now (Slaidins et al. 2020.; Kaudzite 1926).

Stories about hunting or fishing are popular in Piebalga, many of them being of educational value. They were meant to teach young people how to hunt badgers or grouse properly, while fishing stories and local customs taught people to be respectful of the lakes and other fishermen. One old but no longer widely practiced custom was to give fish to anglers who did not catch anything out of kindness, not mocking them for failure, and thus showing respect for fellow fishermen and the lakes as well. As a quote from Stories of Dzerbene's Grandfather shows: 'If you are neither a thief nor an envier, you will be a friend of Raunaisis all your life, and there will be no shortage of fish' (Slaidins et al. 2020: 19).

Religion also played a fundamental role in the community. The local churches served as one of the most prominent meeting points for the inhabitants, the town halls being further from the settlements than the churches. As the Herrnhutian congregations had all their members read sermons, the region's inhabitants were very knowledgeable about theology and religion, which shaped the view that God was with all of them, regardless of their circumstances, and their faith in God and helping their community was more important than social status or wealth (Krumina-Konkova 1995; Kaudzite 1877; Straube 2021). This also resulted in the local inhabitants being very religious and more respectful towards nature during the nineteenth century due to their being grateful to God for giving them such a beautiful land to live in. I quote another entry from Stories of Dzerbene's Grandfather: 'God is our Lord, and may His glory be in heaven, but for the Latvian, the highest is the earth – the homeland, the

native land, his corner, his patch of ground, who created, nursed, baptized and sanctified the great life' (Slaidins et al. 2020: 5). The Herrnhutians were the dominant influence in Piebalga for several centuries, but gradually their membership dwindled as a result of increased urbanization, the reduction in social and economic differences between native Latvian peasants and Germanic nobles because of the abolition of serfdom and Latvian peasants becoming landlords themselves due to buying out former manor lands, and the reduction in religious freedom during the Soviet period. Indeed, the Hernhutians were prosecuted by the Soviet authorities, like all other religious organizations (Straube 2021; Krumina-Konkova 1995; Kaudzite 1877). The Hernhutian congregations in Piebalga were effectively absorbed by the local Lutheran church, which during the nineteenth century already had a dominant presence in Piebalga (Kaudzite 1877; Krumina-Konkova 1995; Straube 2021). However, the Herenhutian congregations in Piebalga ensured that the local inhabitants were more educated than in other regions. Thus, they ran schools for the peasants, as the first municipality-sponsored schools only appeared during the 1900s (Kaudzite 1877; Kaudzite 1926; Krumina-Konkova 1995; Straube 2021).

Besides the Hernhutian congregations, as just noted, in the Piebalga region the Lutheran church was the other and primary influence in religious matters (Kaudzite 1877; Kaudzite 1926). Most churches in Piebalga region are Lutheran, though there are a few Catholic churches in the area as well. Historically, German and later Latvian Lutheran pastors were very heavily involved in local cultural life, with many seasonal events being conducted near parish churches, which also served as a gathering point for various events in the parishes (Kaudzite 1926. 1877). Many pastors were also involved in environmental matters, as many of them, like the local population generally, were hunters and fishermen. As such, they often protested against the use of harmful or unethical methods of hunting in these areas, such as using poisoned bait to catch crayfish. However, that did not stop people doing that, and some believe that it is such methods that have caused crayfish to die out in Lake Raunaisis (Slaidins et al. 2020). Pastors often tried to teach local peasants not to do so, as well as instructing them in other things regarding nature preservation that they may have learned before they were assigned to congregations, but this was not always successful (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926. 1877).

The locals were also quite selective about whom they considered members of their community: people who come to live in the municipality from other

regions are considered partial members due to their not being born in one of the region's parishes. Those who immigrated to Piebalga are considered to be a select group, not locals but still accepted as valued members of the community. The local inhabitants were historically more open to accepting people who took a more active role in the local community, such as doctors, and this trend continues today. However, during the nineteenth century Piebalga inhabitants were, like everywhere else in Latvia, often at the mercy of the German nobles. While most were respected among the locals, others, such as the Landrat Hagemeister, who was infamous for his cruelty, are still objects of various ghost stories (Slaidins et al. 2020: 72). However, pastors were also subject to various stories, for example, stories about their various eccentricities, such as their manner of speech. As many of them were German, there were difficulties in understanding them due to their accents (Slaidins et al. 2020). Despite such quirks, during the nineteenth century the inhabitants of Piebalga were noted for being very industrious and hard-working, very active in their region's cultural life and quick to adapt to various changes in their region, such as those brought about by changes in laws or the natural environment, such as disappearance of crayfish or poor harvests (Kaudzite 1877; Kaudzite 1926; Slaidins et al. 2020; Country Traveler 2013).

Regarding local folk tales and myths, the locals have stories about the creation of Alauksts, Inesis, Zobols and Tauns – a pair of rainclouds from which Lakes Alauksts and Inesis formed after fighting each other over a quiet place to do so. It was Alauksts that won, causing Inesis to run away to another area, while Lakes Tauns and Zobols were formed from pieces of the raincloud from which Inesis was formed. One fell into a swamp (Tauns), while the other formed from a splash from the first piece (Zobols). Another folk tale, about Taurene parish, claimed that the parish had been named after modern cows' ancestors, the taur. Another says that the scenic area was created by the devil (traditional Latvian folk tales depict him as a less harmful and more mischievous equal of the mainstream Christian version): the area was covered in water, and the devil ate and spat out mud, every piece of which became a hill in the area (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020, Latvian Stories and Tales 2013). There are other stories regarding the origin of various other lakes, in addition to rivers, hills and swamps in the region, but not all of them are in Latvian; some of the older examples are in German (Latvian Stories and Tales 2013, Latvian Folklore Repository 2020).

Several folk tales are present in works such as Stories of Dzerbene's Grand-father, with many stories native to Dzerbene also being included in this work, including stories about the parish church, and many about local inhabitants. Such tales include a large number of stories about Dzerbene manor, which is considered to be haunted, with there being many stories regarding ghosts haunting it already in the nineteenth century (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Latvian Stories and Tales 2013, Latvian Folklore Repository 2020). Dz-erbene church also has some ghost stories associated with it. Both sites have various stories, with Dzerbene church having at least two – that ghosts regularly visited the church during Christmas, and that duels are fought between some local nobles' ghosts in the church cemetery (Slaidins et al. 2020: 82). Dzerbene manor also had stories about ghostly carriages visiting the manor at night. There were also ghosts in the manor's tower, among various others (Slaidins, Maldere Cavarts 2020: 62). Tales about devils pranking local inhabitants or haunting some parts of the county are also familiar. There are tales about devils dancing near some ruins at moonlight nights in the late autumn in the northern area of Dzerbene (Slaidins et al. 2020; Latvian Stories and Tales 2013, Latvian Folklore Repository 2020; Kaudzite 1926).

Other parts of Piebalga, such as Vecpiebalga parish, also have stories about hauntings in old buildings, many of them being about the ruins of an old castle near Vecpiebalga church. These stories are about the ghosts of knights riding towards the castle from the church and other ghostly events (Latvian Stories and Tales 2013, Latvian Folklore Repository 2020). Several ghost stories and folk tales are in German, not Latvian. However, regardless of language, an unusual number are about churches, with some stories being intended to explain why some churches had been rebuilt several times over in a short amount of time. One of the reasons suggested by the stories was that the churches were sinking into the ground, caused by the fact that they had been built very close to rivers or in swampy land where the ground is not suited to buildings of stone. Other tales were about witches in Piebalga, a relatively uncommon topic in Piebalga folktales (Latvian Stories and Tales 2013, Latvian Folklore Repository 2020; Kaudzite 1926). The locals were not as superstitious as in the less educated regions, therefore, they did not believe in things like sorcery. Today, local beliefs and folklore have remained in good condition, thanks to the brothers Kaudzite, who described the local stories and beliefs of Piebalga in their books, as well

as the work of other local writers and researchers (Brothers Kaudzite 1879; Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Country Traveler 2013).

Lake and environmental governance in Piebalga during the nineteenth century

The inhabitants of Piebalga have been engaged in lake and environmental management since the nineteenth century, when the landlords owned the land in the region. Farmers needed to be well-versed in forestry and hunting, as a peasant's life demanded such knowledge at the time. While feudal lords owned land, most of the work was done by the peasants, who were often given additional duties as, for example, forest rangers, hunting experts and others (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926). In the nineteenth century there was no understanding of environmental protection in that sense, as such functions were included in land management. However, there was an understanding that forests, lakes and rivers must be treated with caution and could not be polluted or overused because they would lose their productivity. People also knew that using poisons in fishing or hunting could also harm their users and could destroy fish and other animal populations. The term 'invasive species' was also known at the time, and attempts were made to limit their spread in the region (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926).

The lakes were managed by lake managers appointed by the nobility, responsible for the cleanliness of the lake shores, monitoring fish populations, and reporting algal blooms and other problems in the lakes under their control (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Country Traveler 2021). Lake managers also combatted illegal fishing. They were given the right to fish in the lakes all year round, both as a privilege and an obligation because it enabled them to check fish populations and species composition. Shore nets, poisoned traps and similar methods were banned by the nobles, but their use was difficult to restrict, as lake managers could not keep track of the entire lakeshore and identify who owned illegal gear. The use of poisoned traps was considered to be the cause of crayfish extinction in Lake Raunausis (Slaidins, et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926). The lake managers had to live near the lakes under their control, enabling the landlords to marry them to the women living in the area if they did not already live near the lakes (Slaidins et al. 2020: 9, 18; Kaudzite 1926). The position of steward could be hereditary, and they usually trained their sons in the responsibilities of the post, even if the position of steward

was not hereditary. The lake managers were chosen from those farmers who were more knowledgeable in lake matters, were skilled anglers and were well educated. This position required a good knowledge of mathematics languages and the ability to write regular reports for the landlords. In the nineteenth century, there was a primitive lake-monitoring system in which observations were made from lake surveys. The increased growth of aquatic plants, as well as blue-green algal blooms (which were noticeable), and their consequences were taken into account, but at the time the causes were not really known. Research on coastal areas was also carried out, as in the nineteenth century it was known that the pollution of lakes by agricultural wastewater was dangerous. Therefore it was not allowed to graze cattle near the lake shores, a rule that it was necessary to follow so that the lakes would not become polluted (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926).

During the nineteenth century, it was possible to rent lakes, but there were also various bans on fishing for certain fish or using specific fishing gear, depending on the season (Slaidins et al. 2020). In winter, for example, it was not allowed to fish using ordinary fishing poles or to catch pike and similar fish. The lakes could be rented only with the landlords' permission, and only to certain people: it was known who used poisoned fishing baits and who polluted the lakes, and such people were not allowed to rent the lakes, even if their alleged offences could not be properly proved (Slaidins et al. 2020).

The forests in the region were managed by forest rangers, who were appointed similarly to lake managers (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926). Forest rangers paid attention to the practice of local inhabitants felling trees without the permission of the landlords, as well as reporting storm damage. The forest rangers were also tasked with removing trees that obstructed roads, as well as combating poaching. There were several forest rangers in the county, each of whom knew was familiar with a particular area . They cooperated with the manor hunters in controlling wild animals (Kaudzite 1926; Slaidins, et al. 2020). The forest rangers also took part in searches if a local resident disappeared, as well as in making maps and planting trees. Already in the nineteenth century, tree plantations had been established on the lands of the landowners, and the forests were restored because wood was important for building and fuel (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Kalvite et al. 2017).

In the nineteenth century, agricultural land was managed by the farmers, who rented them from the landlords (Kaudzīte 1926). However, the manors

also had their land managers, who were responsible for the agricultural lands that were placed under the direct management of the manor. Care was taken to ensure that the fertility of the land was not compromised on the lands directly owned by the manors and that the farmers cultivating it left the land fallow and sowed clover regularly to restore soil fertility. Farmers acted similarly on their properties: they did the same in the same year of the year in the same field, as well as periodically sowing clover and peas to restore the amount of nitrogen in the soil (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Kalvite et al. 2017).

The land in the region in the nineteenth century was managed by local landlords, who were interested in ensuring that the land they owned earned them enough profits to maintain their manors and their way of life. Consequently, the farmers were subject to strict control, and the landlords could send them to live where they wanted if that meant that the farmer lived close to his job. However, the landlords had specific responsibilities to the farmers: they had to ensure that they had a livelihood and access to a doctor, and they were not to be separated from their families. Farms left without owners were given to landless farmers or those whose duties required them to live in those areas, as well as to assist in the event of an accident. The land parcels were carefully measured so that the land was distributed to the farmers as equally as possible, and to ensure that the existing land was sufficient for the needs of the manor and was large enough to maintain it (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Brothers Kaudzite 1879).

Foresters and hunting managers were responsible for keeping records of wild animals. However, this was usually done during or before the hunt to determine the number of animals. The populations of bears, wolves and lynxes were carefully monitored, as these animals posed a threat to livestock, as well as the local population (Kaudzite 1926; Slaidins et al. 2020). The landlords offered significant prizes for hunting them, including substantial cash prizes, and freed the hunters from working on the manor for up to a week (Slaidins, et al. 2020: 50-1). Black grouse, ducks and wild pigeons were hunted seasonally, and there were restrictions on their hunting, as it was forbidden to hunt these birds while they were hatching. There were no restrictions on fox-hunting, nor on hunting hares (Kaudzite 1926; Slaidins et al. 2020). Raccoons were considered an invasive species as early as the end of the nineteenth century (Slaidins, et al. 2020) and were regularly hunted because they threatened native animals and livestock. Badgers were also hunted, but in special hunting groups in the

presence of the landlord or his appointed manor employees (Slaidins, et al. 2020). Traps were rarely used, only specially trained hunting dogs (Slaidins et al. 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Brothers Kaudzite 1879).

Lake and environmental management in Vecpiebalga at the present time

Nowadays, lake management is entrusted to specialists selected by the municipalities, their work being done according to a certain methodology and following a special lake-management plan, the Vecpiebalga Municipality management regime for public lakes, and the municipal sustainable development plans, which also have sections regarding the management of lakes and other natural objects in the municipality. Lakes can still be rented, but this is usually done by NGOs, who then manage the lakes under Latvian civil law. The lakes can be rented out temporarily, but this can be done repeatedly. Today, special analyses and questionnaires are used for lake management, but for most municipalities, lake management is carried out by either their environmental or financial departments. For all municipalities in the Piebalga region, lake management is included in the responsibilities of the municipal financial divisions. Vecpiebalga has a public-lake management regime, as well as a monitoring program for Lake Alauksts (Lakes of Latvia 2015; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020) However, most lakes in both municipalities are not subject to these controls, either because they are private lakes or because they are too difficult to access due to a lack of roads (Lakes of Latvia 2015; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020).

Agricultural land management, support and advice is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Rural Support Service. Each municipality has agricultural experts, and farmers have access to a wide range of support on various issues. Farmers nowadays also need special education, but some knowledge is also acquired through self-study. Today, the Piebalga region is dominated by organic farming, as the climate and soil of most of the region are not suitable for intensive agriculture (Kaudzite 1926; Celotajs.lv 2012; Country Traveler 2013). Several farms are engaged in sheep-, deer- and berry-farming, which were not pursued in the region in the past (Ceļotājs.lv 2012; Slaidins et al. 2020; Country Traveler 2013; Kaudzite 1926).

The forest administration has changed relatively little, but now the forest guards work under the control of the Latvian State Forests management. Municipalities usually own only part of the forests in their territories. Forest

rangers are also responsible for the disposal of illegal waste sites, a problem in Latvia (Kalvite et al. 2017). In the nineteenth century, there were no such problems with dumping waste in forests: such actions were severely punished, as the forests belonged to the landlords. During the nineteenth century, there were fewer things that people could throw away: for example, glass bottles were valuable since glass was expensive, and they could be used again (Slaidins et al. 2020; Brothers Kaudzite 1879; Kaudzite 1926). Now, it is not uncommon for camping sites and areas near swimming sites to be littered (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Kalvite et al. 2017).

Hunting at the present time in Piebalga is pursued solely by hunting associations and strictly according to the national laws. Landowners have to make agreements with the hunting associations if they want to protect their properties from wildlife. Hunting is usually done on established sites, and the hunting associations also regularly maintain special feeding sites for deer, elk and other animals (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Kalvite et al. 2017).

Nowadays in Piebalga, like elsewhere in Latvia, there are strict laws related to land use: the afforestation of agricultural land is prohibited. Landowners must follow the counties' spatial plans (Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Kalvite et al. 2017, Latvian Civil Law). Land properties are inspected periodically, but land acquisition is much easier than it was in the nineteenth century. The redistribution of plots of land is still practiced, especially if the properties are very much divided and have been left without owners (Latvian Civil Law).

Culture in Piebalga region at the present

The inhabitants of the Piebalga region are highly active in cultural matters, – the inhabitants in both of Piebalgas municipalities are very active in cultural matters, with song and dance associations and culture clubs being very common in both Vecpiebalga and Jaunpiebalga municipalities, with cultural events and town fairs being a regular occurrence, regardless of everything else (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Kaudzite 1926). Schools in Vecpiebalga all are involved in cultural activities, as all of them have courses and interest groups in music and dancing. Vecpiebalga is also one of the few municipalities in the Cesis County that has to have a dedicated music school (Vecpiebalga.lv 2021). The inhabitants of the Piebalga region are also very industrious. Many inhabitants of them are actively trying to start businesses, to support their families and in order to maintain their properties. The recent

events regarding the COVID-19 pandemic have actually motivated people to take up handicrafts such as weaving, with while others people have started culinary companies and similar businesses. This has also been also a boon for farmers in the region, as they have found new buyers for their products. (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Celotajs.lv 2021; Country Traveler 2013). Piebalga inhabitants are also quite protective of the environment and scenery of the region, as they still consider the Piebalga scenery to be part of their cultural heritage, and take a more active in matters regarding the development of infrastructure near lakes, and involve in public discussions regarding municipal planning documents (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020). Furthermore, as a result of their ancestors journal writhing and the preservation of their folktales and stories, Piebalga residents are more protective of the environment than they were before, as a result of the opinion of that at the present, the scenery and environment of the region is worse than what is centuries ago (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Celotajs.lv 2021; Slaidins et al. 2020).

Piebalga inhabitants however no longer are influenced by the Hernhutian congregations – the congregations no longer truly exist, and their influence has largely faded from the region. Religion no longer plays the same role it once had in the community during the 19th century, but the local congregations continue to support the churches, and the churches often involve in local culture events (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Celotajs.lv 2021; Country Traveler 2013).

In comparison to the culture in the region centuries ago, there have been only slight changes. The importance of religion in people's lives has diminished, and the region has been influenced by the years of Soviet occupation, just as it has been influenced by immigration to it form cities. However, the inhabitants have managed to preserve their cultural identity, and have managed to cause a wider appreciation of the traditional Piebalga culture, as a result of frequent cultural events, interest groups and efforts of local residents (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Slaidins et al. 2020). The inhabitants have remained just as industrious and adaptive as they were long ago, and thanks to these qualities and their effort to preserve their identity and heritage, has enabled them to preserve their traditional culture far better than any other cultural

regions in Latvia had in comparison (Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021; Vepciebalga.lv 2020; Kaudzite 1926; Celotajs.lv 2021; Country Traveler 2013; Slaidins et al. 2020).

Conclusions

It can therefore be concluded that Piebalga's inhabitants have managed to preserve their unique culture and mentality, though religion, especially in the shape of the Hernhutian brotherhoods, has largely lost its influence in the region. The region's inhabitants, despite difficulties in doing so, have preserved much of its historical heritage, and while the Hernhutian brotherhoods no longer truly exist, and although religion has a much lower significance than during the nineteenth century, its historical influence has been somewhat preserved, as Piebalga's inhabitants are still very much the same industrious, spirited and creative people that they were centuries ago. The region has changed in many ways, including with regard to the size of the wilderness areas, but the soul of the region and its identity has survived.

Notes

[1]. Regarding culture and religion

Piebalga's regiona' culture has survived largely relatively intact over the years from the nineteenth century. However, most of the influences of the Hernhutian brotherhoods have faded, as the brotherhoods themselves have all but disappeared. Culture and religion continue to play an important role in both Vecpiebalga and Jaunpiebalga municipalities, with cultural and folklore interest groups being common, but the region has lost much of the influence of religion on its culture and on the lifestyle of its inhabitants. Moreover, Piebalga's inhabitants have managed to maintain most of their historical architecture, and the region has retained its distinctive culture, being the effective birthplace of Latvian literature (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Country Traveler 2013; IS Mantojums 2020)

[2]. Regarding lake governance

Lake governance methods have greatly improved, but their actual effectiveness has greatly declined, due to a lack of resources and manpower to conduct lake management. The older, simpler practices used during the nineteenth century were less accurate but much cheaper, did not need specialists, and had other benefits, such as providing a source of income and allowing the use of otherwise abandoned buildings near lakes. The municipalities of Piebalga should adopt a more modern version of these management practices and monitoring approaches in order to provide at least some management

and monitoring of the lakes in their area. None of the municipalities in Latvia have the resources to manage all the lakes under their jurisdiction, only a few lakes, and rural municipalities struggle even with managing just their largest lakes, those in Piebalga municipalities being no exception. Vecpiebalga in particular can only support management and monitoring for Lake Alauksts, while other lakes are under-supported (Lakes of Latvia 2015; Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Konkovs 2020; Konkovs and Ernsteins 2020).

[3]. Comparison of Piebalga between the nineteenth century and the present day

Taking into consideration the effectiveness of the methods used during the nineteenth century in governing natural objects, present-day municipal governments should attempt to apply a more modern version of them in managing various natural sites such as lakes. Culture has lost most of the influence of religion it once had, and the influence of the Hernhutian brotherhoods has almost completely vanished, as have the brotherhoods themselves. The Piebalga region also has preserved most of the old manors and their support structures, but it has significant issues in repairing and supporting the old manor complexes due to its limited resources (Vecpiebalga.lv 2020; Jaunpiebalga.lv 2021).

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WHO ARE OUR NATIONAL HEROES BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS?

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Abstract: The focus of this article is on monuments to national heroes built at the initiative of the Bulgarian nation state, political party or migrant community beyond the national borders. Three analytical perspectives are presented: geographical, cultural and social, given that monuments are both physical objects and represent non-physical relations. The place of a monument is essential in the interpretation of its function, reflecting intercommunity negotiations and the views of community elites regarding the place of the in the host society. Another basic issue is who Bulgarian national heroes are abroad, who has selected them, and what means and procedures brought them there. Our hypothesis connects the core of the national celebrations (both pantheon and calendar) within the national territory with its periphery in what is a dynamic system. These reflections are illustrated with three case studies: Botev's monument in Beijing, Vazov's bust in Moscow and Levski's memorial plate in Yeniköy (Romania). An inventory and a map of all the monuments dedicated to these three figures are attached.

Keywords: National pantheon, national heroes, monuments, migrant communities, national festivity

Introduction

Monuments erected by migrant communities abroad build their national ideology on the example of the nation state, but without its resources and in a multicultural society (Gergova and Gergova 2017: 2). In these conditions, they express the need for cultural dialogue, integration and the goal of preserving identity and national cultural heritage. Monuments erected by migrant communities provide intergenerational continuity and are vital 'social frameworks of memory' (Halbwachs 1992) through which heritage and cultural mechanisms for transmitting significant moments from the past are preserved (Voskresenski 2017: 305).

The Bulgarian Revival Pantheon, established by means of monuments within the national territory, is extremely rich. The Bulgarian Revival Period is fundamental to the national narrative, as it falls within the nineteenth century and reflects the struggles for the independence of both state and church and artistic development, mainly in respect of the national literature. It is therefore not surprising that the pantheon includes revolutionaries, priests, and poets. The Revival pantheon, separated in the 1920s and 1930s, dominates the Medieval pantheon, which, for example, includes saints Cyril and Methodius. It also dominates more recent history, especially since 1989, when many monuments were removed, and others were built or restored.

In our paper, we shall conduct a brief review of monuments and rituals which the Bulgarian state and Bulgarian communities abroad have constructed beyond the present nation state's territory. In order to draw reliable conclusions, we shall present several cases in detail through the prism of three main questions: what part of the Bulgarian national pantheon or the complex of heroes has been presented abroad and how; who initiates the building of monuments and who uses them; and what are the monuments' functions as symbols and/ or markers of Bulgarian identity. Our study's empirical basis is field research carried out with Bulgarian communities in Europe and the USA during the last seven years, as well as an online survey of different countries in South America and Asia.

Why map the monuments abroad?

In fact, this task involves three particular questions – why mapping? why monuments? and why abroad or in migration? In other words, what precisely will

mapping monuments beyond the national borders bring to the methodological and analytical perspective?

Mapping is a procedure in social geography that draws the links between social and spatial features (Vaughan 2018: x). These maps usually involve in-depth research, accumulated data and graphic representations as just one result among others. Monument mapping does not exist in people's individual or collective consciousness, being not something objective, but an analytical construct. Although it is based on physical objects, it presents non-physical relations. Mapping can outline several important discourses:

> *geographical: in which countries and towns have monuments to Bulgarian national heroes been built? This is essential in building the overall picture of contemporary Bulgarian migration and its geographical features, so elaborating the actual map is the key result, not its interpretations. Going further, this would be a map of a global nation – exactly of the nation in the classic meaning of this word (Smith 1995). Such a record transforms the amount of memorial representations into a living organism (Vaughan 2018) with its own dynamics and inner interactions.*

> *cultural: who are these heroes? While we do not intend to indulge in a competition, we argue that a quantitative analysis will develop the understanding of the national pantheon and open up new discussions or contribute to the already ongoing ones. We therefore address issues of the possible embodiment of the national idea in a single figure, the inner hierarchy of the pantheon within the nation-state and beyond its borders, ritual conservatism, etc.*

> *social: this dimension investigates Bulgarian migrant communities' social capital, their leaders' policies and views towards migrant organization, their calendars and activities in space, community activities, the links between them, and their place within the host society.*

Benedict Anderson's idea of extra-local memories and their function in the mobilisation of an 'imagined community' of nationhood (Anderson 2006) considers the spatial embodiment of national ideas with regard to monuments and memorials being realised extra-spatially. Regarding monuments, this does

not mean that space does not matter, but that the monument produces and identifies the place in which it is set, not vice versa. This is a perspective focusing on the instrumentalization of the monuments that treats them not just as a cultural phenomenon or a physical object of veneration or a shared group symbol (Halbwachs 1992). Here, monuments are considered to be rhetorical topoi (Boyer 1994), being outside their usual homely national space and having left the national narrative embodied in memorial sites and figures. Studying monuments constructed because of migration rather reflects vernacular and official models of declaring a presence within the public space and fitting the community national narrative in the host society's memorial landscape. Nuala Johnson insists that the spatiality of memory is not only mirrored in the physical distribution of commemorative sites but also in the interpretative apparatus embedded in them (2002: 295). It is thus interesting to uncover the ways in which a migrant community or nation state across national borders try to integrate their interpretative apparatus to that of the host or to challenge it.

The spatial features of a monument or a group of monuments constitute their meaning both as a physical location and a mode of interpretation (Johnson 1994, Johnson 1995). The exact place of a monument is essential in interpreting its function of reflecting intercommunity negotiations and community's elites' views on the place of the community within the host society – place as both physical and social, as well as performative cultural traditions.

In some cases, it is not the migrant community but the nation state that had built memorial spaces outside its territory. Such gestures open up further discussions contesting or acknowledging theories of nationalism. Regarding space, crossing national borders and exporting national narratives or grounding them outside the national territory highlight two main issues: the place and the figure. Within what significant space and which national hero or symbol has the nation state made efforts regarding place? In short, as national borders are essential for the nation state, crossing them and exporting nationhood and its attributes leads us to emphasize the issue of space.

Literature review

Studies of migrant monuments and memorial practices predominate in these gestures, dedicated to the nation state, to conquer territory beyond its borders, as well as building monuments and carrying out commemoration rituals. However, this direction develops particularly in the context of memory studies and

the notion of transnational memory (see a detailed palette of perception in De Cesari and Rigney 2013; Radstone 2011). One inspiring collection of a variety of articles has been edited by Sabine Marschall, who, in the Introduction, considers the potential of the study of migrants' monuments to involve the 'emergence of a new type of collective memory that is produced at the interface of two or more memorial cultures' (2020: 7). She goes even further, being concerned by processes of integrating migrant memories and 'accommodating their public representation in monuments, especially in places conventionally reserved for the commemoration of national memory' (ibid.: 11). Loretta Baldassar (2006) also reflects on the history-contesting potential of migrant monuments in her case studies of Italy and Australia. In her own study, Anne-Marie Fortier (2000) opened up an analytical perspective on performative culture and suggested that belonging (national or ethnic) and institutional identities could be performative besides being physically present. Surprisingly in the perspective of this topic, in-depth historical studies on São Paulo's and Buenos Aires' sculptural representations of Syrian mythologies have been published by Olivia Wolf (2017, 2020). All these studies bring out the issues of the messages and discussions that monuments and their lives produce, the connection between space and performance, individual and institutional stakeholders, and the national, international and transnational domains.

In the Bulgarian literature, few studies explore monuments constructed abroad by migrant communities or the Bulgarian state, although this activity has been flourishing in recent decades. Besides the current research presented here, not many scholars have studied the issue of migrants' monuments. Nikolay Vukov and Mariyanka Borisova observed and described the unveiling of Vasil Levski's monument in Chicago, choosing as its analytical key its role as a place and reason for the migrant community to gather together (2017: 26-7). In their paper on Bulgarian migrants in Spain, Vukov and Valentin Voskresenski consider monuments to be an aspect of the tangible cultural heritage that the community attempts to create in order to declare its presence in the physical space. Perhaps the only cross-border study of the practice of migrant communities in building monuments is that of V. Voskresenski, part of the collective monograph on cultural heritage in migration (Воскресенски 2017). His theoretical framework is based on the concept of collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), and he suggests a typology of memorial places and monuments built abroad by both the 'old' and 'new' migration. As part of other joint publications,

Svetlozar Eldarov and Rayko Nikolov contributed to the history of building the Sts Cyril and Methodius monument in Rome (Eldarov 2002, Nikolov 1998).

Regarding monuments built by the nation state beyond its national borders, a study particularly on this issue has been conducted by the current article's authors on Bulgarian monuments in Rome and Bucharest, taking into account their history, the rituals and audiences they serve, and their role within the host society (Gergova and Gergova 2017). In Rome's case, among other Bulgarian places in Italy, another in-depth article by Yana Gergova describes the interactions between migrant festivities and state initiatives (Гергова 2019). From the point of view of school life and festivities, the monument to Saints Cyril and Methodius in Thessaloniki has been discussed by Tanya Matanova (2017). Another case of narrow partnership between a local migrant community and state representatives is the 24th May celebrations in Mikulčice (see Borisova 2019). Several scholars have studied Bulgarian communities abroad and their festivities, but unfortunately in almost all these cases there are no monuments (see Янкова 2014).

Although many analyses have been accumulated in both Bulgarian and international scholarship, we will not deal here with the theme of soldiers and war monuments because it is not connected with exporting symbols and images but rather provides the historical basis of the collective memory. Focusing on this theme would move us away from the concepts of imagined communities and the mapping of symbolic sites because war memorials and graveyards, although often mythologised and overloaded with meanings and ideas, are literally connected with their locations.

The Bulgarian Revival Pantheon within and beyond Bulgaria

As in most nations born in the nineteenth century out of liberation and the wars that were defined as unifying or liberating in their respective historiographies (e.g. Hungary, Ukraine, Estonia, etc.), the heroic pantheon of the Bulgarian Revival, that inventory of heroes and narratives, refers precisely to the period of greatest political and artistic audacity. Though the Bulgarian state is also medieval, the community of great figures also includes Saints Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, and a great variety of rulers and scholars, most of them Orthodox saints. However, they are perceived from the distance of time, and their deeds are not considered remarkable feats. On the contrary, Revival personalities stand for bravery, sacrifice, and devotion to national lib-

erty. Scholarship of significance to the Revival period in the Bulgarian national narrative and its symbols have been dealt with by Roudometof 2002, Aretov 2006, Grigorov 2007, etc. Here we would like to add another perspective, that of attempts to export this narrative and its characters.

The leading figures in the Bulgarian Revival Pantheon could be identified as follows: Vasil Levski, the leader and inspirer of the armed struggle for freedom; Hristo Botev, the poet revolutionary who acquired the greatest importance during the socialist period because of his communist ideas; Ivan Vazov, commonly called the Patriarch of the Bulgarian literature; less often Paisiy Hilendarski, a monk and the author of the first Bulgarian history book; and Georgi Sava Rakovski, who established the first armed units of volunteers, etc. The first two, Vasil Levski and Hristo Botev, were friends and fellows in their lives, having spectacular biographies and coming to tragic ends. Levski was captured and hanged by the Ottoman authorities, while Botev died in battle during the April uprising of 1876. In many images and spaces, they are placed together visually, but in the construction and inclusion of their images as part of the national pantheon, there are differences that become particularly visible beyond the national borders (see further below). To outline general trends, we will limit the details and emphasize instead the monuments to Levski, Botev and Vazov. Whilst in Bulgaria monuments to them have been erected in every town and city , abroad things are different.

Figure 1. Map of Levski's, Botev's and Vazov's monuments built abroad. Yana Gergova, Lina Gergova, 2020

The blue points mark monuments to Levski, usually busts but also memorial plaques. These monuments are concentrated in countries near Bulgaria, mostly to the north-east. Some of them are located in not very accessible spaces on Bulgarian embassy premises (as in Washington) or in an embassy's reception area (as in Tokyo). We have not considered those that are not in public open spaces (see also Marschall 2020: 3). In red are the monuments to Botev, of which all but one are busts. They are also concentrated in nearby countries, probably because Botev and Levski are connected biographically with these territories, namely East Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine, where Bulgarians still live today. In green are the monuments to Vazov, two of which are still in progress. Their places are not connected with the subject's life: instead his figure represents Bulgaria symbolically, mainly its literary heritage.

There are also monuments to other Revival figures worldwide, mainly in other European countries, for example, to Georgi Sava Rakovski, Lyuben Karavelov, and Peter Beron. However, they are sporadic and deserve a separate in-depth study.

Choosing the names of Bulgarian migrant (also called Sunday) schools and associations is a linked issue that contributes to analysing the institutional representations of the Revival pantheon within the host society. School names are significantly more diverse and are often not of heroes or historical personalities but abstractions like Homeland (Sidney, Malaga, etc.), Patriotism (Rodolyubie, Toronto, Rabat, etc.), ABV (the first letters in the Cyrillic alphabet) or Alphabet (Azbuka) (Amsterdam, Helsinki, Dublin, Xanthi, etc.). Of about 200 Sunday schools all over the world, only five are named after Ivan Vazov, eight after Hristo Botev and sixteen after Vasil Levski. A fruitful comparison might be conducted of institutional figures and images in Bulgarian communities abroad in a separate study.

Initiatives

Tracing the history of each monument outlines some trends. In general, Vasil Levski's monuments resulted from an initiative exported from Bulgaria and realized after the late 1990s. The initiative extends to at least three continents, but mainly targets places connected with the hero's life. Old and new migrant communities prefer the image of Levski. The All-Bulgarian Vasil Levski Committee is very active, raising funds and erecting monuments not only abroad. Political parties and patriotic organizations also initiate the placing of memo-

rial plaques. The results of the initiative of the All-Bulgarian Committee 'Vasil Levski', the Vasil Levski Foundation, the Bulgarian Genealogical Society 'Rodoznanie' and the portal Kafene.bg under the title 'Let's count the monuments of Levski', launched on 3 March 2009, give a relatively clear picture regarding the number and location of Vasil Levski's monuments both in Bulgaria and abroad. The aim of the initiative was to gather information on places of monuments or bas-reliefs of Vasil Levski, and the results include a little over 140 monuments.

Many of the monuments abroad are copies of two of the most popular ones in Bulgaria: the bas-relief of the monument called Levski in downtown Sofia, which is among the oldest monuments in the country, and the bust in the Boris garden in Sofia, a model for a memorial place of the national pantheon as a whole. We believe that it is due to the model that these monuments abroad have been built: with donations, small amounts are collected, and it is cheaper to purchase a copy.

The monuments to Hristo Botev are diverse in terms of their imaginaries, and they refer to monumental international interactions. Some of Botev's monuments are part of complexes putting together poets and authors from various countries – such memorials are located in Beijing, Bucharest, Gols, etc. In these cases, Botev has been just one representing Bulgaria's literary heritage, sometimes even initiated by the host country. Elsewhere, as in Rome, Moscow and Zagreb, the figure of Ivan Vazov was preferred for this purpose. Botev's monuments also mark stages in his biography in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, or else his name was selected to unify the local migrant communities – as a name of an organization that was subsequently embodied in a monument. Despite this, in most cases Vazov is the state's choice. The three monuments are relatively new, having been erected in recent ten years. What they have in common is that they are placed in urban spaces dedicated to literature, and that Vazov has been chosen due to his image as the Patriarch of Bulgarian literature.

Here we would like to emphasize once again the fondness of the socialist regime for Hristo Botev, which has also been exported. Several monuments to the poet were erected during socialist times or somewhat afterwards, in Bucharest, Ismail, Zadunaevka, and Russia at the 66th km of the autobahn Kievskoe shosse, where we see his emblematic words: 'He who falls in freedom's fight, he does not die', supplementing the memorial to a Bulgarian who fought in the Red Army.

Place of the monument	Year of erection	Initiator; Author
Vasil Levski		
Argentina, Buenos Aires	before 2012	No information
Argentina, Las Breñas	before 2013	No information
Belgium, Brussels	2010	Representative of the Bulgarian embassy, Bulgarian school and local migrant com-mu-nity
Greece, Athens	2018	Bulgarian migrant community
Greece, Thessa-loniki	2004	All-Bulgarian Committee and Foundation 'Vasil Levski', Bulgarian students in Thes-saloniki
Canada, Bramton	2017	Donors coordinat-ed by the Bulgar-ian Church
Cyprus, Nicosia	2012	Donations, the Bulgarian embassy, All-Bulgarian Committee and Foundation 'Vasil Levski'

Cuba, Cienfuegos	1981	Bulgarian workers, built factory with the same name
North Macedonia, Skopje	No information	No information
Moldova, Chişinău	No information	'Vasil Levski' Foundation. Author: Prof. Velichko Minekov
Moldova, Parcani	2008	Erected on the occasion of 100 years of independence of Bulgaria
Moldova, Taraclia	2018	Alexander Borimechkov, public figure and associate of the city hall in Taraclia
Moldova, Tvardiţa	before 2018	No information
Romania, Bucharest	2001	All-Bulgarian Committee and Foundation 'Vasil Levski'
Romania, Yeniköy	2011	Political party Vazrazhdane, businessman Milen Vrabevski
USA, Washington	No information	No information
USA, Chicago	2015	'We, the Bulgarians around the world' Foundation

Serbia, Beograd	2007	National association 'Georgi Stoykov Ra-kovski' and All-Bulgarian committee 'Va-sil Levski'
Serbia, Bosilegrad	2005	Donation, incl. Municipality of Pernik
Serbia, Dimitro-vgrad	2014	The mayor of the town
France, Paris	2007	No information
Ukraine, Berdy-ansk	2007	Association of the Bulgarians in Ukraine, All-Bulgarian Committee and Foundation 'Vasil Levski'
Japan, Tokyo	2012	41st National Assembly and 'Vasil Levski' Foundation on the occasion of 175 years since the birth of the Apostle. At the Bulgarian embassy.
Hristo Botev		
Austria, Gols	1999	Austrian Professor Nick Titz; Author: Kunyo Zhelev

Argentina, Chaco, Roque Sáenz Peña	End of the 1990s	Civil Association 'Bulgarians in Ar-genti-na', Bulgarian Association 'Hristo Botev' from Roque Sáenz Peña
China, Beijing	2006	On the occasion of the celebration of the 60th anniver-sary of the begin-ning of dip-lomatic relations between China and Bul-garia. Author: Prof. Yuan Xikun
Romania, Brăila	No information	No information
Romania, Bucha-rest	No information	No information
Russia, Kiev road	1985 (?)	No information
Ukraine, Artsyz	2010	Community
Ukraine, Botievo	2005	No information
Ukraine, Saduna-jiwka	1991	Author: Georgi Ne-dyalkov. There is a memorial plaque on the house where Botev has lived. A memorial museum was opened in 2008 (branch of the Odessa Lit-erature Museum)

Ukraine, Izmail	1978	In reference to the 100th anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria and 30th anni-versary of the signing of the Friendship, coop-eration and mutual aid between USSR and Bulgaria. Author: Mihail Ne-dopak
Ukraine, Odessa	2009	All-Ukrainian public organiza-tion 'Con-gress of the Bulgarians in Ukraine'
Ivan Vazov		
Italy, Rome	2010	The Ministry of Culture of Bul-garia (Min-ister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov); donat-ed funds from Bozhidar Petraki-ev; Au-thor: Prof. Velichko Minekov

Russia, Moscow	2011	The Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria (Min-ister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov); Author: Levon Baltayan
Croatia, Zagreb	2018	Bulgarian embassy, an idea inspired by Vazov's long-standing friendship with Croatian novelist and translator Dr Fran Gundrum-Oriovac
Argentina, Las Breñas / Berisso	? (project stage)	Due Part of twin-town relationship be-tween Las Breñas (Argentina) and Botev's home-town Sopot (Bulgaria)
Moldova, Colib-abovca	2007	No information

Figure 2. Inventory of all Levski's, Botev's and Vazov's monuments abroad. Yana Gergova, Lina Gergova, 2020.

Practices

Of course, as well as in the country, monuments create ritual space, which is being realized at particular calendrical moments. In the nation state, the monuments to these three Revival figures are being visited and become festive centres on the dates of their birth and death. However, Ivan Vazov is not celebrated solemnly, and his biographical moments are not part of the national calendar. Abroad, these monuments are often central to the festive calendar of the migrant community in general, and they concentrate the attention of the local society on the presence of Bulgaria as a state. For instance, the monument to Levski in Athens and those to Vazov in Zagreb were erected just two years ago but have already accrued various commemorative practices and are involved in the festive and cultural calendar of the local migrant community. One such example is the celebration of the Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and the Slavic Script at the monument in the Croatian capital, which involves the laying of wreaths and flowers, greetings, and a concert with the participation of students from the Bulgarian Sunday School 'Ivan Vazov'.

Case studies

We chose to give three separate examples to illustrate the uses of monuments abroad and their role for the local community. The three monuments represent each of the three Bulgarian Revivalists. They are situated in different countries, each with certain specifics in terms of historical connections with the depicted person initiating the erection of the monument, providing symbolic capital for Bulgarian migrants and Bulgarian tourists.

Case 1: The monument to Hristo Botev in Beijing, China

The bust of this Bulgarian revolutionary in Beijing was unveiled at a solemn ceremony in November 2006 to mark the 60th anniversary of the beginning of diplomatic relations between China and Bulgaria, in Chaoyang Park on the Alley of Greats, along with 12 other sculptures (e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, Karl Marx, Ignacy Jan Pedrevski, etc.). In 2009, on the eve of 2 June, Botev Day and for Those Who Died for Bulgaria's Freedom and Independence, a copy of the bust was donated by the Chinese delegation to the home town of the revolutionary poet Kalofer. It is placed in front of the town hall in the central part

of the city. The author of both sculptures was the Chinese sculptor Prof. Yuan Xinkun, who in 2019 was nominated for the honorary badge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Golden Laurel Branch for his contribution to improving Bulgarian-Chinese relations. It is interesting that the monument depicts Botev at a more mature age, which, due to his tragic death at the age of 28, he did not live to see. It is believed that, through deliberate ageing, the author wanted to present the hero's genius, which, according to Chinese philosophy, is inherent only in an elderly man, not a 28-year-old young man.

For almost 15 years, the area around the monument has been the principal place where festive celebrations related to 24 May (Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavic Script) and 2 June (Botev Day and to Those Who Died for the Freedom and Independence of Bulgaria) are held. Celebrations usually include official speeches, flowers and wreaths laid by guests, as well as concert performances and recitals performed by students from the local Bulgarian Sunday school 'Sts Cyril and Methodius'. All official delegations present flowers and wreaths in front of the monument during their visits to the Chinese capital.

Unlike most celebrations at other Bulgarian monuments abroad, this is marked by the participation not only of representatives of the Bulgarian migrant community and officials in Beijing, but also of Chinese institutions. For example, at each event, the students of Bulgarian studies at the Beijing University of Foreign Languages and Tianjin University of Foreign Languages are among the main participants and prepare a program of songs and poems about Botev and Bulgaria.

Case 2: The monument to Ivan Vazov in Moscow, Russia

The monument to this Bulgarian writer in Moscow was unveiled on 3 June 2011, in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, Nikolay Mladenov, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Andrei Busigin, writers, intellectuals and many citizens. The monument was created by the Armenian sculptor Levon Baltayan. It is located in the atrium of the Library of Foreign Literature among the busts of world-famous people such as Dmitry Likhachev, Charles Dickens, Abraham Lincoln, Simón Bolívar, Sándor Petőfi and others. The activity of the Bulgarian Cultural Institute in Moscow, which has been housed in the library building since 2012, is also connected with its installation. At its initiative, the monument was included in the cultural

calendar of the community (both migrant and local) mostly through ceremonial events with visits by Bulgarian artists, screenings of documentaries, the opening of exhibitions and literary readings. Previously, every year on Enlightenment Leaders Day on 1 November, Bulgarian diaspora representatives, including students from the Bulgarian Sunday school, students and teachers at Moscow universities, and associates of various Bulgarian missions in the city, gather to worship the monument and lay flowers. A festive literature programme, which includes readings of his works, exhibitions of publications, stories about Vazov's life and his relationship with Russia, etc., also celebrate the writer's anniversary. One of the most exciting events, organized for the 169th anniversary, is a walk through places linked to Bulgarian history and culture in the Russian capital, and its starting point was the very monument of Ivan Vazov.

A year before the monument to the writer was erected in the Russian capital, another was unveiled in Rome, on Piazza Thorvaldsen, near Borghese Park, at the initiative of the then-Minister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov, in the presence of the Bulgarian and Italian prime ministers, Boyko Borissov and Silvio Berlusconi. Although for the short time of its existence the monument has become a landmark for Bulgarians – both for the local migrant community (who initiate various celebrations and events in front of it) and for tourists – many Bulgarian visitors to the city come to take pictures. Gradually, the monument became an important site within the celebrations and was on the route of the government delegation on 24 May, the Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and the Slavic Script. It is often preceded by the Enlightenment Leaders Day – 1 November (Gergova <aand Gergova 2017: 12-13). The picture is similar to the latest monument of Ivan Vazov, that in Zagreb, which has already acquired a symbolic appearance as the 'Bulgarian place' in the city, around which festive programs of celebrations and the pilgrimages of official delegations develop.

Going back to the Moscow case, it is striking that, unlike in Rome and Zagreb, the Bulgarian diaspora consider the monument less central as a place of commemoration, the events held there being connected rather with the Bulgarian Cultural Institute's activities. This may be because the monument is located in the closed space of the library yard, making it a 'possession' of the institute. Vazov's monument also has to compete with other monuments related to Bulgarian history that traditionally host anniversaries and public events.

Case 3: Vasil Levski's monument in Yeniköy (Mihail Kogălniceanu), Romania

The idea of building such a monument was born in 2007 within the environment of the nationalist TV channel SKAT and party VMRO. The initiator was the historian and at that time vice-president of the party, Kostadin Kostadinov, who comes from Dobrudzha and is interested in the topic of Northern Dobrudzha (today in Romania) as both a historian and a politician. During the filming making of his film about Bulgarians in Northern Dobrudja, a 'Forgotten Land', he discovered that the old Bulgarian school building was still preserved in the village of Yeniköy.

In 2010, VMRO activists from Varna and Dobrich and scholars from Dobrich Regional History Museum carried out a research expedition in Northern Dobrudzha. They started an initiative to create a monument to Vasil Levski. Vasil Levski was a teacher at the Bulgarian school in the village of Mihail Kogălniceanu, formerly Yeniköy, in 1866-1867,. After a campaign consisting of raising funds and negotiating with the local authorities in Tulcea and Mihail Kogălniceanu, the memorial plate was unveiled on 6 July 2011. The date was not chosen by chance, but is Levski's old-style birth date. The plate was funded by Milen Vrabevski, who is famous for his projects building and restoring monuments and organising patriotic gatherings for Bulgarians from Bessarabia. The plate was placed on the former school wall, now a clinic. The unveiling event was attended by many guests from Varna and Dobrich, mainly activists in VMRO. A local Bulgarian folk group took part, and a priest consecrated the memorial plate.

Every year, on the date of the hero's birth, even in 2020 when pandemic measures restricted border crossings, modest memorial ceremonies take place. They are usually organised by VMRO or Kostadinov's new party, Vazrazhdane ('Revival'). Ordinary tourists also visit the monument on their way to other places in Romania, place flowers there or just take a photo at the plate. The plate is an essential stop in trips under the title 'In Levski's footsteps' taken in Romania. According to the memorial sign's ideologists, it is loaded with the function 'to remind the locals and all Bulgarians of the most beloved son of our nation' (TV Skat, 08.07.2011). However, it is also considered a step in recovering the memory of Bulgarian historian personalities who are connected with Dobrudzha, such as Khan Asparuh, Dobrotitsa, Stefan Karadzha and Pop Hariton.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the article, we set out three main analytical purposes in mapping Bulgarian migrants' monuments worldwide: geographical, cultural, and social. They cannot be separated, given that all the meanings and functions of the monuments are intertwined, so our conclusions consider all of them together. In migration settings, we can speak about the concentration of national pantheons in one or two figures. Since this cannot be fully recreated, only the most significant ones are chosen, but we see that the top of the pyramid is reserved again for Levski, Botev and Vazov, who stand on it in descending order. Considering the cultural gestures and social practices of the first-generation migrants, it is not surprising to see them copy or bring with them the nationalist matrixes of the pantheon, such as festivity, education, etc. However, here we have also mentioned monuments in South America built by the heirs of migrants from the early twentieth century. So here, we have two possibilities that are not mutually exclusive: first, the matrixes have not changed much in the last century; and second, communication with the homeland ensures that the nationalist reflexes are updated.

The three figures become symbols – each of them individually in the particular space – of the whole nation and the context of the national festivity. While in Bulgaria each of them has its own separate time in the calendar, in migration, many feasts from the national calendar are celebrated at the only monument, especially the national holiday on 3 March. Personal 'specialisation' and biography cease to matter, and one figure concentrates the whole palette of national heroes. Nevertheless, monuments that have a biographical connection with their region are considered proof of this connection. The right to build a monument is evidence of the host society's willingness to accept 'our' narrative or to confirm 'our' significance through national heroes. Such monuments usually create pilgrimage routes, while others are essential mainly for local migrant communities and diplomatic initiatives.

In terms of space, migrants' national monuments are connected with the homeland and the national narrative, mythology and pantheon, as well as the constellation of 'other' figures in the host public space. A monument is a result of the negotiation of ideas, but mainly the migrants' right to inhabit or visit the host society and to contribute to it through their national culture.

Lina Gergova, Yana Gergova

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] See: az-jenata.bg/a/8-svobodno-vreme/8051-pomognete-na-initsiativata-da-prebroim-pametnitsite-na-levski/; vesti.bg/bulgaria/obshtestvo/kolko-sa-pametnicite-na-vasil-levski-2303211.

[2] The monument is located in the middle of a busy intersection in Sofia city centre, near where Vasil Levski was executed in February 1873. The project for building a monument started in 1878, and the official opening was in 1895, which made it one of the first monuments in the newly liberated Principality of Bulgaria. Its authors were Antonín Kolář (architect), Rudolf Weyr and František Novák (sculptors) and Abramo Peruchelli (stonecutter).

[3] The bust monument was unveiled in 1992 and it is the first to be erected in the Boris garden (on the Alley of Notable Bulgarians) after the political changes of 1989. In its place already was a monument to Georgi Atanasov, which has been removed. Its authors were Vladimir Ginovski (sculptor) and Ivan Bitrakov (architect). See: registersofia.bg/index.php?view=monument&option=com_monuments&formdata[id]=1127&Itemid=140.

[4] The monument is located on the facade of the Bulgarian Theoretical Lyceum 'Vasil Levski' in Chisinau.

[5] Source: glaspress.rs/паметна-плоча-за-васил-левски-бе-откри/; novini.bg/sviat/balkani/469321.

[6] Prof. Titz was awarded the Order of 'Sts Cyril and Methodius' by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria in 2009 on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Austria for his great work in promoting Bulgarian culture and art in the Republic of Austria.

[7] Source: news.bg/world/borisov-otkri-pametnik-na-ivan-vazov-v-zagreb.html; trud.bg/вижте-паметника-на-иван-вазов-в-загреб/; mfa.bg/embassies/croatia/news/18463.

[8] In 2013, a delegation from Sopot led by the mayor Veselin Lichev visited Las Brenyas, where he signed a agreement to establish economic and cultural exchange between the two cities at a solemn ceremony on Bulgaria Square. The document is the first of its kind in the history of Bulgarian-Argentine relations and confirms the framework of cooperation between the two countries at the regional level. The first initiative for cultural exchange between the two cities is planned to be an exchange of monuments of famous artists from Bulgaria and Argentina. For Bulgaria this is Ivan Vazov, to be erected in Beriso, and for Argentina – the poet with Bulgarian roots, Mario Nestorov. For more, see: dnes.bg/obshtestvo/2013/11/30/sled-botev-i-levski-i-vazov-s-pametnik-v-arjentina.207902; mfa.bg/embassies/argentina/news/6005. To date there is no information about the future the two monuments.

[9] See the celebrations in 2019 and 2020 – mfa.bg/embassies/croatia/news/25462; mfa.bg/embassies/croatia/news/21970; facebook.com/watch/?v=341333256839200, as well as the commemoration by a government delegation led by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria in front of the monument in June 2018 – mfa.bg/embassies/croatia/news/18539.

[10] More about the ceremony see: http://bulgarian.cri.cn/61/2006/11/21/1@45966.htm.

[11] The sculpture in Kalofer was stolen in November 2010 but found and returned to its place the next year. See: frognews.bg/kultura/cherno-bqlo/plastmasov-botev-made-china-striaska-kalofer.html.

[12] For example see: bulgarian.cri.cn/1081/2013/12/15/1s129115.htm; https://m.president.bg/bg/news/rosen-plevneliev-v-pekin-balgariya-e-malka-ikonomika-no-edin-ot-golemite-priyateli-na-kitay-v-es.

[13] See more: struma.com/obshtestvo/kitaiski-studenti-na-blagoevgradski-prepodavatel-pyaha-na-bulgarski-ezik-pred_150166/; mfa.bg/embassies/china/news/18521; mfa.bg/embassies/china/news/22057; http://china.edax.org/?p=3916.

[14] See: http://book-kiosk.ru/publication.php?id=3211; http://bgdiaspora.h3b.ru/1126.

[15] For example, see the celebration program in 2013: bci-russia.ru/afisha/болгарские-традиции-и-будители/?lang=RU; a review of the celebration in 2014: bci-russia.ru/news/в-честь-дня-народных-будителей/?lang=RU, and an invitation for the event in 2016: https://www.facebook.com/moskva.bulgarite/posts/1862423057324262.

[16] For example, see: bci-russia.ru/afisha/вечер-памяти-ивана-вазова-пройдет-в-бки/?lang=RU.

[17] The event starts with a reading of the writer's poems in Bulgarian and their translated versions in Russian, and continues with a visit to the monument of Sts Cyril and Methodius and the Russian grenadiers who fell in the battle of Pleven during the Russo-Turkish war 1877-1878. See: bci-russia.ru/afisha/190719/?lang=bg.

[18] See, for example, a celebration of 24 May at the Sts Cyril and Methodius' monument (mfa.bg/embassies/russia/news/21978); a celebration of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria on 3 March in front of the monument to the grenadiers who fell in the battle of Pleven (mfa.bg/embassies/russia/news/20721) and the annual commemoration of the anniversary of the capitulation of Pleven in the Russo-Turkish Liberation War of 1877-1878 in front of the same monument (mfa.bg/embassies/russia/news/16393).

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THE BALKAN CONCEPT OF THE PHENOMENON OF ODESSA CULTURE

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Abstract. This article explores manifestations of the Balkan concept as a component of the phenomenon of 'Odessa culture'. The research aims to reveal the concept's specific components, how they were formed in Odessa's sociocultural environment and how they are manifested today. These tasks are solved by means of retrospective analysis, one of the key methods of Historical Urban Studies. This form of analysis enables investigation of the issues of city development and functioning in a comprehensive fashion and implies an interdisciplinary approach. The process of populating Odessa and its ethnic composition shaped the 'Odessa culture' phenomenon. Its unique nature involves a harmonious blend of various social, ethnic and religious layers. Since Odessa was established as a city, the Balkan peoples have become an integral part of this process. The Balkan component is now cemented in the city's culture and is strongly reflected in its toponymy and social and cultural practices. The public activities of individuals and cultural communities contribute to the positive image of Balkan ethnicities. For example, the Balkan culinary tradition is an integral component of Odessans' everyday culture. All the investigated aspects (demographic, toponymic, personal, sociocultural, culinary) enable the process whereby the Balkan concept synthesizes with the 'Odessa culture' phenomenon to be revealed. Odessa culture today is unimaginable without its Balkan component.

Keywords: Balkan peoples, component, concept, Odessa, Odessa culture, phenomenon.

Introduction

Today, the notion of the 'city' is used with a far wider meaning than simply referring to a certain locality: it is also multi-layered. It implies a unique collection of listed heritage buildings, a place where urban culture is being shaped, a power centre whose power extends to neighbouring territories, a centre of economic ties and a special sociocultural environment. Urban Studies have long been an interdisciplinary field of research, encompassing both the integrated discipline itself and the complex of various theoretical approaches and disciplinary traditions. The city has been studied by historians, sociologists, architects, geographers, ethnologists and social anthropologists. Here it is given a special place occupied by the research category of 'the city's image', which comprises several parameters, from the vital service systems or socio-economic activity to spiritual life, including various forms of leisure, and cultural and religious zones. This category is often exploited by the humanities, as it covers the complex of typical forms of the lives of the individual, social groups and society as a whole in association with living conditions.

Accordingly, the focus on certain types of sources and investigatory objectives may determine different images of the city: demographic (ways of forming populations and the dynamics of their composition); architectural and/or toponymic (constructions, buildings, streets); ethnic (ethnic groups, manifestations of ethnic components in various walks of urban life); poetic (fiction, including poetry and prose fiction); personal or biographical (biographies of outstanding personalities, visitors to and natives of the city); sociocultural (the sociocultural practices of city-dwellers); and virtual (Internet forums, blogs and social media communities that represent local identity). We place the emphasis only on such city image's aspects as the demographic, toponymic, personal, and sociocultural.

It is worth mentioning that although every city has its history, not every city has been lucky enough to create a unique culture that distinguishes it from other cities. The specific nature of Odessa (Ukraine) implies not only the history of its populating, forming, development, everyday life and holidays, but also the ethnic dimension of these processes.

The object of the research in the paper is the City of Odessa. The subject is manifestations of the Balkan concept as a component of the phenomenon that is 'Odessa culture'. I aim to track down the ways in which the Balkan components in the sociocultural environment of the city of Odessa are formed and how they manifest themselves now. The research tasks target individual components of

the Balkan concept that was historically formed and that became an integral part of both Odessa as a whole and 'Odessa culture' in particular.

In the investigation of certain ethnic components of a specific urban culture, it seems appropriate to use the term 'concept'. I believe that this term captures both the aim and the tasks of the present research most accurately. Despite the category of a concept having been exploited in science since the Middle Ages, it was the late twentieth century that witnessed its apparent actualization. Initially, linguistics boosted the spreading of this category, though it is impossible to limit its applicability to one area alone. In various areas of humanitarian studies, concepts acquire various meanings and interpretations. Contemporary researchers tend to believe that 'concept' is close to people's mental worlds, and hence to culture and history, and that this is where its distinctive nature comes from. The most significant feature of a concept is the multidimensional and discreet cohesion of its meaning, which exists, however, in a continuous cultural and historical space. Therefore, 'concept' tends to cultural transmission from one subject category to another, which entitles it to be called the major means of cultural transmission (Ibragimova 2010: 29).

The research tasks set out above will be solved by means of retrospective analysis, which is seen as one of the key methods in Historical Urban Studies. It enables us to explore comprehensively the development and functioning of cities and involves an interdisciplinary approach.

The phenomenon of Odessa and the diversity of its residents has been drawing the attention of historians, local history experts and ethnographers for several centuries now. This interest has contributed to the considerable research heritage on different aspects of city studies. It includes not $investigations into specific ritual practices and the everyday life of city's residents.

Contemporary domestic and overseas historiography has a well-substantiated premise about the polyethnic and multicultural nature of the city of Odessa (Gerligi 1999; Stanko 2002; Richardson 2008; Prigarin 2017). These investigations, which prove Odessa's polyethnic nature (Belousova and Volkova, 2002; Kalmakan 2002; Belousova and Berezin 2014), play a significant role here. Local history experts place the spotlight not only the city's ethnic component, but also on the everyday cultural life of Odessans (Gubar 2010a; Gubar 2010b; Dontsova 2016).

However, historiography provides only a fragmented presentation of the history of individual Balkan ethnicities in Odessa (Kisse 2006; Berber 2019). Therefore,

this article will be largely focused on the Balkan concept as a whole, its place in the city's evolution and how it has shaped the phenomenon of Odessa culture, revealed through the lens of the concept's specific components.

The components of the Balkan concept

Historically, modalities of settlement and ethnic composition of Odessa have become the basis for shaping the so-called 'Odessa' phenomenon. Its distinguishing and unique nature is provided by the seamless integration of many components that at first sight might seem barely compatible: various social, ethnic and religious layers. What also matters in forming a unique image of Odessa is, among others and equally importantly, the Balkan concept. Its manifestations are often subtle and not particularly visual in revealing their deep historical roots.

Furthermore, I shall outline the key components of the Balkan concepts that were formed historically and have become an integral part of Odessa's image as a whole, and 'Odessa culture' in particular.

The first component is demographic.

This is determined by the historical events and processes of the city's settlement.

Southern Palmyra, Black Sea Babylon, Small Paris, the Capital of the South – Odessa was assigned many epithets. And with reason. The city had barely started when the visitors watching the first port piles being driven down predicted a prominent future for the place.

A. Pushkin portrays Odessa in the most informative, yet laconic way (quite apart from the poetic beauty of the piece). His 'Odessa's portrait' provides a much better understanding of the vibes, spirit and mystery of the city than any voluminous historical treatise:

'...The tongue of golden Italy
resounds along the gay street where
walks the proud Slav,
Frenchman, Spaniard, Armenian,
and Greek, and the heavy Moldavian,
and the son of Egyptian soil,
the retired Corsair, Moralí...' (translated by V. Nabokov)

Following Pushkin, many renowned writers, artists, musicians, actors, scientists and public figures became 'portrayers' of Odessa (V chem zhe fenomen Odessy?).

The American researcher Patricia Gerligi, analysing the demographic development of Odessa in the nineteenth century, emphasized the key role of newcomers as a factor in the city's population (Gerligi 1999: 226-33).

The rise of Odessa made it appealing for numerous migrants. In many Russian provinces, there were rumours about the city that was seeking a workforce and offered tempting opportunities for the pursuit of trade and crafts. The Ukrainian historian O.P. Ogloblin pointed out that within the Porto Franco, wages in Odessa were higher than in England or in any other country (Ogloblin 1928: 42).

In the early nineteenth century, expatriate migrants from overseas played a significant role in the economy, culture and other areas of Odessa's urban life. Many foreigners arrived in the city from lands controlled by Turkey, where they had suffered various forms of repression. Among those who resettled from this country and the territories it had invaded and occupied were Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs.

These Balkan migrants were among the first residents of this glorious Black Sea city, supporting the idea that the first Balkan component of the image and culture of the city is, of course, a demographic one.

Greeks. When speaking about Greeks, it is important to mention that it was not only the urban colonies they founded in the northern Black Sea region that made such a great contribution to the cultural development of the region. Much later, when Odessa has been founded and developed further, the Greeks were fully engaged in this process too. By investing money in construction and even managing the city successfully, they made a considerable contribution to Odessa's development.

Once the Russian army had seized the Turkish fortress of Khadzhybey and Odessa has been founded (the city was named after the ancient town of Odessos, a colony of Miletus), the Greeks went there to settle. The very first residents to create a Greek community in the city were the Ragtopolou, Gorgoli, Stamati, Lambrou, Maurokardatou, Skarlatou, Chrithomali, Linardatou and other families, a total of twenty families. In 1795, Odessa hosted 223 Greek nationals, in 1796 three thousand and in 1910 ten thousand, out of Odessa's

then total population of 550,000). The Greek language was spoken by 5013 people (Nun`yes 2007: 64).

The Greeks were among the largest merchants to play a major role in Odessa's foreign trade. They launched banking and small trading enterprises in the area, owned industrial enterprises, with small-scale production and crafts, as well as hotels and restaurants. They had a reputation as savvy bakers. Many of them are commemorated in the history of Odessa, such as D. Paleolog, P. Rodokanaki, G. Marazlis and M. Krion (Stanko 2002: 104).

The representatives of Odessa's Greek community were major contributors to the struggle for the national liberation of the Greek people from Ottoman rule. Here, on this coast of the Black Sea, was born the patriotic force that went on to deliver independence for Greece. And in this struggle, the Greeks fought shoulder to shoulder together with their co-religionists – Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Ukrainian (Black Sea) Cossacks. They laid down their lives for liberating the Balkan peoples.

The Greek diaspora in Odessa thus made a major contribution to the establishment and development of Odessa as a port city. Moreover, Greeks occupied a prominent place in Russia's trading relations with many countries around the world. The activities of the famous Greek merchants drove the international trading network, with Odessa becoming the maritime gates to the south of the Russian Empire.

Bulgarians. After the fall of the Izmail Fortress in December 1790, some Bulgarians, having resided in Izmail, moved to the outskirts of Khadzhybey. This was the first step toward a Bulgarian presence in the city of Odessa.

The first-ever census in Odessa was held on 25 July 1795. It recorded the fact that, at that moment, sixty Bulgarian nationals – 33 males and 27 females – had settled on the land of General De Vitte. Two years later, a report by the Novorossian Governor-General mentions that the Bulgarians had come there after the seizure of the Izmail Fortress and are very poor. They are therefore pleading for permission to settle there permanently as registered residents of Odessa.

According to Odessa's general layout at that time, within the city borders was a settlement called Bulgarka, populated by those 33 men and 37 women. In her book Moldovanka, Tetiana Dontsova states: 'Despite the stereotype, it must be admitted that the Moldovans were not the pioneers who settled in the Vodyana Balka. The role of the local first settlers rightfully belongs to the Bulgarians who founded Mala Bulgarka. The left bank of the Vodyana Balka

had become the cradle of Odessa Bulgarians long before the right bank had a Moldovan settlement' (Dontsova 2016: 24). This is a reference to those sixty Bulgarian nationals who had left Izmail and become the founders of the Bulgarka area that lasted for as long as a hundred years, from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century.

In the early nineteenth century, the Bulgarka area welcomed new Bulgarian families from the neighbouring Kubanks, Velykyi and Malyi Buyalyk – the Hospodynovs, Dobrevs, Ivanovs, Serbinovs, Mikulovs and Bulgarovs.

In the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, Odessa attracted many Bulgarian-born merchants of the third guild. In 1800, the Odessa Magistrates's newsletter contained records of the merchants of the third guild Ivan Vrazov, Ivan Ivani, Ivan Anturov and Kosta sin Dimo. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Odessa became the home of future philanthropists and prominent figures of the Bulgarian Renaissance, Mykhola Spyrydonov Palauzov and Vasil Yevstafiev Aprilov.

In the 1860s, Mykola Myronovych Toshkov, Vasyl Rasheyev and Mykola Krystoforovych Palauzov owned almost an entire block of what is now downtown Odessa, bounded by what are now Dvorianska, Nizhynska, Leo Tolstoy and Novoselskoho streets. This block used to be called 'the Bulgarian block'.

In Odessa, Bulgarians were merchants of different sizes, civil servants in various departments, craftspeople and ordinary workmen. There were some highly extended families, as well as others that were elementary families. The parish registrars of the Greek Church of Saint Trinity, the parish serving the Bulgarians, have records that shed the light on some aspects of the everyday lives of the ordinary people. For instance, there is a record of Mykola, the illegitimate son of the Odessa craftswoman Kateryna Vasylivna Bolharova. There are many records about the holders of the Bulgarian surname Somliev, who often served as bridesmaids or best men at the weddings or as the godparents of new-born Bulgarians in Odessa.

Albanians. The path that brought Albanians to Ukraine was long and full of obstacles. The first Albanian settlers appear in Ukraine in the second half of the eighteenth century, when in 1778 the Greek army, created by S. Mavromichalis and comprising, among others, Albanians, was posted to the Crimea. Escaping from Ottoman oppression, many migrants from the Balkan peninsula, including Albanians, would settle in the Russian Empire. During the first years after Odessa's foundation, Albanians came here from the Crimea

and Bulgaria. The archival records mention 'Commissions for the settlement of Greeks and Albanians' (Nun`yes 2007: 22). In the reign of Catherine II, the city built houses for the Albanians, who were locally referred to as Arnauts. The first houses were constructed in the so-called 'Arnaut Sloboda'. In 1818, the Albanians gained the status of colonists. They had a compact settlement in what are now Velyka Arnautska and Mala Arnautska streets. The temper of the settlers and their guests (the Albanians used to exploit their houses as inns) were often mentioned on the crime news (Kesmendzhi).

The term 'Arnaut' requires a more detailed explanation. In the Ottoman Empire, it used to be the nickname for any Christian who had served in the Turkish army. One explanation argues that the Ottomans used the word 'Arnaut' to refer to members of the 'Greek army', who were accurate marksmen and strong warriors. As a rule, these were actually Albanians (Zhecheva et al. 2014: 172). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the name 'Arnaut' was reserved for Orthodox Greeks and other Balkan nationals who fled from the Ottoman Empire to the lands that had been recovered by the Russian Empire during the Russian-Ottoman wars in the second part of the eighteenth century (Kesmendzhi).

Serbs. After Turks occupied the Balkans in the seventeenth century, the Serbs were among those Christian refugees who fled to Ukraine. Initially, there were just a handful of such individuals. The first Serbian settlements in the Odessa region emerged after the defeat of the Serbian rebels against the Turks. This was the city to which the Serbian escapees from Montenegro would come to. In 1805, 22 families (a hundred people) from the Montenegrin village of Trebesa, which had been destroyed by the Turks, founded Serbka, while twelve families (ninety people) from the village of Humatsa became the founders of Chornogorka (Nun`yes 2007: 132).

Odessa became a home for Serbian merchants, scientists and cultural figures. 1891 witnessed the foundation of the Serbian Benevolent Association. Back then, the Kingdom of Serbia had a consulate in Odessa, and during WWI, the staff of the Serbian Volunteer Corps was located there. After the events of 1917, most of the Serbs were evacuated together with the White Guardists. Those who remained in the region vanished in the gloom of the Russian Revolution.

Summing up, we can generally agree with the quote of the famous Serbian researcher L. Tserovich on the history of the local Serbs: 'Odessa no longer has any Serbs. They are a part of history now' (Tserovich 2002).

The second component is toponymic or spatial

The formation of the city's ethnic composition is reflected in its toponymy. Streets are the foundation of any city or town, the witnesses and keepers of various pages of its history. Odessa is no an exception here.

Among the names of Odessa's streets, one can find Hretska (the Greek; both street and square), Velyka and Mala Arnautska (referred to above), and Bolharska (Bulgarian).

Hretska (Greek) street is one of the oldest in the city. It received its name from the fact that most of the people living here represented the city's largest ethnic communities, which were all Greek. Greek settlements had relocated here long before the seizure of the Khadzhybey Fortress . According to the local history expert Oleh Gubar, in the area of what is now 30 Hretska street there was a coffee shop run by Simon Asparidis, a Greek national. Gubar says that while the Khadzybey fortress was being fought over, Asparidis fled from the city and came back only five days later, on September 19. However, Oleksandr De Ribas thinks that Asparidis never left the city and was already back in his coffee shop on September 14. Simon Asparidis is believed to be the first restaurant-keeper in Odessa. Over the years, the street where his coffee shop was located was overwhelmingly inhabited by his fellow Greeks and became the central and most prominent of the city's streets. This was the residence for Greek entrepreneurs, with their many warehouses, such as the 'Mauromatis Grocery and Colonial Shop', 'Pefanis Butchery', ' Caliphotidis Brewery' and 'Teseoglou Barber Shop'. In the early twentieth century, Oleksandr De Ribas, a grandson of Odessa's founder, wrote: 'The Greek street has its peculiar fragrance. It smells like dates, nuts and oranges, and various colonial spices' (De Ribas 1995).

Hretska (Greek) Square is one of the oldest and largest squares in Odessa. Back in the times of the Khadzhybey settlement, the area that later became a square hosted a market place. The square's development started from the areas detached from what is now Hretska street, and later part of what is now Deribasivska street was attached to it. Most of the developers were Greeks — Ioannopulou, Serafino, Papahadzhy, Rallis, Marazlis. This was the distinguishing feature that determined the street's name.

The history of Hretska Square dates back to François de Wollant, who drew up the first town plan for the then new city of Odessa. Echoing the architecture of ancient Rome, he decided to create several separate centres ('hearths') of

urban life grouped around market places. Hretska Square became one such centre, as well as becoming the centre of the city's main trading artery. De Wollant's ideas were carried out by two architects, the brothers Francesco and Giovanni Frapolli. Construction and development started in the early nineteenth century, and by 1830 the merchants' stands in the Greek market had already been completed.

The poet Eduard Bahrytskyi once wrote:

The market would buzz all over Greek square,
And over the town, the dawns would be glowing
The coffee would steam and Pushkin would glare
At the blue-greyish sea never slowing.

One of the new locations for the leisure time of residents and guests in today's city is Hretskyi (Greek) Park, built by Greek philanthropists.

Arnaut Sloboda, Velyka and Mala Arnautska streets. Besides Moldavian Sloboda, the old city maps also feature the Arnaut Sloboda, which was started as early as 1791. Once the war with the Turks was over, Platon Zubov, one of Odessa's founders, tasked Jose de Ribas with building houses for Greeks and Orthodox Albanians – the Arnauts. This is how Arnaut Sloboda started in Odessa (Malaya Arnautskaya…). Over the years, it was 'dissolved' in urban development. 'In the layout, the epicentre of the Arnaut Sloboda was in fact shaped like a square and bounded within what are today Bazarna, Kanatna, Panteleimonovska and Pushkinska streets' (Gubar 2010a: 25).

Odessa's citizens are aware that Velyka and Mala Arnautska streets were named after the Albanians, the first settlers in this area. However, according to Gubar, different people settled here: 'By de Ribas' order, these buildings were handed over to the Greek trustee Kes Oglou (Kesoglou) to accommodate Mediterranean settlers. Kesoglou, however, would settle not only Greeks, Albanians and South Slavs, but also people who had arrived from different regions of Russia and form overseas' (Gubar 2010a: 20).

Some Albanians, having settled in Odessa, joint the Russian army, while others engaged in handicrafts and commerce. It was then that the streets were divided. In what is now Velyka Arnautska stood the houses of sailors comprising tall Arnauts, and Mala Arnautska became the home for shorter men who served in the infantry and cavalry. Some of them settled in the village

of Arnautovka, now called Alexandrovka (Vopros-otvet: otkuda proizoshli nazvaniya odesskikh ulits).

Bolgarska (Bulgarian) Street is a distinct example of toponomy. Despite popular belief, its name does not refer to the Bulgarians as a people, but to a specific Bulgarian family, the Bolgarovs (Bulgarovs), who settled here in the mid-1810s. Dmitry Bolgarov was a 'supervisor of the Moldavian Sloboda' as early as 1813. Research by a well-known historian of Odessa and local history expert shows that on 15 June 1813, four plots of land of standard size were allocated in the Moldavan Sloboda, including one for 'Dmitry Bolgarov, the supervisor of the Moldavan Sloboda.' His name is likely to have been associated with the name of one of the streets in what is now Moldavanka district (Gubar 2010b: 32). There are records of several people with this surname, including property owners on the 'street named after them'.

In 1814, the Construction Committee issued an open letter to Evdokia Serbinova, also known as Bulgarova, allowing her to construct a house, which, however, was only built in 1829. The Bulgarov-Serbinovs' land lot was located at the beginning of the future street. In the nineteenth century, the street appeared in the records and on maps as both Bolgarska (Bulgarian), and Serbinovskaya, a parallel naming in which Serbinovskaya emerged thanks to Mikhail Serbinov. It is assumed that the Bulgarov and Serbinov families, which become related, are believed to have come from the now-forgotten area of the city called Bulgarka (Dontsova 2016: 332).

The third component – an individual component.

This can be traced in the major endeavours many of these individuals made for the benefit of the city in different historical periods. In the urban environment, ethnicity acquires clear features if it is seen through the lens of the activities of the outstanding personalities who, on the one hand, were acknowledged thanks to their activities in a certain area (for instance, politics, civic endeavours, science etc,) and on the other hand added lustre to their ethnicity and are associated with it accordingly.

The Greeks made a significant contribution to the city's political, economic and cultural development. Remarkably, during the nineteenth century, Odessa was run by six people of Greek origin, indeed, since 1800, when Ioan Kafedzhi became the mayor. Ivan Ambrosiy (twice), Dmitry Inglezi and Konstantin

Papudov were also elected city mayors (Nun`yes 2007: 65). But the city mayor who played the greatest role in making Odessa Greeks famous was Hryhoriy Hryhorovych Marazlis, mayor of the city from 1878 to 1895. Under his leadership, Odessa grew into a cultural, educational, academic and recreational centre in the south of the Russian Empire. During this period, the city opened a bacteriological laboratory, run by I.I.Mechnikov, a botanical garden, the Kuyalnik Resort, a public library, a central post office, a mental hospital, a Museum of Fine Arts, more than forty public and educational institutions, enterprises, shops and the Privoz market. Gas lighting and a tram became parts of city life. Many of these institutions were established at the expense of H. Marazlis himself and charitable contributions made by the Greek community. As the head of the Greek Benevolent Association, Hryhoriy Marazlis made sure that the Greek community provided all the necessary items and food to Greek immigrants. The way Odessa looks like today owes much to G. Marazlis as well.

In the early nineteenth century, Odessa welcomed prominent figures of the Bulgarian Renaissance, Mykhola Spyrydonov Palauzov and Vasil Yevstafiev Aprilov. Mykola Chrystoforovych Palauzov reached the highest position in the social hierarchy of Odessa: not only did he receive a noble title, he also served as the mayor of Odessa. He initiated and chaired the Odessa Bulgarian Board of Trustees (1854-1899), which published more books in the Bulgarian language than Bulgaria itself did at that time. From the 1840s to the 1860s, Odessa was one of the centres of the Bulgarian socio-political movement. First, in 1858, Odessa was visited by the Bulgarian revolutionary Georgy Rakovsky, who wrote his 'Plan for the Liberation of Bulgaria' in the city. Later, in 1863, the Bulgarian poet and revolutionary Hristo Botev arrived here. Odessa also became the city where Ivan Vazov wrote his first short stories and began his novel Under the Yoke.

The list of today's famous Bulgarian figures includes the following individuals:

In the area of politics and civic activity, Anton Ivanovich Kisse, born in Yevhenovka, Tarutyno Raion, Odessa Oblast. He earned his university degree in Odessa. Today, he is a Ukrainian MP, the President of the Association of Bulgarians of Ukraine, President of the Wrestling Association of Odessa region, and initiator and active participant in various social and cultural events related to the Bulgarian community of Odessa.

Academia-wise, Volodymyr Nykyforovych Stanko, a renowned scientist, Doctor of Sciences in history, professor, Laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine.

He was born into a Bulgarian family in the village of Ternivka in Mykolaiv Oblast. After earning a degree in history, he became not only a regular historian but also an outstanding archaeologist, ethnologist and founder of research and educational activities in Odessa. For many years he was the dean of the Faculty of History at Odessa National I.I. Mechnikov University (ONU). It was thanks to him that his faculty opened a Department of Archaeology and Ethnology of Ukraine. He also became the initiator and founding father of the scholarly school of ethnography in Odessa (Prigarin A.A., 2013). But he was particularly enthusiastic about Bulgarian Studies, founding the Odessa Scientific Society of Bulgarian Studies and the Department of Bulgarian Studies at the Philological Faculty of ONU. He was the author of numerous scientific publications on his native land and his ancestors, the Bulgarians. However, he believed that one could not be an expert on just one nation alone and that each community should be considered from the perspective of its cross-cultural interactions. His civic activity in the national and cultural movement of the Association of Bulgarians of Ukraine is substantial.

Another remarkable individual on this list is a man who turned his passion into good: the founder of the only Museum of Football History in Ukraine, now located in Odessa, Emanuil Ganev (widely known under his nickname Misha Bulgarin). Back in 2009, he established a Football Fanclub that exhibited items of football paraphernalia collected by Ganev over 35 years. (Klub bolelshchikov futbola …). However, in 2013 a severe fire destroyed almost all these unique and rare exhibits. Ganev then initiated the establishment of 'Football History Square', featuring a monument to Ukrainians who had won a Golden Ball Award. Great enthusiasm and devotion to something you are keen on can work wonders! Thus, on 10 September 2016, the Museum was reopened to visitors. It is worth mentioning that the Internet portals that covered this event reported not only the official name of the creator of the Football Museum in Odessa, but also his 'popular' nickname, Misha Bolgarin (Muzey futbola snova ...).

However, it is not only prominent individuals of a certain ethnicity that have contributed to the positive image of a particular ethnic group within the city. This image is greatly promoted by civic societies, which at the public level create a favourable environment for the interaction of the ethnic community with representatives of both 'their' ethnic group and the government or society as a whole. This is why it deems appropriate to look at:

The fourth component, a sociocultural one.

This unfolds through the lens of civic organizations' activities that have brought together different ethnic communities and supported their ethnic identities in the city.

The Greeks played an important role in founding the city and its port, promoting international trade and occupying key positions in local government. Some Greek entrepreneurial families – Rodokonakis, Ralis, Marazlis, Vuchina, etc. –occupies leading positions in the economic life of the city generation after generation and were proactive members of charitable associations before stepping into immortality in the history of Odessa (Stanko 2002: 213). However, the first-ever formal association of ethnic Greeks in Odessa was not concerned with charity or religious support in the diaspora, but about fighting for the independence of their ancestral homeland from the Ottoman Empire. 1814 was the year of the foundation of 'Filiki Eteria' (Greek for 'Union of Friends'), a secret society founded by N. Skufas, E. Xanthos and A. Tsakalov (Belousova 2017: 49). This event ushered the preparations for the 1821 Greek Revolution and contributed to the Greek idea that Odessa was 'their' city because this was where the fire of their freedom struggle was ignited. Among other Greek organizations that emerged later was the Greek Benevolent Association (founded in 1862), the Greek Public Assembly 'Anagennisi' (Greek for 'Renaissance'; 1907), the Mutual Association of Greek Servants (1910) and the the Greek Music and Literary Society 'Nea Zoe' (Greek for 'New Life'), established in 1918 by the students of the then Novorossiysk University with the assistance of the Greek club 'Omonia' (Greek for 'Concord') (Belousova 2017: 49).

In the late twentieth century, after a long break, in 1988 the first Greek organization in Ukraine emerged in Odessa – the Greek club 'Hellas'. The club was intended as a centre for the revival of the famous Greek traditions of Odessa and initiated by Aristotle Agafangelovich Papunidi (Nun`yes 2007: 72). 'Hellas' became one of the first ethnic organizations in the city. The club was seen as the centre of a movement for the revival of Hellenism in Ukraine. Its members formerly controlled the restoration of the historic Greek building at 20 Chervony Lane and promoted the establishment of a Greek Cultural Centre. These days, the building is a home for the Filiki Eteria Museum, preserved since the late 1980s and early 1990s by the efforts of 'Hellada'. 'Hellada' activities drew the attention of the Greek government to Odessa, resulting in

the opening of the Odessa branch of the Foundation of Greek Culture in 1994. The members of 'Hellada' made it a tradition to celebrate Greek national holidays, above all, Okhi Day and Independence Day. They also made significant efforts to popularize Greek language classes. They maintain active cooperation with other Greek organizations and societies of other national minorities at the municipal, regional and national levels. In particular, Hellada is an active member of the Union of Greeks of Ukraine and the Council of Representatives of National Cultural Societies of the Odessa Oblast at the Odessa Oblast State Administration.

What is more, Greek NGOs throughout the Odessa oblast come under the patronage of the Odessa Oblast Community of Greeks, established in 1994. The community cooperates with the Consulate General of Greece in Odessa and is a member of the Council of Representatives of National-Cultural Societies at the Department for Nationalities and Religions of the Oblast State Administration. It is also an active participant in all cultural events initiated by the local authorities. In 1999, it became a member of the Federation of Greek Societies of Ukraine (Nun`yes 2007: 71).

Since October 2003, the community has been publishing a monthly newspaper, the Odyssos. The community also has a Women's Council, which organizes parties and festive events, as well as making national costumes. The community's youth organization organizes regular festive events, dance parties and language classes. The community runs the Club of Entrepreneurs, which became the basis for the Business Hub for Greek-Ukrainian Trade and Industrial Business.

Odessa houses not only Greek but also Bulgarian organizations that have all-Ukrainian status. First of all is the Association of Bulgarian National-Cultural Societies and Organizations of Ukraine, established in Odessa on 2 October 1993. Initially, it comprised only seven organizations that were operating at that time, but their number increased later. As was mentioned above, the President of the Association is A.I. Kisse. The Association's vision is to promote the national culture of Bulgarians living in Ukraine, support their cultural, spiritual, ethnic and socio-economic interests, and develop friendly relations between Ukraine and Bulgaria (Asotsiatsia na balgarite v Ukrayna). The Association's printed outlet is the all-Ukrainian weekly bulletin Obozrenie Plus.

Moreover, since 2007, the Congress of Bulgarians of Ukraine has been operating in Odessa (headed by Yu. Gramatik). In 2013, the Congress helped to bring the Bulgarian Drama Theatre in Odessa back to life. The theatre company

includes Bessarabian Bulgarians, as well as Odessans, who united for a common cause – the revival of the Bulgarian theatre in Odessa. The creators of the theatre call it the Odessa Bulgarian Drama Theater – a modern theatre with a Bulgarian accent! (Odesskiy Bolgarskiy Dramaticheskiy teatr...).

In 2013, yet another Bulgarian NGO was registered in Odessa, the All-Ukrainian Assembly of Bulgarians of Ukraine. It was headed by Dora Kostova, the editor-in-chief of the Bulgarian-language newspaper Roden Krai.

All these Odessa-based Bulgarian organizations have extensive networks of social and political ties.

It is also worth mentioning other infrastructural organizations of the Bulgarian community in Odessa, such as the Odessa Bulgarian Society (operating since 1989), the All-Ukrainian Centre of Bulgarian Culture (since 1999), the Ivan Vazov Library (since 1998) and 'Aktiv', a Bulgarian youth club (since 2008). These organizations are involved with various social groups of Bulgarians living in the city, ranging from children and young people to scientists and the community more generally. For example, thanks to the All-Ukrainian Centre of Bulgarian Culture, the city's Bulgarian community is able to come together and not only mark important historical dates, but also celebrate the traditional festivals. Sometimes the celebration goes beyond the cultural centre and the city itself becomes the venue of the celebration. For example, it has become a tradition to celebrate the spring festival Dovizhdane, Baba Marta by decorating the trees near the Opera House with white and red martenitsas and singing national Bulgarian songs and dances

The Serbs made the first attempt to start an ethnic association of their own back in 1885 but failed. Only in 1891 did the community manage to launch the Serbian Benevolent Society at Serbia's Consulate General in Odessa. Consul General G. Suppicic played an important role in the formation of this Society. Among its other founders was Prince Yu. Gagarin, A. Petrovic, G. Mitkevic and N. Markovic (Belousova 2017: 53). The aim of the organization was to help poor Serbs in Odessa and its suburbs, as well as any who were travelling through the city. The society's funds accumulated thanks to membership fees, donations, income from theatrical performances, family dinners and balls. Odessa ladies who took part in raising the Society's funds were given the title of the Society's philanthropists. At the request of Consul G. Suppicic in 1893-1919, the then Novorossiya University regularly handed over its assembly hall and

large classrooms for public lectures for the benefit of the Serbian Benevolent Society (Belousova 2017: 54).

Present-day Ukrainian society in general and Odessa in particular is familiar with the culture of the Serbian people thanks to the 'Ukrainian-Serbian Society', am NGO registered in Odessa in 2004. The Society brings together mainly historians, linguists and creative intellectuals.

The Albanian cultural and educational society 'Rilindia' ('Renaissance') is involved in the preservation of the language and culture of the Albanians residing in present-day Ukraine. Since day one of its work in 1993, its activities have encompassed not only language-learning initiatives, but also the preservation of cultural monuments, literature and history, cultural contacts with Albanians living in other territories, and participation in international scientific and cultural events. Although the Society has only regional status (it is registered in the village of Zhovtneve (Karakurt), Bolgrad Raion, Odessa Oblast), its activities are covered not only on the local but also in the national and international media. It publishes its own newspaper, Rilindija, which features materials in the Albanian, Russian and Ukrainian languages (Nun`yes 2007: 23).

The history of the settlement of Odessa and the shaping of its ethnic composition is also reflected in the local cuisine, which seamlessly combines various traditions – Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Central European, Caucasian and undoubtedly Balkan. Each of these components has added its own vibe, adapting experiences and customs to the local environment. Accordingly, it is impossible to ignore:

The fifth component – a culinary one

This can be traced in two dimensions: first, is the Balkan component of 'Odessa' cuisine; and second, there are ethnic restaurants with 'Balkan vibes', which existed formerly and are still run in the city today.

The Balkan substrate of Odessa's cuisine was formed primarily at the level of raw food materials. Bulgarians, who lived not only downtown but also on the outskirts of Odessa were renowned gardeners and winegrowers. They supplied greens, melons and gourds, as well as vegetables, to the Odessa markets. Bell pepper has since been called 'Bulgarian', even though by the twentieth century Bulgarians no longer had a monopoly in growing this vegetable. The Albanians in the south of Ukraine made type of spring wheat, called 'Arnautka', very popular. During the early years in Odessa, Greek fishermen supplied the

city with a variety of fish. It is thanks to them that Odessa's markets offered fresh mullet, bull, gloss and mussels, a choice that meets the needs of modern Odessa's residents as well.

The 'Balkan footprint' is also detectable in the catering system. Among the names for the city's catering facilities are 'tavern' (of Greek origin), korchma (from the Bulgarian word for a pub) and badega (of Romanesque origin) (Prigarin 2017: 172). For example, until recently at the crossing of Katerynenska and Gretska streets could be found the Bessarabian Bodega restaurant , which presented itself as a Bessarabian restaurant offering only local food and beverages.

The City Food Market (Misky Rynok Idy) serves local specialities, both foods and drinks. The staples of Greek cuisine (various olives, exclusive unrefined olive oil, feta, etc.) can be purchased from the Greek Shop at the New Bazaar. The chain of stores called 'Wines of the World' offers a variety of beverages. Besides a large assortment of drinks from all over the world for any taste and budget, there are exclusively Balkan drinks there, too, like Greek ouzo, plum, pear and all kinds of fruit brandy. According to the store staff, the most frequent buyers of the Bulgarian brandy rakiya are members of the Bulgarian ethnic community living in the city.

The local cuisine is served not only in dedicated cafes and restaurants but also in all-Ukrainian networks. In the variety of dishes that are offered, Balkan cuisine occupies a special place, with a selection of snacks with bryndza, various recipes for cooking mussels and vegetables; 'Greek' and 'Shopsky' salads are often on restaurant menus.

The menu of the famous restaurant Gambrinus features a salad called 'Salad for Senka-Greek'. It is a mix of bell peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, feta cheese, Crimean onions and olive oil. Traditional Greek cuisine can also be found on the menus of what are referred to as Mediterranean cuisine restaurants. There was once a Greek restaurant called Papa Costa on Hretska Street (now closed), while Hretska Square featured a Greek cafe called Elinikon. The Piteria restaurant served Greek dishes alongside European, Turkish and Arabic cuisine also.

With many catering facilities serving Balkan dishes as a part of their menu, there are also specialized restaurants focused on both Balkan cuisine in general and the cuisine of individual Balkan ethnic groups.

Besides the Bessarabian Bodega mentioned above, one can also mentioned a restaurant called Balkani. The restaurant's owners, in addressing prospective

visitors, emphasize the known Odessa like of eating well and then assure them that they can satisfy it thanks to the most delicious Bulgarian cuisine, Bulgarian hospitality, famous Bulgarian wines, extraordinary dances, songs and incredible treats (Restoran Balkani…).

There are more cafes and restaurants with Bulgarian ethnic vibes, such as Mehana and Bessarabka. There used to be two more restaurants called Chotyry Bolharyna (Four Bulgarians) and Bessarabskyi Dvorik (Bessarabian courtyard) where one could try the taste of Bulgarian national cuisine in full, as well as drinks by both local Bessarabian and imported Bulgarian producers.

Even the exterior and interior designs of these establishments indicate or highlight their specific ethnic backgrounds. In Bessarabka, one can find a sophisticated combination of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Bulgarian cuisines, while Mehana presents itself as an exclusively Bulgarian restaurant with a history (founded in 1998) of specializing in authentic Bulgarian cuisine. For any restaurant with traditional cuisine, it is quite typical for there to be many Bulgarians among its guests (Bolgarskiy restoran s istoriey…).

Conclusion

Since Odessa emerged and evolved as a city, Balkan peoples have become an integral part of these processes. Thus is reflected in the fact that the Balkan component of the city is embedded in its culture and has obvious traces in its toponymics and social and cultural practices. The public activities of individuals and cultural communities contribute to the preservation of a positive image of these Balkan ethnicities. It is abundantly clear that the Balkan culinary tradition has become an integral part of the everyday cultural life of Odessans.

All the components we have looked at above (demographic, toponymic, personal, sociocultural and culinary) have enabled us to represent the process whereby the Balkan concept is synthesized with the phenomenon of 'Odessa culture'. Therefore, it is now impossible to envisage Odessa's culture without the Balkan component.

The social and political processes of transformation that have taken place in Odessa in particular and in Ukraine as a whole during the last fifty years have brought about a revival of the national identities of the members of the Balkan peoples in the city. This process has resulted in their involvement in the cultural, social and political life of the city. This suggests that Odessa is the centre of the Balkan diaspora in Ukraine.

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II

National and Confessional Features of Festivals and Holidays

FESTIVE AND DAILY INTERACTION BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS IN CONTEMPORARY LITHUANIA AND BULGARIA

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Abstract. The article is based on data from ethnographic field research that was conducted in Vilnius and the Vilnius are in 2017–2020 and in Sofia in 2019. To meet the aims of this research comparing interactions between neighbours in the cities of Sofia and Vilnius respectively, I analysed two types of neighbourhood: the formal, which is determined by territorial proximity and the necessity of mutual assistance; and the informal, which is based on friendly feelings and the desire to spend leisure time and celebrate together. However, the specific features of field research in these cities highlighted another aspect of the neighbourhood, namely, how it functions in public and private spaces. A majority of respondents associated friendship with visiting one another at home, while birthdays were the most common celebration for spending time together. Older respondents, mostly those who were from villages, remember how neighbours would interact in the village environment and how they brought this concept of neighbourhood to the city, naturally comparing it with the situation there and pointing out generational differences. However, in the opinion of the majority, the city environment changed the nature of interactions between neighbours and

created a unique concept of neighbourhood that was based on close social links, which sometimes developed into friendship.

Keywords: neighbourhood, Vilnius, Sofia, mutual assistance, leisure, festivals, village, city

Introduction

The concept of the neighbourhood is a very broad idea applied in many academic disciplines. From the ethnological perspective, the concept of neighbourhood is balanced somewhere between being a geographical concept and a value-based category. As the German ethnologist Klaus Roth noted, even though the neighbourhood is a social-spatial category, this concept can also encompass both close and more distant neighbours, depending on one's choice (Roth 2001: 9–34). Neighbourhood studies have shown that interactions between neighbours can be very different. My own research, conducted in 2017–2018 in settlements of varying sizes (villages, towns and cities) in locations relatively close to the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, allowed me to distinguish two types of neighbourhood, one distant and formal, the close and informal. The first was determined by territorial proximity, while the second was associated not only with territory and the necessity of mutual assistance, but also with a group of people who felt a connection through friendly emotions, and who could choose freely, without any feeling of obligation, how to spend their leisure time or to celebrate various occasions. Research with two age groups, one older (born before 1969), the other younger (born after 1969), revealed that it was the older generation who noticed the main changes that had taken place during the last few decades. The weakening of social relations between neighbours was influenced by the age of the respondents, the turnover of neighbours and rapid processes of modernization that allowed people to remain independent of those who lived nearby. It was found that, over time, the weakening of good neighbourly relations is detrimental to close neighbourhoods (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 35–61; 2020: 51–64). The study of neighbourhoods in settlements of varying sizes also showed that there were weaker social relations in one village (Nemėžis) which bordered the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius (part of the settlement had already been incorporated into the city), compared to other settlements that had been studied. Meanwhile, the Bulgarian researcher Meglena Zlatkova, who studied the phenomenon of the neighbourhood in a major city in her country, Plovdiv, drew attention to the very rapid urbanization in Bulgaria during the socialist

period, where migrants coming to the city from villages brought their ideas and habits of contact with neighbours (Zlatkova 2001: 185–192). This raised the issue of how neighbourhood links can be developed in a large city, where the extent of social assistance provided by one's neighbours is relatively smaller than in a village or town, while the neighbourhood is more strongly defined by territorial proximity. However, we should not yet dismiss the potential of the concept of a neighbourhood being brought by migrants from villages and towns into the city.

The aim of this article is to analyse neighbourhood connections based on the experiences of people living in Sofia and Vilnius. The analysis rests on ethnographic field research conducted in Vilnius and the Vilnius area in 2017–2020 as part of the Lithuanian Institute of History's project 'Leisure Time, Celebrations and Rituals in the Vilnius Region: Social and Cultural Aspects', and in 2019 in Sofia as part of the project 'Festive and Daily Culture in Bulgaria and Lithuania: Tradition and Modernity'. During these research projects, analogous questions were posed to respondents in semi-structured interviews conducted in both Lithuania and Bulgaria. Respondents were asked how they perceived their neighbourhoods, whether their understanding of them changed over time, and if so how. They were also asked how many neighbours they interacted with and whether they saw any differences between being neighbours and being friends. Moreover, they were asked how neighbours communicated and interacted, what forms of mutual assistance there were, and about the presence or absence of rewards for providing this assistance. The interviews ended with questions about joint activities among neighbours – leisure time and celebrations. The interviews were conducted with respondents of various ages, both genders, levels of education, different religions and nationalities. Respondents were interviewed in the yards of their homes, in parks or in other public spaces. In Sofia, the questions were asked in English and Russian, and in Vilnius in Lithuanian.

Neighbourhood research

Neighbourhood research in the city using the approach adopted in the present article has hardly been conducted in either Lithuania or Bulgaria. In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, research by Lithuanian ethnologists focused almost exclusively on village locations, and much less commonly on towns. According to Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, who studied com-

munity customs, neighbourly relations were based on traditions that had been established in feudal times, which, despite changing somewhat in eastern and south-eastern Lithuania, basically remained the same until the mid-twentieth century. Interaction between peasants in the old patriarchal village was expressed through common work bees, collective involvement in communal village affairs, the provision of mutual assistance in various cases and the participation of all neighbours in the celebration of family and calendrical celebrations (Vyšniauskaitė 1964: 527).

The pioneer of systematic neighbourhood research in Lithuania was Antanas Mažiulis, who dedicated quite a lot of attention to the description of neighbourhood traditions in villages in Lithuania's north-east (Mažiulis 1940: 246; Mažiulis 1941: 91–96). However, this ethnologist's greatest contribution to neighbourhood historiography was the distinction between 'close' and 'greater' neighbourhoods. In his opinion, 'closeness' was a matter of two or three of one's closest neighbours maintaining a particularly close connection. The 'greater' category encompassed a small village or part of a larger village and was not close in most cases, but evinced rather a kind of neighbourliness 'based more on necessity rather than sincerity' (Mažiulis 1957: 244).

As lifestyles changed in the second half of the twentieth century and the way services were provided changed, many of the forms of unrewarded assistance naturally disappeared from village communities. It was no longer neighbours who helped out with most of the communal work on the farmstead, but relatives coming from the cities. They planted vegetable gardens, harvested the potatoes, collected hay, picked berries and fruit, and received some of this harvest in kind, as well as various products and food and drink during the work (Merkienė 2002: 100). This was in large part due to the start of geographical and social mobility in the second half of the twentieth century, as well as less experience among the older generations, while the demise of the community's authority and responsibility for the behaviour of its members shattered the neighbourly communal traditions that had been dominant in Lithuanian villages up to the mid-twentieth century (Bylaitė-Žakaitienė 2012: 282). Some of the communal customs that had been maintained among neighbours were analysed in the early 21st century. For example, the traditional custom of visiting new-born children in Dzūkija still existed just a few years ago, a custom which, according to respondents, was intended to foster closer friendships between families and was even 'a good opportunity to heal arguments and disagreements between

neighbours' (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2002: 80). A separate study was dedicated to comparing the forms of neighbourly relations in one town and one village. It was found that communication between neighbours living near one another in villages in the second half of the twentieth century was more active than that between neighbours living in cities (Udraitė 2016: 920–922). However, there have been no comprehensive ethnological studies on the city in the early 21st century. We must therefore rely on sociologists who state that, in recent years, urban communities have come to be characterized by social alienation and greater social mobility, leading to a drop in community feeling. Links in these communities are more likely to be based on specialized relations, rather than on providing assistance: that is, members of urban communities use different types of links in order to acquire particular resources. In the city, individuals are not included in traditional and close communities, but they constantly manoeuvre between sparse networks that are spread out over a given space and that are often changing. City communities are not neighbourhood communities, but are more like dispersed networks that perform the functions of support and socialization (Leliūgienė and Sadauskas 2011: 1293). My research in Vilnius showed that in this city, communities of neighbours had formed that were based on families living in close proximity to one another spending time together on a regular basis.

Zlatkova's works stand out from those of other researchers in Bulgaria. Based on research conducted in the post-socialist city of Plovdiv in Bulgaria, the second largest city in the country, she discussed how urban spaces were defined from the viewpoint of the people based on their everyday life activities, and how the latter were associated with redefining and giving new meaning to traditional forms of social interaction and models of behaviour (Zlatkova 2001: 185–92). In a later article, she discussed the ways in which public and private space was divided, analysing the practices for settling down in communal spaces in daily life and showing how they can be made one's own (Zlatkova 2015: 41–60). Of research conducted in neighbouring countries, it is worth mentioning a study published in 2019 by Polish sociologists working in three cities of different sizes (Warsaw, Poznan and Wronki), where the importance of the proper functioning of spatial neighbourhoods was also a prime focus. The second most important factor, however, was highly social in nature and related to firmly embedded social rooting in one's place of residence, which created the social premises for building long-term relationships and a common

platform of lifestyle and interests where spatial anchoring plays a less significant role (Nowak et al. 2019: 70–1).

Zlatkova's research on the socialist period in Bulgaria, as in many other post-socialist countries, may be described as concerning the forced urbanization and modernization that were introduced after World War II. This is why a large number of village residents moved to the cities and found employment in the industrial sector, though this migration also provoked a housing shortage (Zlatkova 2015: 45). An analogous migration from villages in the post-World War II period that radically altered the composition of the population in Vilnius and other cities was also noticed in Lithuania (Kasparavičienė and Trinkūnienė 1995: 7–46). However, it must be stressed that the ethnic composition of residents in Vilnius and Sofia is different. In Sofia, Bulgarians make up as much as 96 percent of the total population, with the Roma making up just 2 percent, and Turks 1 percent (data from 2011). Vilnius, on the other hand, is a poly-ethnic city, where (data from 2011) Lithuanians made up only 63.2 percent, Poles 16.5 and Russians 11.9 percent.

Ethnographic field research conducted in Sofia and Vilnius in recent years showed that the formation of the neighbourhood concept and the stability of the links between neighbours in today's society was greatly influenced by one's place of residence, type of housing (apartment building or a private home), time spent living in the same place, changes of residence and the person's age. However, other circumstances were just as important, such as personal interests, education, one's preferred lifestyle, family status, the features of a person's character, etc. According to the research conducted in Sofia, a majority of the respondents who lived in apartments (sixteen live in apartment buildings, five live in privately owned homes) had lived in the same building for over a decade (thirty to forty years). A similar situation was found to exist in Vilnius (sixteen live in apartment buildings, three live in privately owned homes). Living nearby, in the respondent's geographical location, unavoidably determined certain contacts, such as living in an apartment building, when there are some things in common between all the residents, such as a shared roof and water supply system. Private home-owners also share connections in the form of common obligations. On the one hand, in both Vilnius and Sofia, as in Lithuania's villages and towns, neighbours share a bond due to mutual assistance. People usually look to their neighbours when they need to borrow something, to ask them to keep an eye on their apartment while they're away, to mind the children, and

so on. Neighbours provide necessary assistance in the event of illnesses as well. In this sphere, we are unlikely to find any fundamental differences between Vilnius and Sofia. In this paper I shall accordingly concentrate on the 'close' neighbourhood, which encompasses daily and festive occasions where time is spent together, as well as the spaces where this interaction occurs.

Interaction between neighbours in the public space: 'what goes on outside the door of the apartment'

Zlatkova mentioned the importance of communal spaces in post-socialist cities in Bulgaria. However, they not only provide an opportunity to receive social assistance when dealing with health or household issues, but also encourage daily friendly interactions. According to Zlatkova, 'Residential areas are both physical and social constructions, each one of them has its own images and places of memory, each can be a site of the collective memory of a community, a family or of all urban residents. Thus, a residential area is a living space, a spatial and human entity, a togetherness of collective life, a framework of meanings created by its citizens' (Zlatkova 2015: 44).

This is also evident from my own field research in Bulgaria and Lithuania. One of the most important places where neighbours meet and spend time together is the communal yard, where there are recreational spaces, like benches and children's playgrounds. Benches are also found near apartment building stairwells, where people, especially the older generation, spend a lot of time communicating with one another, as well as with other neighbours who were coming and going, or simply watching the nearby surroundings. This is like a closed space which is treated as their own by the residents who share the communal yard, as others rarely pass by. This situation was very evident during the research in Sofia: going from one apartment building yard to another searching for respondents, we were immediately take for strangers. Soon enough, we received an explanation: neighbours appeared to recognise the regulars from not just their own apartment buildings, but those nearby as well. Analogous observations were noticed when walking through apartment building yards in Vilnius too. Even though at first glance the yards in Vilnius and Sofia might appear to be alike, they do have particular characteristics specific just to each yard. For example, in yards in Sofia there are recreation zones (benches, playgrounds), though we often also noticed a random, non-standard pergola, or a table or bench. It turns out that these had been made by some of the local

inhabitants, with the agreement of their neighbours. That is why these fixtures are not just considered common property, but also as a communal space for interaction. Yet as the field research showed, it is usually groups of people who were just connected because they were formally neighbours who gathered in these spaces, as well as those who had common interests determined by common hobbies, or were of the same age or gender. Understandably, over the course of time these groups may regroup themselves differently, yet as the research showed, probably the most stable factor helping to maintain ties was a similar age and the similar time of initially having moved into the building.

It also became apparent that the space in the yard chosen for interaction may differ. For example, while the older women might assemble on benches right near their stairwell, younger women with small children would gather at the playground, or even another neighbouring yard. When observing this interaction between neighbours, it became clear that groups of neighbours had not only formed on the basis of specific characteristics, but that there was also an established time when they would gather in this space – mothers with children and older men and women would each come out at a specific time. There were often cases of mixed groups interacting, but there were also activities that were clearly distinguished by gender. Another location for interaction between neighbours was the public parks that have grown up surrounded by apartment buildings, which is quite typical of Sofia. The neighbours from one, a few or several stairwells (buildings) would go there for a walk. Neighbours taking their pets for a walk also choose their own particular spaces.

A similar situation was observed in Vilnius, in the yards of apartment buildings: older women would be chatting in groups sitting on benches, and mothers with children would also gather, but less commonly men. In the evenings, their places would often be taken over by youths. The long-term observation of these yards nestled among the apartment buildings in my vicinity led me to notice that neighbours go for walks or sit down in spaces further away from their own buildings as well, going along specially made walking paths, in the forest, etc. Due to the quarantine, some of the interviews were conducted via telephone, so observation could not take place in other suburbs of Vilnius. A slightly different situation has become established in the surroundings of private homes (usually those that are relatively recent), where spaces have been especially installed at the initiative of neighbours themselves for purposes of interaction. The survey of respondents supported these observation-based insights.

For one resident of Sofia who had been born in 1935, the most important thing was good company, in the form of the same group gathering at the same place. She spends a lot of time with female neighbours of a similar age, sitting on a bench near their building. Even though a majority of the residents in the building are now from a younger age group, they always say hello to her when going past, asking her how she is doing, which was important for her, said the respondent. In this way, she maintains good neighbourly relations not just with her closest three female neighbours, but also with all the residents in the building. Daily interaction with neighbours in the communal space is characteristic of both men and women. As a Turk (b. 1960) who has been living in the same building for twenty years explained, at 6 pm, men and women who live in the apartment building will gather in the yard to sit on the benches and chat about politics, and common and personal matters. By communing every day, the neighbours share books, newspapers and various information. According to a woman born in 1939, the neighbours in her building also enjoyed gathering nearby in the evenings: the men would gather in the late afternoon to play cards, while several female neighbours had a tradition of meeting at 10 o'clock and going to a cafe together. Now the men no longer gather due to older age and health problems, while the women who still can do so continue going out to the cafe. In the respondent's opinion, this type of habit of interaction did not occur with more recent neighbours, due in part to their different ages. As a respondent born in 1939 said, each day, especially when the weather was fine, four or five female neighbours would gather in the yard at 10 o'clock and would all go to the nearby cafe for some coffee and cake and a chat. However, in winter (or when the weather was not so good) or if one of them was ill, they would gather at one of their homes. According to her, the neighbourhood is critically important to pensioners, even if they have children and grandchildren with whom they often keep in touch by phone. Regular neighbourly interaction for someone who is no longer working and can rarely travel far from their own home was very important. One respondent born in 1956 said that, despite living in a private home, she still upheld the ritual of meeting several neighbours on Saturdays or Sundays to go to a cafe together. However, lately they have been gathering at the home of one of the women from the group rather than going to the cafe. This tradition of daily interaction, as the survey showed, has been maintained for many years by respondents from both apartment buildings and private homes. However, the coffee-drinking ritual has been maintained mostly

by the older women. Younger women did not really have this kind of ritual, yet they did notice that the older generation did interact regularly in the yards.

It should be noted that the younger residents of Sofia (mostly those who were single) did not have any stronger bonds with their neighbours. One Bulgarian respondent born in 1983 who had lived in the same apartment building since her birth stated that to her neighbourhood was being able to 'borrow or loan something, carry something, wake up or look after each other's kids. Even if they run into one another by chance, even if it is every day, they always stop and chat'. When asked what they talked about, she said it was mostly daily, household topics, but not about anything personal. Mothers taking their children out to play in the yard or city park would talk to their neighbours every day. One respondent born in 1983 observed that she saw how neighbours gathered in the yards according to their age and interests: old with old, mothers and kids with other mothers and kids, but she had no children of her own. A Bulgarian woman born in 1969 also noticed that, for a close-knit neighbourhood to form, the age, education, profession and interests of the neighbours was very important. Without finding anything in common, each neighbour ended up living in their own world. That is why, in many cases, family, relatives and friends became closer than neighbours, but if some common interests were shared with a neighbour, their bond could become very close, even friendly. The respondent also took the different time period into account: whereas earlier neighbourly relations were closer and whole families interacted, nowadays this is much less widespread.

Similar trends in neighbourly relations were observed in Vilnius. A male resident of Vilnius born in 1978 described neighbourhood as 'forced' social relations with people 'forcibly' living nearby. But although this was not a person's own, free choice, a bond would develop with one's neighbours, singling out a specific space uniting them, and leading to the formation of a unifying culture of interaction. The respondent who shared this experience had changed his place of residence numerous times in his life. As the man explained, he currently lives in a suburb of private homes where the members of their neighbours' association had reached an agreement to jointly purchase a plot of land which they used for communal, general purposes – gatherings, celebrations, outdoor games and the like. Common rules applied to all the neighbours. Among this group of neighbours there were various nationalities, different levels of education and different ages, but according to the respondent they all

got along well together. Daily interaction was forming, as was handling common practical matters, creating certain traditions for celebrations, and so on. Yet the respondent added that he personally maintained closer ties with seven families (the neighbours' association consisted of around thirty families). It so happened that these were neighbours who lived in the closest proximity to the respondent, yet this closeness would probably not have formed had they not shared common interests, i.e., the things that encourage interaction not just out of obligation on account of living near one another, but things that also satisfy a person's personal needs.

According to a man born in 1965, neighbours are linked by friendly interaction, as when the adults and children all get along well together. His family lives in a suburb of private semi-detached houses, and this kind of interaction has grown up between five families. Even closer (in a way, forced) interaction can be observed between neighbours living in apartment buildings. A woman born in 1983 has lived in this type of residence (an apartment building) for only a year so far, and is close to only two families. However, all the residents in the building are linked by having the same roof and by the renovation work that goes along with it. In this way, all the neighbours are drawn into interaction, gathering in the yard or stairwell to discuss matters that relate to all of them, as in the view of this woman, neighbourhood is what goes on 'outside of the apartment's door', i.e., not in the private space of one's apartment.

A Russian resident of Vilnius born in 1976 agreed. For him, 'neighbourhood is a connection with certain people, in a certain territory'. He lives in an apartment building, helps his neighbours when needed and has a say in solving joint issues relating to the building. When neighbours run into one another, they stop to chat briefly about the weather or politics, but they don't actually visit one another in their homes. A Lithuanian resident of Vilnius born in 1985 found a more practical than emotional meaning of neighbourhood. According to this respondent, neighbours need to get along because this ensures a safe neighbourhood – household assistance, keeping an eye on each other's apartments, etc. A slightly different impression was shared by a woman living in a two-storey building. She has access to a communal yard that they share with the elderly neighbours who live on the first floor, where a lot of time is spent. When the yard needed to be fixed up, they initiated the work and contributed their own funds, thinking that it would be difficult financially for the elderly residents who lived off their pensions. However, later on the neighbours from

the first floor offered to contribute, giving what they could. They acted similarly when the roof needed to be renovated. At first glance it would appear that this was related to things that fell under the category of joint ownership, however the respondent provided more examples of this kind of closer mutual interaction (when the older people look after the children, if need be, visit one another, etc.). This indicates that this interaction between the two neighbouring families was not formal: they were linked by the desire to help one another and to spend time in a common space.

Bulgarians and Lithuanians both drew attention to the different times we are living in. Their experiences revealed the changing nature of interaction between neighbours not only of different generations, but also in terms of the differences between city and village. A woman from Vilnius born in 1963 said that even though all her neighbours who lived in Fabijoniškės (a suburb of Vilniaus) were friendly (mostly Russians lived in her building), she felt there was a greater sense of community when compared to the times when she lived with her parents in Lazdynai (another suburb of Vilnius). Perhaps this was because most of the residents at that time had migrated from the villages and had not yet forgotten old traditions. It was common for older women to sit and chat on the benches near the apartment building stairwells, sometimes looking after the neighbours' children playing in the communal yard. Of course, there were neighbours who were closer, and others who were more distant in terms of interaction, but in the communal yard everyone felt a connection when there was some general work to be done, or when matters that affected everyone needed to be discussed. Nowadays, in the respondent's opinion, people have become much more closed, life-styles have changed, and the older traditions of neighbourly interaction have been forgotten. Now there is a heightened sense of insecurity in communal spaces: earlier, children could play by themselves in the yards because everyone knew each other's children. These days, children are rarely allowed to go outside in the yard by themselves and need supervision from adults. This claim is confirmed by the accounts of another two elderly women. According to one respondent who was born in 1940, during the Soviet period a lot of young people settled in Vilnius from the villages, initially to study, and ended up staying. That is why there was a greater sense of community among the neighbours, more sincere interactions based on the traditions they had brought from the villages. For example, neighbours helped out in the event of a funeral or on other occasions without even being

asked. This woman has lived in this particular apartment building since 1981 – a lot of people of a similar age and social class all moved in at the same time. Most had children, and through them the parents would also get to know one another. Interaction between these parents (now only two women from that group remain) exists to this day. Even though the neighbours in the apartment building are constantly changing, in recent times she has noticed more young people among her new neighbours. People greet one another and stop to chat in the stairwell, but that is as far as the interaction goes. The woman says she doesn't want to 'intrude too much' because she is already older and the two groups have different interests. A Russian woman born in 1955 shared similar experiences. She had been living in the same apartment building since 1972: the majority of the new settlers were people who had arrived in the city from villages, with closer interaction occurring both on a daily basis and during celebrations. Now she notices a greater sense of individualism in the current generation and their new forms of interaction and communication.

The tradition I observed during my fieldwork in Sofia, where a certain group of female neighbours would regularly go the local café, was not noticed in Vilnius, though women would often drop in on one another for a coffee. These gatherings did not occur at a fixed time, as was the case in Bulgaria, and they happened in the territory where the neighbours lived. For example, a resident of Vilnius born in 1976 said that she met with her neighbours to drink some tea in the communal yard, but that these gatherings were spontaneous, occurring when the idea popped into someone's head, or when there was a particular occasion. This woman would also regularly meet up with three other female neighbours on Thursdays to sing together. The respondent born in 1966 compared her experiences of living in apartment buildings in different locations (she had changed her place of residence a total of six times), saying that, even though she got along well with her neighbours at her current residence, relations with her neighbours at the previous residence were much closer. She was raising children at the time, and would thus often meet up with other mothers, helping one another, going over for a visit, drinking coffee and alike. According to another respondent, a woman born in 1974, she and her neighbours would meet on Saturdays in the communal space for a working bee, or to celebrate someone's birthday. A woman born in 1976 shared a ritual with her closest neighbour to invite one another over for tea once a week. According to a female respondent born in 1975 (who lives in an apartment building), working

bees would always be followed by sharing and having food together, or one or another neighbour would cook shashlik on the barbeque, or they'd simply get together to chat or have a drink. Even though there was no regular schedule for these interactions, five or six families regularly interacted in this way.

Thus, in both cities, in some cases we would see neighbours looking after the communal building or providing social assistance, but communal spaces also formed in which one's leisure time could be spent. Respondents interviewed in Sofia spent relatively more time in public spaces. There was an established tradition of neighbours going to the local cafe on a daily basis, which was not observed in Vilnius. What both cities had in common was that in almost all cases the respondents identified a close neighbourhood with a certain number of neighbours with whom the relations being formed were closer than with other neighbours. A different type of interaction between neighbours depending on their generation was also observed

Neighbourhood and friendship: 'the doors of the apartment are open to neighbours'

In his analysis of neighbourhood in Bosnia, David Henig reminds us of the saying 'before starting to build a house, you need to find a neighbour'. He also uses the 'open door' metaphor, which is hardly conceivable in the city (Henig 2012: 3–19). This metaphor reminds us of the description of a close neighbourhood in a Lithuanian village given by Mažiulis, where one could borrow something from one's neighbour's house without even asking (Mažiulis 1957: 233–244). This demonstrates the trust, moral values and importance of private space needed in constructing a neighbourhood.

During my research in Sofia and Vilnius, it became clear that the contacts that had been established were often pursued not just in the public space, but also in the environment of one's private home. Thus, the question that naturally arises is whether living nearby determines friendly feelings (the concept of friendship in Vilnius and Sofia is discussed in an article by Ž. Šaknys (2018: 119–130). Respondents in Sofia were asked whether they had friends among their neighbours, and a majority said 'yes'. But could they describe the difference between neighbourhood and friendship? A frequent response was that the fundamental difference between a friend and a friend who was a neighbour was that personal things could only be discussed between friends. So, for neighbours

also to become friends they had not only to share common interests: time was also needed during which this bond would be 'tested'. The oldest of the respondents, a woman from Sofia born in 1933, said that she had been living in the apartment building for 55 years and that for her being neighbours with the women with whom she maintained closer relations was equal to friendship. These women had helped each other their whole lives, their families had spent time together and visited one another. According to this woman, even now, whenever her health and the weather was good, she would always go outside to sit on the bench near the building, where more of her friends would also gather. The elderly women would chat and treat each other to food and drinks. For example, on the day of our conversation, one neighbour sat by us and gave the respondent some of the cake (banitsa) she had just baked. A Turkish Muslim who had lived in Sofia for forty years and lived in the same building for twenty years said that for him, a 'good neighbour was better than a relative or colleague': he further said he had friends among his circle of neighbours.

Meanwhile, a Bulgarian woman born in 1983 who has been living in the same apartment building for 36 years said that she had close interactions with five or six neighbours, only three of whom she considered friends. According to the woman, it was only the neighbourly friends who could call each other up at any time, go to a cafe together, invite each other over for birthdays or sometimes even celebrate New Year's Eve together. Obviously not all the neighbours one is close to are necessarily considered friends as well. Based on personal experience, other opinions were also shared. A respondent born in 1956 said that, even though she got along well with her neighbours, they were not friends. The woman reasoned that people become friends only when they start being closer, sharing intimate details, which she avoided doing with her neighbours. In her opinion, open interaction could prompt rumours and discord among neighbours. According to another woman born in 1962, neighbours could be friends, but they also had to be of a similar age and have common interests. The fact that they lived near one another was not a condition for friendship, and she had no neighbours whom she would consider friends. A more radical approach to neighbours as friends was encountered among the younger respondents. A woman born in 1973 said that, even though her neighbours were pleasant, she didn't really interact with them or know them very well. This respondent had only lived in this building for a relatively short time, while time and a particular occasion were needed to establish a friendship. In the woman's view, friendship

depended on common interests, ages and long years of knowing one another, which showed that the person could be trusted. Another woman born in the same year said that she only had a few close friends from her yard in her childhood with whom she played. At present, she did not have any friends among her neighbours. One had to trust the other person to become friends, while those sorts of relations had not formed with the current group of neighbours.

As the fieldwork with residents in Sofia showed, younger respondents would rarely consider the possibility of being friends with their neighbours. A resident of Sofia born in 1999 who lived in a private home said that there were many good neighbours living nearby. They would help one another, share cakes they had baked, etc., yet none would be considered friends. According to the respondent, 'my neighbours are not the people I would want to have closer relations with'. A respondent born in 1995 also said quite categorically that, even though she got along well with her neighbours, they were not her friends. Neighbours were people one would interact with on a daily basis, whereas friends involved more personal interaction. For example, on her birthday, she would only receive a gift or flowers from friends whom she had invited over to her place. The respondent born in 1995 did not celebrate such occasions with her neighbours, only with her friends. In her opinion, there was a difference between the concepts of 'neighbours' and 'friends'. She herself has one friend who was also a neighbour. She maintained good relations with the other neighbours, but would only talk to them about general things, go to the park together, and did not engage in the same type of interaction as she would with her friends. The way in which one interacts with one's neighbours also depends on the person's nature. For example, an English and Russian teacher born in 1988 said that for her, 'a place where people live is already a neighbourhood'. Neighbours might not always become friends, and even in cases of closer neighbourly relations (not friendship), people chose one another depending on their shared interests. You might want to go to a cafe with certain neighbours, less so with others. This woman said that, while she had no friends from among her neighbours, they did get on well and she liked everyone.

The research showed that, in present-day Vilnius, residents made a similar distinction between friends and neighbours. In the opinion of one resident of Vilnius born in 1946, neighbours had the potential to become friends, but their relations had to be very close. She has been friends with one neighbour for a long time already, if there's a special occasion she invites her over to her

place, and they spend their leisure time together. According to a woman born in 1970, neighbours either become friends or remain simply neighbours. She was lucky, as she was on friendly terms with two neighbouring families. At first the children started playing together, then the parents started talking and interacting, finding they shared similar hobbies and interests. A similar situation developed for another respondent, where the friendship began with the children and then extended to the parents, who also became friends and ended up going on trips together, visiting each other at their rural properties, etc. A woman born in 1976 also said that neighbours can be friends, but not always. Forming a friendship requires a lot of time, shared memories and the like, which is more difficult to achieve with neighbours, as they can change. A woman from Vilnius born in 1966 shared her experiences of friendship with neighbours. She said that when she used to live in her earlier apartment, she had just had her children. It was through them that she became friends with neighbours of a similar age, who were also raising children. They had their daily rituals, e.g., going for daily walks with the children, having coffee together at the cafe or when their children were napping, at each other's places. They would always celebrate the children's and parents' birthdays together. At the time, it felt as if she had become very good friends with those neighbours. However, when their place of residence changed, initially they try to keep the friendship going, but over time this happened less and less frequently, and ultimately it came to a natural end.

The opposite situation was also observed: a woman born in 1940 said how a friendship that started through being neighbours with one particular family lasted right up until they passed away. Even though both families changed their places or residence, and moved to different cities, they always remained friends by writing letters, visiting one another, and celebrating birthdays together, as well as other occasions. Obviously, a spiritual closeness is required for this kind of friendship to last. Other respondents agreed. According to one woman born in 1966, if people become friends, they feel the desire to celebrate birthdays, New Year's Eve or even the second day of Christmas together, inviting each other over. When one woman born in 1976 settled down in Užupis (a suburb of Vilnius), her university friends became her neighbours, and their friendship has lasted up to now. However, in that time (she has lived in Užupis for over twenty years) she has made friends with other neighbours as well. The respondent was then raising three children, so it was through them that the

parents also started interacting. Another female respondent born in 1962 had an interesting case of friendship to share with us. Five other neighbours would constantly gather at one neighbour's place to celebrate her birthday, although the respondent did not interact very much with the other neighbours who gathered there. She was only close to two other neighbours, and only met the others when it was the birthday of the neighbours just mentioned. Among residents of Vilnius (born in 1976 and 1983), there are some who said that interaction between neighbours does not extend into the private space if that neighbour is not considered a friend. Nor was it very easy for older residents of Vilnius to make friends with their neighbours. As one woman who has been living in the same building for forty years said, she had a few female neighbours with whom she maintained closer interactions, but they never really became friends. Perhaps her interaction with others was affected because their viewpoints or interests did not always correspond, or because mutual trust did not develop. Another reason could be that the idea brought from her parents' home in the village – 'keep your neighbour at a polite distance, then you'll get along' – influenced the degree of her interaction with them.

Thus, the research showed that some neighbours can develop into friends, and that one of the features of that friendship was daily and festive interaction in both public and private spaces. Of all the respondents, it was young Bulgarians who stood out, some of whom indicated that they had no friends among their neighbours. However, people with young children established neighbourly relations that often developed into friendly relations more easily than other groups. An analogous situation was observed by researchers studying the neighbourhood in Polish cities (Nowak et al. 2019: 71).

Celebrations with neighbours: a combination of public and private spaces

For festive interaction in both Vilnius and in Sofia, neighbours usually come together on two main occasions –New Year and birthdays, or less commonly, on names days. According to a respondent from Sofia born in 1946, even though the main celebrations were Christmas and Easter, which Bulgarians usually celebrated with their families, they would sometimes invite one or other neighbouring family with whom they got along well at the time to celebrate a birthday or names day. A woman born in 1939 said that she celebrated not

only her birthdays with her neighbours, but also New Year's Eve. However, this kind of close interaction had not yet formed with neighbours who had moved in more recently. These occasions were celebrated by respondents who lived in apartment buildings and those who lived in private houses. One respondent born in 1956 has lived in the same building for 53 years. Many of the same female neighbours still live nearby to this day, with whom she brings in the New Year either at one of their apartments, or in a restaurant they go to together. However, she only celebrates birthdays with one of these neighbours because both women happen to have the same birth date. Each one also invites their own circle of friends. According to a woman born in 1946, while she does not celebrate birthdays and other celebrations with her neighbours, they do gather outside in the yard to bring in the New Year, where they wish each other all the best. A unique custom among Bulgarians is to treat one's neighbours to food and drink before one's birthday. A woman born in 1962 explained how, on the eve of her birthday, one of her female neighbours would go over to her neighbour's place with some kind of treats. Then that neighbour, wanting to be polite, would give her a present the next day. I also happened to encounter this custom in the hotel where I was staying when one of the staff treated everyone to sweets, adding that she was doing so on the occasion of her birthday. This kind of custom has not been observed in Lithuania, where treats are offered only after someone has received birthday greetings or has received a gift.

In Bulgaria, unlike in Lithuania, festive gatherings among neighbours are more common among those from the older generation. However, the spectrum of occasions celebrated with neighbours is slightly broader than in Bulgaria, even though joint celebrations of New Year and birthdays predominates in both countries.

In Lithuania, according to a woman born in 1970, as for the majority of respondents, it has become common to celebrate children's birthdays together by inviting the neighbours' children over. Neighbours also gather to mark St John's Day (Midsummer) and New Year's Eve. They gather in the communal apartment building yard, and everyone brings food and drink to share. A Vilnius woman born in 1974 who lives in an apartment building also said she celebrated various occasions with several neighbours. New Year's Eve celebrations were particularly memorable – five families would get together. They would decide who would make particular dishes in advance and who would be the host. Their celebrations would usually start with dinner and be followed by games. One of

the more interesting games was to throw dice to win a prize (these gifts would be purchased in advance by all the neighbours 'chipping in', and they would all be nicely wrapped so that no one could guess what was inside). At midnight everyone would go outside to watch the fireworks and then come back inside to continue celebrating, eating and drinking. The children would be put to bed at one of the neighbours' homes.

At Christmas (even though it is considered a family celebration), these neighbours would decorate the stairwell together and treat others to cookies that would be left in the stairwell. They also gathered together to celebrate St John's Day: the children would play, and the adults would also think up all sorts of activities. Sometimes neighbours would not necessarily celebrate together, but they would all try to create a festive atmosphere in a public space. As one woman from Vilnius who was born in 1984 explained, even though Christmas and Easter were family celebrations, neighbours would sometimes leave cake, decorated Easter eggs or tiny Christmas buns (kalėdaičiai) for one another on their doorsteps. A Polish woman who lives in Vilnius (b. 1955) also added that, even now, the women would decorate the stairwell ahead of celebrations, such as the New Year, Christmas and Easter. Neighbours would also come together to mark Shrovetide traditions. A Vilnius woman born in 1976 said that whoever wanted to celebrate Shrovetide would gather in the communal yard and visit neighbours who lived further away. A man born in 1978 said that a tradition had formed whereby Shrovetide was celebrated in their neighbourhood community: children would go from house to house dressed as traditional Lithuanian Shrovetide characters 'begging' for pancakes and sweets, and then gather in a communal space to set fire to the Morė straw-lady. Both neighbours who lived in apartment buildings and those who lived in semi-detached houses spoke about the communal celebration of Shrovetide. A male respondent born in 1965 said that his neighbours had been marking this occasion for six years already, yet the more important New Year's Eve would have neighbours gathering in the street, letting off fireworks, greeting one another, sometimes sharing treats or inviting one another over to their homes. Older respondents were also found to celebrate New Year's Eve with their neighbours more frequently. A woman from Vilnius who had been born in 1946 and who lived alone celebrated the New Year with her closest neighbours in 2019.

The research for this paper showed that celebrations brought neighbours together in the public and/or private home environment. Neighbouring fami-

lies who maintained close and friendly relations with one another were often inclined to celebrate such occasions in their home environment. It was birthdays that most commonly brought neighbour-friends together in both cities. Even though neighbours in Vilnius were more likely to celebrate on more occasions and were marked in the public space, the participants in these celebrations were not necessarily identified as friends by the respondents.

Conclusions

To achieve the aims of this research of comparing interactions between neighbours in the cities of Sofia and Vilnius, in this I have analysed two types of neighbourhood: the formal, which is determined by territorial proximity and the necessity of mutual assistance; and the informal, based on friendly feelings and wanting to spend leisure time and celebrations together. However, the specific features of field research in the two cities highlighted another aspect of neighbourhood, namely, how it functions in the public and the private spaces. The research showed that in both Sofia and Vilnius, a communal public space would be chosen or sometimes even created to spend time together both on a daily basis and when marking celebrations, or in some cases, neighbours would interact in the private surroundings of their home. Three neighbourhood categories can be distinguished at this level: 1. those that are limited to just necessary mutual assistance; 2. those that include incidental or pre-planned daily or festive interaction in a public space; and 3. those neighbourhoods that develop further into pre-planned daily and festive interaction in the private space. Often, the latter two groups overlap in response to the different ratios of neighbourly and friendly feelings that are shared.

In both Lithuania and in Bulgaria, neighbourhoods from the second category dominate, as public spaces are used to spend time together with neighbours on a daily basis and to mark certain celebrations. In Sofia, this is more typical of the older respondents, as the younger generation in Bulgaria has have less interaction with their neighbours than do younger people in Lithuania. In Vilnius, young neighbours often celebrate special occasions together, but a public space set aside for celebrations does not make them feel obliged to develop friendly relations. In both Vilnius and Sofia, it appears that having young children has a strong influence on the intensity of neighbourly relations and whether these will develop into friendship, as neighbours feel a bond in

caring for children, sharing common experiences and later celebrating special occasions together. In both cities, some respondents did have friends among their neighbours, but they do not equate being neighbours with being friends, and they make a clear distinction between these concepts. Friendship is expressed by spending time together in public and private spaces. A majority of the respondents associated friendship with visiting one another at home, while birthdays were the most common celebration for spending time together. Older respondents, mostly those who came from villages, remember how neighbours would interact in the village environment. Having brought this concept of neighbourhood to the city, naturally they compared it to the situation there and pointed out generational differences. However, in the opinion of the majority, the city environment had altered interactions between neighbours and created a unique concept of neighbourhood that was based on close social links, some of which might develop into friendship.

Notes

[1] In Sofia in 2019 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 respondents born between 1933 and 1997. Almost all respondents were of Bulgarian nationality (there was one Turk and one Russian woman). Analogous research was conducted in 2020 and 2021 in the city of Vilnius during which 19 respondents who were born between 1934 and 1983 were interviewed (nationalities included Lithuanians, one Russian man and one Polish woman). Due to the quarantine in effect at the time, some of the respondents in Vilnius were interviewed over the phone

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NATIONAL AND CONFESSIONAL FEATURES OF FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS: STRUCTURE OF THE RITUAL YEAR IN MODERN LITHUANIA AND BULGARIA

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Abstract: The article aims to answer the question of whether different confessions and nationalities are an important factor in structuring a nation's ritual year. People's attitude towards state holidays (non-work days) is analysed based on research carried out by the author in 2012-2019 in Sofia (Bulgaria), Vilnius (Lithuania) and the towns and villages of Vilnius County. The study revealed that citizens of both states hold similar of state holidays. More popular are traditional holidays spent mostly with the family than modern holidays, which are often related to the nation's history and are celebrated with friends. The study also showed that there was little correlation between a holiday being a day off and its popularity. The ethnic and confessional structures of the two states do not constitute significant discrepancies differences with regard to the popularity of traditional and modern holidays.

Keywords: Festivals, holidays, ritual years, Lithuania, Bulgaria

Introduction

In 1994, the ethnologist Juozas Kudirka described Christmas Eve as celebrated in Lithuania (Kudirka 1994: 19-42), thus becoming the first scholar to take into consideration the confessional and national particularities of holidays in Lithuania. However, more thorough comparative research on holidays observed by Lithuanian confessional and ethnic communities did not start until the 21st century. The most recent studies have revealed that the way a holiday or festival (e.g. New Year, Shrove Tuesday or Assumption) is celebrated by different ethnic and confessional groups within the same state may create symbolic boundaries of otherness or in some cases merge such groups (Šaknys 2014: 105-17; Šaknys 2015a: 105-28; Šaknys 2016: 258-70; Šaknys 2020: 35-50). On the other hand, different confessional and ethnic groups may have different attitudes towards national holidays (Mardosa 2013: 58; Mardosa 2016: 105-122). Hence the question of how these phenomena manifested themselves in different countries and how nationality and confession influence the structure of the ritual year.

Research by the ethnologist Rasa Paukštytė Šaknienė comparing Lithuanian and Bulgarian Christmas traditions revealed that over the late 20th and early 21st centuries Christmas Eve became the most important celebration bringing the family together in the cities she was investigating. Moreover, the research showed that Christmas as observed by Orthodox Bulgarians in Sofia was more akin to the festival observed by Catholic Lithuanians and Poles in Vilnius than to that celebrated by Orthodox Russians (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 58-72; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2019: 57-70). This suggests that attribution to one or other confession may not be the main factor in determining the popularity of religious festivals. These findings led to a comparison of the ritual year in Lithuania and Bulgaria by juxtaposing people's attitudes towards this state holiday and by posing the question of whether different confessions and nationalities are an important factor in framing the ritual year. In pursuit of this goal, sights were set on the following objectives: 1) revealing the interaction between the ritual year of a state and the holidays and festivals observed by its citizens; 2) comparing traditional state holidays in Lithuania and Bulgaria; and 3) comparing modern state holidays in Lithuania and Bulgaria.

The main source for this paper is fieldwork material (semi-structured interviews) collected in Vilnius and the Vilnius area in 2012–2018 within the framework of the projects 'Social Interaction and Cultural Expression in the City: Leisure Time, Holidays and Rituals', 'Contemporary Festivals and Holi-

days in the Families of Vilnius citizens' and 'Leisure, Holidays and Rituals in the Vilnius Area: Social and Cultural Aspects'. Other material was collected in Sofia in the course of the project 'Contemporary Festivity in Bulgaria and Lithuania: from Traditional Culture to Post-Modern Transformations' in 2015 and 'Festival and Everyday Culture in Bulgaria and Lithuania: Tradition and Modernity' in 2019.

Alongside the field research mentioned above, ethnographic material collected by other authors and their research was also used in the analysis. Maria Znamierowska-Prüfferowa's research on the traditions of various ethnic and confessional groups in Vilnius (Znamierowska-Prüfferowa 1997, 2009) and Angel Jankov's study of Bulgarian Catholic calendar holidays and customs (Jankov 2003) are among the most valuable and comprehensive works on this theme. In addition, Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė's study of Bulgarian Catholic religiosity is worth mentioning: the findings of her field research, carried out in 2015-2017, helped to determine that Catholic religious identity had been preserved in the Plovdiv area (Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė 2018: 31-44).

The first research comparing Lithuanian and Bulgarian calendar festivals and holidays was Dalia Senvaitytė's article 'The collective identity characteristics of Bulgarians and Lithuanians: a comparative analysis of students' attitudes', which was based on empirical research data from 2010. The characteristics of collective identity (national, cultural and religious) of Bulgarians and Lithuanians were discussed, as well as their expression among students from Sofia, Plovdiv and Kaunas universities. According to her data, the most popular celebrations for Bulgarian students 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 New Year (23%). The author concluded that national holidays are much less important for Lithuanian than for Bulgarian students (ibid.: 485).

My research covers not only the culture of young people. In Sofia, on from 18 to 27 September 2019, twenty respondents born between 1933 and 1997 were interviewed, eighteen Bulgarians, one Turkish and one Russian. In Vilnius and Vilnius district I administered 40 and 45 semi-structured interviews. In addition to thirty Lithuanians, six Poles, two Russians, one Belarusian and one Jew born from 1965 to 1999 were interviewed in Vilnius. Research in Vilnius district research covered not only 23 Lithanians, but also eleven Poles, three Russians, one Byelorussian, five Tartars and two Karaims born from 1925 to

Žilvytis Šaknys

1999. In terms of religion, the absolute majority of respondents in Lithuania were Catholics, in Bulgaria Orthodox. During my fieldwork I tried to gather information about state holidays, by asking respondents with whom those celebrations were celebrated last year (family, relatives, friends, neighbours, co-workers, etc.). Respondents were also asked to indicate their favourite holiday.

In Sofia, field research was usually carried out in parks, yards, cafés and other public spaces. When choosing respondents, their age, sex, nationality and beliefs were not taken into consideration – the main criterion was their willingness to talk and their ability to answer questions in English or Russian. In Lithuania the languages were Lithuanian and Russian, and the respondents from villages and small towns were interviewed in their homes.

The interaction between public holidays and personal festivals

According to Katarína Popelková, 'The term holiday means the interruption of … daily routine, a moment commemorated on a cyclical basis or a period accompanied by normative or ritual acts and with an ascribed symbolic meaning' (Popelková 2017: 171). Certainly state holidays have an impact on people's leisure time by turning an ordinary day into a day off. Such days have the potential to shape feelings of ethnic, civic or religious identity. In the words of Gabriella Elgenius, 'the formalization of … European national days is often the result of negotiations between the people and the elites, a process that may be interpreted as an attempt by the latter to establish continuity with a living past through repeated and formalized ritual/symbolic complexes aiming to enhance the collective experience' (Elgenius 2007: 68). On the other hand, as Ekaterina Anastasova stated, the 'national festive system (as a part of the nation-building process) plays a major role in the formation and maintenance of national identity, outlining the border between "we-they", [being] the main symbols of the nation and the main consolidating factors (and mechanisms) to integrate the national community' (Anastasova 2011: 159-60). However, some holidays are related to a common Christian culture or are global in character (New Year, the First of May) and are observed in several countries. People in Lithuania and Bulgaria celebrate New Year (on the 1st of January; bulg. Нова година, lith. Nauji metai), Labour Day (on the 1st of May; bulg. Ден на труда и на международната работническа солидарност, lith. Tarptautinė darbo diena), Christmas Eve (bulg. Бъдни вечер, lith. Kūčios), two days of Christmas (bulg. Рождество Христово, Коляда, lith. Kalėdos) and the first and second

days of Easter (bulg. Великден, lith. Velykos; their dates in Lithuania and Bulgaria usually differ). In Bulgaria the Friday and Saturday before Easter are also festive days (Велики петък, Велика събота). On 24th June Lithuanians celebrate St. John's Day (Joninės, Rasos), on 15th August the Assumption of Mary (Žolinė) and on 1st November All Saints' Day (Visų Šventųjų diena). In Bulgaria, 6th May is celebrated as St. George's Day, which is also the Day of the Bulgarian Army (celebrated since 1880; Гергьовден, Ден на храбростта и Българската армия). 6th July, which marks the coronation of the first king of Lithuania, Mindaugas, in 1253, is the State Day in Lithuania (Valstybės diena). On 16th February the citizens of the country celebrate the Restoration of the State Day, which commemorates the proclamation of Lithuania's independence in 1918 (Lietuvos valstybės atkūrimo diena), while 11th March is Restoration of Independence Day (Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimo diena), which marks the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990. On 3rd March Bulgarians celebrate Liberation Day, which commemorates the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire after the war of 1877-1878 (Ден на Освобождението на България от османско иго). 22nd September is Bulgaria's Independence Day, referring to the proclamation of the country's independence in 1908 (Ден на Независимостта на България), while 6th September is celebrated as Unification Day (Ден на Съединението), which marks the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria in 1885. In addition, on 1st November, the country celebrates Bulgarian National Awakening Day or the Day of Bulgarian Enlighteners (Ден на народните будители), commemorating the Bulgarian national revival movement and honouring the memory and work of scholars, enlighteners, and national liberation fighters who helped preserve Bulgarian self-awareness and the nation's spiritual values and morals for centuries. 24th May is the Day of Culture and Literacy or the Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture, including Slavonic Literature and marking the educational activities of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century (Ден на българската просвета и култура и на славянската писменост). In Lithuania people also observe Mother's Day (first Sunday in May, Motinos diena)) and Father's Day (first Sunday in June, Tėvo diena).

However, when in the course of the recent field survey respondents in Sofia were asked what the most important holiday was, only some emphasized the significance of state holidays. Fifteen percent of respondents stated that the most important festivals were their birthdays or those of their family members.

For example, a woman born in 1983 stated that her birthday is a 'personal holiday', which she celebrates over several days, at different times, with different people. However, name days are much less popular than birthdays. Only one representative of the younger generation (born in 1983) singled out Nikulden (Saint Nicholas Day), celebrated on 6th December, as a names day. Equally important are religious festivals. A Turkish man born in 1960 indicated that Qurban Bayram was the most important holiday, as it was fun and included a family get-together. Other people might feel nostalgic about the past. For a Bulgarian woman born in 1934 the most important holiday is 9th May, Victory Day. She prepares a fancy dinner and watches Russian television on that occasion. Young people like festivals that came from the West. A student born in 1997 singled out Halloween, as for her this is the merriest celebration. Only 60 percent of respondents consider state holidays to be important. 25 percent mentioned Christmas, 20 percent New Year, 10 percent Easter, and only one woman, a former scholar (born in 1949), singled out 24th May, the Day of Culture and Literacy, which she now celebrates with her granddaughters outside the National Library.

When asked about the most important modern holidays in Vilnius, most respondents highlighted New Year (27 percent) and birthdays (20 percent). 13 percent considered Christmas to be the most important celebration, 9 percent mentioned St. John's Day and the Restoration of Independence Day (11th March), 7 percent voted for Halloween (31st October), 4 percent for the Restoration of the State Day (16th February) and Valentine's Day (14th February), and 2 percent indicated the State Day (6th July), All Saints' Day (1st November) and the Assumption (15th August). Thus, only 69 percent of the respondents in Vilnius mentioned state holidays (Šaknys 2019: 242).

The situation in the two countries is therefore very similar: just over a half of all the respondents in Sofia and two thirds in Vilnius indicated that state holidays were the most important to them. The research suggests that ordinary people sometimes view state holidays as ordinary days off, as an opportunity to have a few extra hours sleep, to tidy up the house, do other work or meet with friends. On the other hand, a festival that is considered truly important is celebrated after hours or postponed until the nearest weekend and sometimes even celebrated several times with different people (family members, co-workers and friends). This applies not only to state holidays but also to festivals observed by each country's ethnic minorities. Most ethnic groups

have their own holidays that do not coincide with the official state holidays, therefore those who work or study have to celebrate them after hours or take paid or unpaid leave (Šaknys 2015b: 100).

Traditional state holidays

In the scientific literature, holidays are often separated into religious and secular groups. Lately, however, the divide between religious and secular holidays has been disappearing, with the recreational function of the holiday gaining in importance (Kalnius 2003: 186; Mardosa 2013: 58), so that this dichotomy is ceasing to be objective. In order to compare state holidays as observed by residents of Vilnius, the Vilnius area and Sofia, a slightly different classification was employed, with holidays being grouped into traditional and modern. Traditional state holidays (without disclaiming their religious origin) are those that were celebrated prior to the nineteenth century in both countries. The figure below shows nine traditional holidays in Bulgaria and eight in Lithuania. In Bulgaria, however, unlike Lithuania, holidays that fall on a weekend are compensated by an additional day off, whereas in Lithuania the first day of Easter is always celebrated on a Sunday, which is a non-work day. The number of holidays also differs, with six traditional holidays in Lithuania and only four in Bulgaria. Bulgarians have four days off for Easter, Lithuanians only two. In both countries three days are allocated for Christmas. 1st January is celebrated in both Lithuania and Bulgaria. In addition, Lithuanians have the Assumption, All Saints' Day and St. John's Day, whereas Bulgarians celebrate St. George's Day, which is not only a religious family festival, but also the Day of the Bulgarian Army.

In order to understand better the popularity of holidays, data on the percentage of respondents who observed one or another holiday in the past few years will be presented. The number of people surveyed is not representative, therefore only the most general trends can be identified. As can be seen, Christmas Eve and Christmas were celebrated in all Christian families in both countries with the exception of a Turkish Muslim in Bulgaria, and Tartar Muslims, a Jew and representatives of the Karaite ethno-confessional group in Lithuania. The percentage of the population that is non-Christian in Lithuania and Bulgaria is very small. Based on data 2001, Muslims make up 13 percent of Bulgaria's population, and Jews account for 0.8 percent. In Lithuania, these numbers are even smaller. According to the 2011 census, Muslims make up 0.09 percent of the country's population, Jews 0.04 percent and Karaites 0.01

percent. Thus, there is no doubt that the majority of the population in both countries celebrate Christmas. The festival was also observed by non-religious respondents. For example, a student from Sofia (born in 1997) who identified herself as a half-Orthodox representative of the Goth subculture and was rather critical of religion, claimed that she celebrated Christmas and Easter. On the other hand, a woman born in 1995 said that, although not pious, she nonetheless celebrated Christmas to suit other members of her family. This example suggests that religious festivals also be celebrated by those who lack a religion.

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS IN SOFIA, VILNIUS AND VILNIUS COUNTY

	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Sofia	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Vilnius	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Vilnius County
▪ 12.24 Cristmas Eve	95	95	90
▪ 12.25 Christmas. First Day	95	95	90
▪ 12.26 Christmas. Second Day	70		
▪ 01.01 New Year	95	97,5	88
▪ Good Friday	50		
▪ Holy Saturday	45		
▪ Easter Sunday	95	95	98
▪ Easter Monday	70		
▪ 05.06 St. George's Day	75		
▪ 06.24 St. John's Day		62,5	73
▪ 08.15 Assumption		32,5	53
▪ 11.01 All Saints' Day		80	86

*The survey in Vilnius and Vilnius County made no distinction between the first and second days of Christmas and Easter.

Figure 1. Traditional Holidays in Sofia, Vilnius and Vilnius County

The figures for the first day of Easter are comparable. The festival was observed by all the surveyed Christians, Lithuanian Karaites indicated the equivalent of Easter, called Tymbyl Chydžy, and the Jewish woman pointed out Pesah as being celebrated at a similar time. However, fewer Bulgarians celebrate the second day of Easter. About half of the respondents in Bulgaria celebrate Good Friday and Holy Saturday (in Lithuania, data regarding these days were not collected). The lesser popularity of the Friday and Saturday before Easter can be explained by the fact that these days are dedicated to the preparation for the festival and are thus not identified with the festival itself. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, however, still uses the Julian calendar. In 1968, together with the Romanian and Greek Orthodox Churches, it adopted the Gregorian calendar, but the Easter cycle and church holidays are still observed in accordance with the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in Bulgaria. The Julian calendar is still used by the Russian Orthodox Church, therefore, people of the Orthodox faith in Lithuania still celebrate Christmas on 7th January. This leads to an emphasis on the official New Year on 1st January and more ritual prominence given to Easter as compared to Christmas. Of course, Bulgarians have more Easter- and spring-related holidays than Lithuanians. For example, very important festivals in Bulgaria are Lazarovden and Baba Marta. According to Jankov, these holidays are considered important not only by the Orthodox but also by Catholics (Jankov 2003). In Lithuania, these festivals are not observed by either Catholics or the Orthodox.

The third most important festival in both countries is New Year. In the socialist period, this was considered the most important holiday in both countries (Ivanova 2005: 335-6; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 64-5). During that period, some families did not celebrate Christmas but transferred certain of its ceremonial elements to New Year. According to the respondents, Bulgarians, like Lithuanians, would decorate the Christmas tree and wait for Father Frost (Дядо мраз in Bulgaria; Senis šaltis in Lithuania), or today Santa Claus (bulg. Дядо Коледа; lith. Kalėdų senis), to bring presents. Recently Christmas has regained its status, though young people also indicate that Christmas as the most important celebration of the year. A most unexpected reason why New Year should be considered an important celebration was offered by a student from Sofia born in 1985: she liked the festival as it was not associated with religion. New Year in Lithuania and Bulgaria is celebrated in a similar manner: people prepare a fancy dinner, listen to the president's speech, open a bottle of

champagne at midnight and go out to watch the fireworks (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 67). In both countries, young people sometimes celebrate New Year's Eve together with their parents and after midnight go out with friends. Older people, conversely, tend to celebrate with friends rather than families. Analysis of New Year celebrations revealed that respondents from Vilnius County spend the holiday with their families more often than with friends (73 percent and 44 percent respectively). In Sofia, 50 percent of the respondents celebrate New Year with their families and 70 percent with friends; in Vilnius these figures are 30 percent and 77.5 percent respectively. Although respondents in Lithuania were not asked how they observe the second days of Christmas and of Easter, their comments suggest that these festive days are often spent with friends. In Sofia, 20 percent of the respondents celebrated the second day of Christmas with their families and 45 percent – with friends; the figures for the second day of Easter are 35 percent and 30 percent respectively.

In 2015, I had the opportunity to observe the celebration of St. George's Day in Sofia. A huge military parade and other events on public spaces attracted crowds. Fewer people could be seen in churches. The research data suggest that this holiday is celebrated by 75 percent of the respondents, twice as many celebrating it with friends rather than with family members. Although the majority of the respondents knew and spoke about the family traditions observed on St. George's Day (roast lamb, baking a special pie), only 30 percent of them spent the holiday with their families. Some respondents celebrated it as a names day. This is indicative of the rapid transformation of a family festival into a public holiday.

Figure 2. St. George's Day is the Day of the Bulgarian Army. Sofia, 6th May 2015. Photo by Žilvytis Šaknys.

A popular festival in Lithuania is St. John's Day. Usually people gather around bonfires, which are set up in public spaces, or privately celebrate the names day of a member of their family or a friend. In Vilnius, St. John's Day is more often celebrated with friends, whereas in Vilnius County people tend to spend it with their families. This celebration is more secular in character, though is very important to those who profess the old Baltic faith. On the other hand, this festival is closely related to the Lithuanian national revival in Lithuania Minor at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, it is widely celebrated in Lithuania's Baltic neighbours, Latvia and Estonia.

Figure 3. St. John's Day, Vilnius, 23th June 2011. Photo by Žilvytis Šaknys.

A highly popular holiday is All Saints' Day, the eve of All Souls. On this day people visit the graves of their loved ones and meet with relatives in their home towns and villages. All Saints Day is normally spent with the extended family. As of 2020, All Souls Day is also a holiday and a day off in Lithuania. Only one third of the respondents in Vilnius and less than half in Vilnius County admitted celebrating the Assumption. In the city, the percentage of those who celebrate it with their families and friends was more or less equal, whereas in the Vilnius area the majority of those who observe the festival spend it with family members. In the urban environment it is sometimes difficult to grasp the meaning of a religious holiday packed with numerous agrarian rituals. Some respondents stated that they did not understand its meaning (for more details, see Šaknys 2020: 35–50).

The research of traditional holidays revealed that the source behind the popularity of a holiday is usually its family-related nature. Other important factors are traditions kept alive for centuries and the perceived meaning of a festival. As for the festivals observed in the city, my previous research had already revealed certain differences between Lithuania and Bulgaria (Šaknys 2018a: 119-30). This study also highlighted the trend to visit one's home town on holidays. For example, at Easter, a woman born in 1948 goes to the city of Pernik, which she left some fifty years ago but is where her parents' house has been preserved. Another woman born in 1973 likes Christmas as there are several days off and she can visit her relatives in Montana (her native area), or else her family comes to visit her in Sofia. In Lithuania, a similar holiday in this respect is the All Saints' Day; however, if people from Vilnius want to visit the graves of their loved ones around Lithuania, they have little time left to meet with their relatives and friends.

In summary, it should be noted that, in the structure of the ritual year, traditional holidays in Lithuania receive more attention. In fact, in Bulgaria people have more traditional holidays, but some of them are ordinary working days.

Modern state holidays

Another type of state holiday is modern holidays. Most of them originate in the country's history, and as they are not related to religion, they should seemingly importance to all religious and ethnic groups. However, in their content these festivals do not differ much from religious celebrations. According to Gabriella Elgenius, the national day is in many ways treated like a 'sacred' activity, and

symbols such as the flag attain the status of sacred objects. As central components of national worship they have, in other words, been raised above everyday life (Elgenius 2007: 78). On the other hand, on these holidays solemn services are held at churches of various denominations. Paradoxically, a smaller group of the surveyed respondents celebrates these holidays.

|	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Sofia	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Vilnius	Percentage of celebrating respondents in Vilnius county
03.03 Liberation Day	45		
05.01 Labour Day	25	17,5	7
05.24 Culture and Literacy Day	70		
09.06 Unification Day	25		
09.22 Independence Day	25		
11.01 Day of The Bulgarian Enlighteners	45		
02.16 State Restoration Day		57,5	39
03.11 Restoration of Independence Day		50	39
07.06 State Day		42,5	54
Mother's Day		85	83
Father's Day		55	68

Figure 4. Modern Holidays in Sofia, Vilnius and Vilnius County

Both Lithuanians and Bulgarians have six modern state holidays. However, in Lithuania Mother's Day and Father's Day fall on a Sunday, which is a non-work day. The two states have one holiday in common, Labour Day, though in neither country is it particularly popular. In Bulgaria only a quarter of the respondents admitted celebrating it, whereas in Lithuania this number was even smaller. On 14th July 1889, the Second International Congress in Paris declared 1st May International Workers' Solidarity Day. In Bulgaria, this day has been a holiday since 1939, but it acquired particular popularity during socialist rule. In Lithuania, this festival has a rather long history. It was declared state holiday back in 1919, but in 1930 1st May was removed from the list. The celebration was revived in 1940, following Lithuania's occupation by the USSR, and it was observed during both the Nazi (1941-1944) and Soviet (1945-1989) occupations. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the festival was demoted to an ordinary work day, but it was reinstated by the Social Democrats, who came to power in 1996. On 1st May 2004, Lithuania joined the European Union. Bonfires were lit in towns and cities, but this tradition did not last. The celebration of Lithuania's accession to the European Union did not take root, therefore this occasion is only included in the list of memorable days, and 1st May is mainly celebrated as Labour Day. In both Bulgaria and Lithuania, 1st May had no folk traditions associated with the first day of May (as, for example, in Germany and neighbouring Germanic countries, where there are long-standing traditions of the May festival). Some respondents in both countries referred to this holiday as socialist or Soviet.

In Bulgaria, a quarter of the respondents celebrate Unification Day. When asked about this festival, several respondents claimed that it was most solemnly celebrated in Plovdiv, where the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria was proclaimed in 1885. Their responses gave the impression of it being more of a local than an all-Bulgarian holiday. The field research was carried out in September, so most of the respondents had the chance to remember what they were doing on that particular day. However, the majority stated that they did not celebrate it.

No more than a quarter of the respondents admitted celebrating Bulgaria's Independence Day. The respondents had an even better opportunity to remember it, as the field research was conducted just before the holiday and immediately after it. Several representatives of the older generation even said that they had forgotten about the festival, though it was celebrated a day or

two before the interview. After being reminded of the date, the respondents admitted not celebrating the festival. One respondent even said that there were too many of those independence days for him to remember to celebrate each of them. Younger respondents seemed to be more eager to celebrate the holiday. Sofia Heritage Days were held in the city on the eve and day of the celebration, a colourful and entertaining event designed to appeal to both young and older people. However, just as in Vilnius, only a meagre number of the residents of the city attends such events.

Figure 5. Sofia Heritage Days. Sofia, 21st September 2018. Photo by Žilvytis Šaknys.

Significantly more, almost half of the respondents focused on Liberation Day. Sometimes this was called the most important holiday, the National Day. The holiday may be popular due to the fact that it is the first of the three dates marking the formation of the Bulgarian state and has been celebrated since 1888 (with a break in 1944-1989) (Gergova 2016: 94-7). The popularity of the festival could be a matter of seasonality: it is celebrated on 3rd March and is close to the popular festival of Baba Marta (1st March). As for the first three holidays, Ekaterina Anastasova argues that political reasons and present-day historical associations with Russia and the socialist period might be the main reason for their unpopularity (Anastasova 2011: 163). However, just as few respondents admitted celebrating the Day of the Bulgarian Enlighteners, which falls on 1st November and is a day off only for education professionals.

Meanwhile in Bulgaria the most popular of all modern holidays is Culture and Literacy Day, observed by two thirds of all the respondents. This day is also officially celebrated in North Macedonia and commemorated in Russia and Serbia. According to Anastasova, 'this festival was the most loved Bulgarian holiday in the period of socialism: in all towns and villages in Bulgaria long processions of university and schoolteachers, students and schoolteachers, children and their relatives dressed in special clothes were organised and a special program was performed. Streets were overcrowded with joyful people' (Anastasova 2011: 165). It has certain features of a national holiday (anthem sung, flag raised, images of Cyril and Methodius carried by processions), a strong element of national pride (books to read handed out to everyone) and the potential for nostalgia (every Bulgarian was a schoolchild once). However, this festival, though an official celebration, is not considered a national holiday in Bulgaria, due to the absence of its most important quality – a uniqueness that distinguishes 'ours' from 'theirs' (Anastasova 2011: 165-6). Dalia Senvaitytė also mentions this holiday as a popular celebration among students, indicating that it is compulsory in schools (Senvaitytė 2011: 485). According to this ethnologist, state holidays are much less important to Lithuanian than to Bulgarian students. The most important state holiday for students in Lithuania is the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence (11th March), whereas the State Day (6th July) is given less prominence (ibid.). My data shows a different situation. In Vilnius most popular is Restoration of the State Day. The birthday of the modern state of Lithuania is the only festival that retained the status of a public holiday and non-work day both in 1919-1940 and after 1990, and it

surpasses other national holidays in popularity. State Day, declared in 1990, is the least frequently celebrated. Meanwhile, in Vilnius County it is celebrated most often of all other national holidays. Only 39 percent of my respondents celebrated the other two national holidays. In summary, it can be said that in Vilnius and its area these holidays were observed by about a half of all the respondents, though numerous entertainment events are organized on these dates (for more information see Šaknys 2021). This figure is comparable to the research results in Bulgaria.

According to Elgenius, national ceremonies create awareness and may as a result reinforce and sustain the values of the community. National days can be powerful tools that bind past, present and future generations together (Elgenius 2007: 77). In Bulgaria, there is a recent debate regarding the most important state holiday, namely National Day, though Anastasova argues that 'the discussion about which feast has to be the national one continues, and is renewed every year' (Anastasova 2011: 164). In Lithuania, this issue was intensely discussed in 1920-1940. The expression 'National Day', which denotes the most important state holiday in Lithuania, was often used in the Lithuanian press between 1918 and 1940. However, it refers not to just one but a number of different holidays, such as the Day of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania (16th February), the Day of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania (15th May), the Assumption (15th August), or the Day of the Coronation of Vytautas the Great (8th September). The need to emphasize one or another holiday was associated with the most suitable season to celebrate it (15th May, later 8th September) or financial reasons were cited, as a celebration that coincides with a religious festival would not require an additional day off (the Assumption and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary). The patriotic motif was in the third place in 1930 when celebrating the 500th anniversary of Vytautas' coronation (which in fact never happened). After the restoration of independence in 1990, only 16th February became a public holiday. The Assumption is considered a religious celebration (Šaknys 2018b: 129–154). Thus, neither Lithuania nor Bulgaria is able to focus on just one National Day: instead they celebrate several of such, which makes it difficult to determine a clearer perception of the value-based hierarchy of events.

Figure 6. Restoration of the State Day. Vilnius, 16th February 2018. Photo by Žilvytis Šaknys.

All national holidays in Sofia are usually spent with friends rather than family. In Vilnius and Vilnius County, the most popular modern holidays are Mother's Day and Father's Day. Unlike the majority of other modern holidays, these two are mostly family celebrations. Mother's Day dates back to 1928, though in 1940, following the Soviet occupation, it was banned and revived shortly before the collapse of the USSR, mostly by the efforts of ethnologist Juozas Kudirka (Kudirka 1989); in 1990 the holiday was reinstated (Šidiškienė 2016a: 234-5). The celebration includes visiting mothers and giving them presents. Father's Day was declared a holiday in the last years of the Republic of Lithuania and was celebrated for no longer than a couple of years until the Soviet occupation. It was also promoted in the publication dedicated to Mother's Day. In 2008 Father's Day became a state holiday (Šidiškienė 2016b: 249), but neither before the war nor now has it been on the scale of the Mother's Day celebration.

In summary, it should be noted that, in the structure of the ritual year in Bulgaria, national holidays are given more prominence than in Lithuania. In

most cases modern state holidays are spent with friends (less often in Vilnius County), with the exception of Father's Day and Mother's Day in Lithuania, which are celebrated within the family, but these festivals always fall on a Sunday, so there are no additional days off.

Conclusions

This comparison of the ritual year in the Baltic nation of Lithuania, where most people are Catholics, and in the Slavonic nation of Bulgaria, where most residents are of the Orthodox faith, has revealed that in both countries a decline in the influence of the church on festivals can be observed, leading to their being grouped into traditional and modern.

Analysis of the most important traditional celebration of Catholic Lithuanians and Orthodox Bulgarians, namely Christmas, suggests that not only the predominant confession, but also the calendar (Julian or Gregorian) used for the festival has an impact on the value structure of the ritual year and the associated holidays. This might be the reason why, among different Christian confessions and in different states, one or another holiday may acquire identical value. The emphasis on Christmas Eve in both Bulgaria and Lithuania may be associated with the fact that in both countries Christmas is celebrated in accordance with the Gregorian calendar. On the other hand, comparing the number of traditional and modern holidays, we see that in Lithuania the state puts emphasis on traditional holidays, in Bulgaria on modern holidays. However, the attitude of people towards state holidays in both countries is similar. Traditional celebrations originating in religious festivals that are usually celebrated within the family are more popular in Vilnius and Sofia compared to modern holidays, which are mostly related to the history of the state and celebrated with friends. In this respect, the situation in smaller towns and villages in Lithuania is a little different, as here modern holidays are more often celebrated within the family circle.

The research also revealed that, when analysing modern holidays, both young and old in both Bulgaria and Lithuania at times find it difficult to explain the historical value of a particular celebration. On the days linked with the history of the state, both countries offer a great variety of events, though they are attended by less than a half of the respondents. Festive events on such occasions are usually designed to attract young people, while older residents have no entertainment that would suit their age. The holiday that the respondents in

both countries find most difficult to understand and describe is International Labour Day. Neither country has a single National Day that would stand out in the hierarchy of the ritual year. This complicates the association of holidays with the formation of national and civic identity in both countries.

Analysis of the structure of the ritual year in Lithuania and Bulgaria revealed more similarities than differences. The research findings suggest that a day off on a particular holiday does not guarantee its popularity. The ethnic and confessional structure of different states does not form any differences when comparing the popularity of religion- and history-based holidays.

Notes

[1] As holiday-related terms vary even in the scientific literature, and although there are discrepancies when translating them from other languages into English, the definitions of these concepts used in this paper are as follows. The state's ritual year is the legally established structure of public holidays (days off). A state holiday is a calendrical date designated by the government as a holiday (a day off). A festival is a holiday observed by a national, ethnic or confessional group, family or other communities (a work day). A national holiday is a holiday associated with historical events (a day off). A National Day is the state's most important holiday.

[2] In 2020, another holiday – All Souls' Day (Vėlinės) celebrated on 2nd November – was introduced. As these changes came after the completion of the field research, this holiday is not covered in this article.

[3] Cyril and Methodius are best known as the creators of the Slavonic alphabet. Cyril first created the Glagolitic script – the old Slavonic church script – and later the Cyrillic alphabet, which is still used in Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Ukraine, as well as by the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches. It is thanks to Cyril and Methodius that the Gospel and other Christian books were translated into Old Slavonic. In 1980, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Cyril and Methodius the patron saints of Europe.

[4] Due to a lack of space, Christmas and Easter will not be discussed in detail here. However, they are the most important Christian as well as family celebrations both in Lithuania and Bulgaria, and have many traditions in common (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2018: 58-72; Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2019: 57-70).

[5] In fact, certain similarities between New Year and Christmas Eve customs in Lithuania and Bulgaria could be observed already at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Slaveĭkov 2012: 32; Kudirka 1993: 243-254), therefore it was not a

difficult task to elevate New Year to the status of the most important festival of the year by attributing certain Christmas traditions to it.

[6] In Bulgaria, unlike in Lithuania, All Soul's Days (Zadushnitsa) are several. There are usually three Zadushnitsa days in a calendar year: on Saturdays before Mesni Zagovezni (eight weeks before Easter, Meat Fast Sunday), before Petdesetnitsa (50 Days after Easter) and before Arhangelovden (8th November, Michelmas). In some regions of Bulgaria there are also three All Soul's days around other major holidays: Todorovden (Saturday after Sirni Zagovezni (Cheese-Fast Sunday), St. Theodore's Feast Day (seven weeks before Easter), Lazarovden (the last but on Saturday before Easter, St. Lazarus Feast Day) and Petkovden (14th October, St. Petka's Day) (Benina-Marinkova Dimitrova, Tsanova Antonova and Assenova Paprikova-Krutilin 2019: 95).

[7] Bulgaria joined the European Union on 1st January 2007.

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MASQUERADE GAMES IN THE PERNIK REGION OF BULGARIA: PRESERVING AND PROMOTING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract. The focus of this text is the masquerade tradition in central-west Bulgaria and activities related to its safeguarding and promotion. The essence of the survakar games in the Pernik Region is described, as well as its significance in traditional culture and its contemporary manifestations. The games with masks in the region are performed on the Surva feast day (14 January; also St. Basil's Day according to the Julian calendar). The text notes the importance of the custom in the local community's traditional culture. The main characters in the survakar groups, which are typical of both the past and the present, are presented, as are some new phenomena related to the feast. The tendencies in the context of the dynamics and events of the twentieth century are outlined, thanks to which the masquerade tradition has maintained its vitality until the present day. Some processes that have threatened the vitality of these masquerade games in the past are considered. Various local activities related to the safeguarding of the tradition are presented. The role of the community is important for the transmission of cultural practice to future generations, as is the role of local cultural institutions and organizations in preserving the tradition. Some ways of popular-

izing the local heritage and the joint work of the main actors engaged in safeguarding the region's intangible cultural heritage today are emphasized.

Keywords: masquerade games, surva (surova), intangible cultural heritage, preservation, promotion.

Introduction

In the context of processes for preserving intangible cultural heritage, communities have a main role in taking care of their own cultural heritage. According to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Convention 2003),[1] it is local communities that have the central role in both identifying intangible cultural heritage and implementing proposed safeguarding measures, as well as in the maintenance and transmission of this heritage and communities' active involvement in its management (Article 15). At the same time, each state is needs to adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of its intangible cultural heritage in society; integrating the safeguarding of such heritage into planning programmes; designating or establishing one or more competent bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage that is present in its territory; fostering scientific, technical and artistic studies, as well as research methodologies, with a view to the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage; fostering the creation or strengthening of institutions for training in the management of intangible cultural heritage; and establishing institutions to document intangible cultural heritage and to facilitate access to them. (Article 13). All these guidelines in Convention 2003 presuppose very close cooperation between the various actors working in the field of preserving intangible cultural heritage – communities, groups and individuals, national and local institutions, and both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The focus of this text is how the masquerade tradition in central-west Bulgaria is being preserved and more specifically how cooperation between communities and experts in the safeguarding and promotion of the tradition of masquerade games in the Pernik region is being carried out. The text traces the interactions between communities, experts and institutions over a period of more than fifty years, which includes the periods both before and after Bulgaria's ratification of Convention 2003 in 2006.

Masquerade games in Pernik Region

The tradition of masquerade games[2] in central-west Bulgaria is bound up with the winter ritual cycle and is a significant element of the intangible cultural heritage of scores of villages in Pernik District. This ancient tradition, still alive at the present day, occupies an important place in the local population's festive calendar , and the local region in which the masquerade remains a cultural practice comprises more than fifty settlements.

The masquerade games are performed on 14 January (St. Basil's Day according to the Julian calendar), the ritual starting already on the eve of the holiday. In the old style calendar, this is New Year's Day, called by local communities Surva, Surova or Sirova, while the participants are called survakari, survashkarye, sirviskarye, mechkarye or startsi. Preparation for the games begins as early as late autumn, when the work in the fields draws to an end. Then people gather skins, dried birds' feathers and wings, and look for bells. Before the holiday itself, the participants meet together to allocate the different characters and elect their leader. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, only young unmarried men from the local community disguised themselves, because the custom had the function of an initiation ceremony, as well as being connected with their future marriages (Manova 1977; Kraev 2003). Today men of all ages, as well as women and children also put on masks. In some villages, there are numerous children's groups, including some of the characters typifying the groups of adults.

The masquerade group represents a wedding procession with the following characters– 'bride', 'bridegroom', 'father-in-law', 'mother-in-law', 'best man', 'woman witness', 'priest', 'sexton', 'bear with bear keeper'. Other characters are the group's leader (bolyubasha) and the 'gypsies' (Roma), as well as some modern ones like 'doctor', 'nurse', 'policeman', etc. (Figs. 1–2). Those who are connected with the idea of a wedding are dressed in traditional costumes, typical for the region. The survakars who wear masks are dressed in hides, the fur inside out, and they wear bells on their waists. After the 1930s, they start to make some of the costumes from worn-out clothes, cut to rags. Nowadays, such costumes are made from different bands of material, cut from pieces of cloth. The masks for the head bear the local designation lik/litsi (effigy/effigies). They are made of wood, stuffed parts of domestic animals, leather, horns, tails, birds' wings and feathers. The masks are zoomorphic and more rarely anthropomorphic (Figs. 3–4).

Figure 1. Wedding procession and 'bear with a bear keeper' from Lyulin village, Pernik Region. Photo: Milena Lyubenova, 2017. (Archive IEFSEM – BAS: FtAIF № 1575, arch. unit 180).

Figure 2. 'Nurse' and Leader of the group from Kosharevo village. Photo: Milena Lyubenova, 2020. (Archive IEFSEM – BAS: FtAIF №1837, arch. unit 290).

Figure 3. Survakar group from Divotino village. Photo: Milena Lyubenova, 2019.
(Archive IEFSEM – BAS: FtAIF No.1751, arch. unit 320).

In the past, late in the evening of 14 January, the survakars gathered at a house, disguised and already masked, to start visiting the households in the village. Frequently they first visited a neighbouring village before going around their own. Today, the holiday is on both 13 and 14 January. In the evening of 13 January, the survakars go to the centre of the settlement, light fires, dance around them, jest with the crowd, visit neighbouring villages, welcome other masquerade groups, and, with everyone else, take part in the chain dance or horo, enjoying the fun. Early in the morning of 14 January, the masked characters gather again to walk around the village. As a rule, they visit every home, and people interpret this as a wish for good health and well-being. In every house, the 'priest' weds the 'newly-weds', 'the bear mauls people for good health' and everyone else dances noisily and joyously around in the yard. The hosts anticipate them eagerly and with love, welcome them with traditional food, treat them and give them money, meat, fruit and drinks. The whole population of the village takes part in the holiday, which makes the custom extremely lively and dynamic in our days. Every Surva group has between fifty and a hundred participants, so that on the feast of 13 and 14 January those wearing masks in Pernik region grow to several thousand. In spite of the social and political changes after the middle of the twentieth century and, notwithstanding the country's intensive industrialization and modernization, with their impact on practising the elements of traditional culture in their natural environment, the masquerade tradition in the Pernik region has proved to be resistant and to this very day is being transmitted to future generations.

After 1944,[3] there were some towards administrative restrictions being placed on those practicing Surva games (Bokova 2010), but no permanent prohibition was introduced. Later during socialism, some attempts were made to change the date of the masquerade games, the authorities wishing them to be preformed on a rest day (Saturday or Sunday). This was to try and avoid people's mass absence from work when the holiday coincided with a workday. However, those attempts were unsuccessful due to resistance from the participants in the survakar groups.[4]

After the mid-1950s, the increased industrialization of the country and the wave of migration from villages to towns put the practice of the masquerades at risk. In that period, became one of the main industrial centres in Bulgaria,[5] which accelerated the movement of the region's inhabitants into the town. This

impacted on the survakar games in some of the villages, where the custom gradually started dying out.

Figure 4. Survakar from Yardzhilovtsi village. Photo: Milena Lyubenova, 2013. Archive IEFSEM – BAS: FtAIF No.1360, arch. unit 107).

The Festival of the Masquerade Games in Pernik

Based on what remained of the living tradition, in 1966 a festival of masquerade games was established in Pernik. This was the initiative of Yordan Nikolov, a choreographer and folklorist, and also an inspector in the Culture and Art Department of the Pernik District People's Council (Georgiev 2017). The organization of the festival is related to the country's cultural policy at that time, which was directed at investigating and restoring old traditional customs, which start to be presented on the stages of folk festivals and feasts on a mass scale.[6] As a result an urban holiday was introduced in Pernik, where the preserved survakar tradition from the region's settlements was presented to the public at large, together with the masquerade groups that had been invited from some other parts of the country (Figs. 5–7). After the 1960s, the activities related to safeguarding and popularizing the masquerade games in the Pernik region become an important part of the work of experts in the sphere of culture. In the following decades, there was continual research and cooperation between these specialists and the communities that still practiced the masquerade tradition.

As already stressed, this is a period of the active migration of the population of local villages to the town of Pernik. According to the local experts, an important factor in maintaining the survakar games as a living practice in the villages is considered to have been the National Festival of the Survakars and Kukers, organized in Pernik in 1966 (Manova 2012: 15–16). Over the years it won recognition as a significant cultural event in Pernik Municipality, and from 1985 acquired the statute of an international event in the form of an International Festival of the Masquerade Games – 'Surva'.[7] In that same period of time of over fifty years, the interactions between local communities and cultural experts was a significant aspect of the region's cultural policy. Its aim, on the one hand, was to preserve the vitality of the local cultural tradition in the villages, while on the other hand developing the festival as a cultural event in Pernik town, at the same time giving it national and later international importance.

The International Festival of the Masquerade Games in Pernik has played a strong role in popularizing the masquerade tradition both in the country and abroad. In the course of time, its scope was broadened, and both its participants and its visitors increased in number. At present, the masquerade groups that part in the festival from Bulgaria and from all over the world number more than a hundred, and those in masks number over five thousand.

Figure 5. National Festival of Kukers and Survakars – Pernik 1977. Survakar group from Selishten dol village (State Archives – Pernik: Fond. 1134, inventory 1, arch. unit 81, page 2).

Figure 6. National Festival of Kukers and Survakars – Pernik 1977. Survakar group from Kosharevo village (State Archives – Pernik: Fond. 1134, inventory 1, arch. unit 78, page 3).

Figure 7. International Festival of Masquerade Games 'Surva' – Pernik 2016. Photo: Milena Lyubenova, 2016. (Archive IEFSEM – BAS: FtAIF №1517, arch. unit 337).

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at the present day

No doubt the experience acquired in these decades contributes to the joint work between communities and experts in activities related to applying to UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage being continued. As a result of this active work, in 2012 Pernik prepared to nominate the survakar games for the National System of 'Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria'.[8] The nomination includes 31 villages in Pernik District that are the bearers of the masquerade tradition and that have given their preliminary informed consent to take part in the National System. As a result, the cultural element is selected first regionally and then nationally, being inscribed in the National Representative List of elements of intangible cultural heritage in the same year.[9]

The initiative to include the masquerade games from the whole region in a single nomination and draw up a dossier on the 'Surova Folk Festival in the Pernik Region' was the outcome of active cooperation between local communi-

ties and local experts, in which respect the role of the specialists was of special importance. The Regional Museum of History – Pernik drew the dossier up with the assistance of experts from the Regional Expert-Consulting and Information Centre – Pernik, the 'Culture' Department of Pernik Municipality and representatives of the culture centres or chitalishta[10] in the villages of Pernik District. The participation of experts in preparing the nomination makes it possible to involve scores of villages in Pernik District and results in inscribing the custom in the National List of Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage. At present, of all the nominations that took part in the National System, this is still the only one in Bulgaria representing an element that is typical for a whole region of the country.

In 2015, the masquerade tradition of Pernik region was also inscribed in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.[11] Again, cooperation between local communities and local experts was of decisive importance, as was the joint work of experts both locally and nationally. For this nomination also increased the number of the settlements that gave their consent to their inclusion, a total of 41 survakar groups.

The active work of safeguarding the masquerade tradition in the Pernik region continued in the years that followed inscription of the element in the UNESCO Representative List. According to the Operational Directives for the Implementation of Convention 2003, non-governmental organizations (NGO), experts, centres of expertise and research institutes play a decisive role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In the third chapter of the Directives, it is pointed out that the States Parties should guarantee the participation of the communities that are the bearers of the intangible cultural heritage, and should involve civil society in the implementation of the Convention both nationally and internationally.[12] Nationally, in their safeguarding endeavours, the States Parties should encourage the participation of non-governmental organizations, especially in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage, because these organizations are most often in the best position to work directly with local communities.[13]

The different actors involved in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage locally and nationally have their own role in the process (Ivanova 2016: 73–81; Stanoeva 2016: 179–92; Nalbantyan-Hacheryan 2019). As already emphasized, the role of the communities who are involved in safeguarding their own cultural heritage is very significant, indeed essential. In actual fact, the real preserva-

tion of intangible cultural heritage goes on where it is continually practised (Stanoeva 2016: 181). Besides, an important factor in these processes is the involvement of both state institutions (national, regional and local) and non-governmental organizations. The civil sector structures also have a significant role and can cooperate with the state, the local authority, the communities and the experts in all the aspects regarding the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.[14] Most of those organizations work on the project principle, but look for sustainability in their activities namely in the interaction with state institutions, with scientific institutes and with the bearers of intangible cultural values (Nalbantyan-Hacheryan 2018: 26).

Until Surva was inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List, along with the communities and their local cultural centres, which represent them (including also survakar associations[15]), the different institutions in Pernik District, such as the Regional Museum of History – Pernik, the Regional Expert-Consulting and Information Centre – Pernik, the 'Culture' Department at the Pernik Municipality and others, played an important roles too.

In 2016, a non-governmental organization was established in the town of Pernik with the aim of working in the sphere of safeguarding the region's local cultural heritage (material and intangible) with specific reference to the Surva element. Some of its initiators had participated as experts in the town's cultural institutions in past decades and had taken an active role in preparing the two nominations of the custom for the national and world lists. They were also among the masterminds in realizing the initiative to create a non-profit association. The main work of the association was directed to having the Surova feast inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List. The goal is to continue joint activities with local communities to maintain the vitality of the element and support its dissemination, as well as, if necessary, taking safeguarding measures.

In this way, a 'Local Heritage' Non-profit Association was registered in Pernik in 2016.[16] The initiative started at the local level, and all of its founders were one way or another concerned with the safeguarding of the masquerade tradition in the region. Once the NGO was registered, its initial significant activities were naturally related to that element of the intangible cultural heritage. One of the Association's basic tasks is to continue the systematic work of collecting information about the custom in various regional villages and of recording it in its natural milieu, thus creating an archive consisting of different types of documents (audio, video, photos and text materials).

At the beginning of 2019, the 'Local Heritage' Association adopted an initiative supported by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO. Workshops were organized to manufacture survakar masks on the eve of the feast of Surva, the aim being to demonstrate the method of mask manufacture both to the children and young people in a village with a living masquerade tradition and among those from an urban environment as well. A bearer of the masquerade tradition in the Pernik Region demonstrated the manufacturing technology. The workshops were carried out in the course of several days in 'St. Luke' National Secondary School of Applied Arts in Sofia and in the 'Ivan Vazov' Primary School in the village of Izvor, Radomir Region, Pernik District (Fig. 8). The manufactured masks were presented at the exhibition called 'An Encounter with Surova' in the town of Pernik (Fig. 9).

Figure 8. Workshop for survakar masks. Photo: Aleksandar Atanasov, 2019. (Archive: 'Local Heritage' Association).

Figure 9. Exhibition of survakar masks. Fhoto: Milena Lyubenova, 2019. (Archive: 'Local Heritage' Association).

In 2018, the 'Local Heritage' Association started implementing a project supported by the 'Culture' National Fund entitled 'Popularizing the Custom of Surva by Means of an Interactive Web Page'. The objective of the project was to introduce one of the significant elements of the intangible cultural heritage in Pernik region, namely the feast Surva to the internet. This would improve access to information about the custom among a wide circle of users in the virtual space by creating a multimedia product representing all the survakar groups in the region on a common platform, which would provide textual information (in Bulgarian and in English), along with photo and video materials. The aim was to widen the possible visibility of the element nationally and internationally by introducing the information in a synthesised and popular form.

The main activities envisaged in the project were investigations in archives, field research, and establishing and enriching the interactive site. Interviews were conducted, observations were carried out in the settlements that had preserved the tradition, and various audio-visual materials were collected (photos, audio and video-recordings). Archive documents were examined as well (interviews, photos and video recordings) from the Regional Museum of

History – Pernik, the State Archives – Pernik, and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The collected information was processed, texts were prepared with translations in English, and the visual materials were selected.

On the website[17] one can find information about the Surva custom in Pernik Region, both the masquerade's traditional characteristics and its contemporary manifestations (Fig. 10). The main characters that are typical of the winter games with masks in the region are outlined. Also represented are all the survakar groups in Pernik area, their arrangement following the territorial divisions of their villages. The masquerade tradition is still a living practice in five municipalities of Pernik District: Breznik, Zemen, Kovachevtsi, Pernik and Radomir.

Every survakar group is introduced with a text and photo and video materials. The texts include information taken from interviews conducted in the villages and from archive documents. The interviews were conducted with
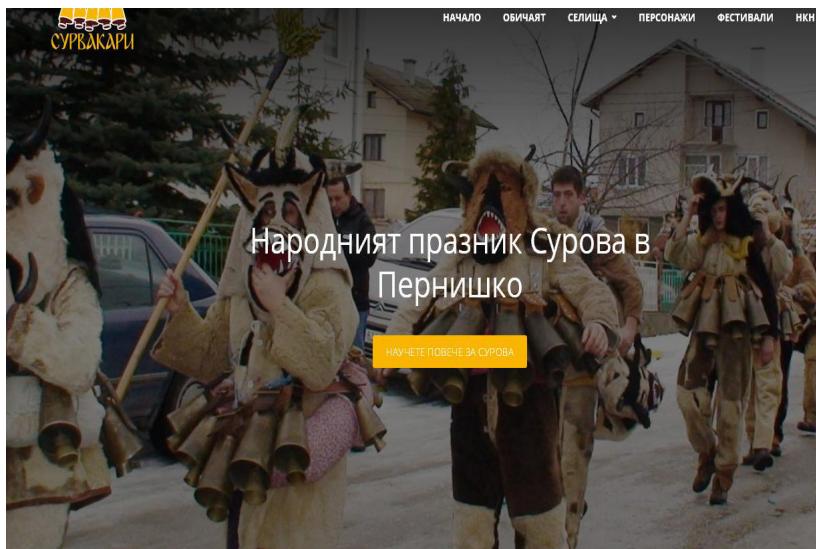

Figure 10. The website of the Survakar groups in Pernik region (https://survakari.com/).

different generations of participants in the survakar groups and with survakars with definite roles in the masquerade: bolyubashiya (leader of the group), 'bride', 'bridegroom', 'priest', etc.; from hosts (members of the local community who welcome the masked characters into their homes); and from representatives of the settlements who have administrative and staff functions and at the same time take part in the life of the survakar groups.[18]

The visual materials represent the masquerade in the settlements with archive photos and video recordings. Some of the photos convey an idea of how Surva was celebrated some decades ago. The masquerade participants themselves submitted them for the site, but some of the old photos were also selected from the State Archives in Pernik. The video materials were recorded more recently and show the contemporary state of the survakar games in the region. Information about the participation of the masquerade groups in various festivals in the country and abroad is also given on the site. A separate section presents the work carried out in Bulgaria on fulfilling the requirements of Convention 2003, as well as the involvement of the Surva fest in the National System 'Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria' in 2012, and inscription of the element in the respective Lists of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – the National one and that of Humanity.

Among the important aims of the project is to enrich the site by building up a body of different types of documents that record the past and the present state of the Surva feast in Pernik Region, namely audio and video recordings, photos and written documents. As a result, an archive collection will be built up that can be successfully used in the future for purposes of both investigation and popularization. On the other hand, it is important to continue the field research and to maintain the site, enriching it with new information. Building the webpage plays a positive role in accumulating information, while representatives from different survakar groups and from village communities continue to provide additional data, mainly photos and facts about the masquerade groups. Besides widening the visibility of this cultural tradition that is so significant in the Pernik region, the site also aims to encourage feedback with the communities, which should continue to have an active role in safeguarding their local intangible cultural heritage in the future as well. They should therefore transmit the tradition to the following generations and should get involved in activities for its preservation and popularization through further investigations and recording activities.

Nowadays, local activities for safeguarding this intangible cultural heritage are in accordance with the implementation of Convention 2003. Undoubtedly, the inscription of the Surova fest in the UNESCO Representative List has increased the self-confidence of the bearers of the masquerade tradition in the Pernik region and engaged certain actors from the local community who saw prospects for new activities and initiatives related to safeguarding and promoting the element. However, the involvement of the local community, as well as the interaction between the bearers, experts and institutions that conduct the official cultural policies of the state was a fact well before the ratification of Convention 2003 and the inscription of the element in the Representative list. Safeguarding these masquerade games as a living practice at the present day is the next step in a process that began in the middle of the twentieth century. The community continues to have an important role in safeguarding this local cultural practice. In implementing measures for protection of the element, close interaction between bearers and experts and institutional support occurs within the local community.

Conclusion

The processes related to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage comprise the whole range of activities, from maintaining the vitality of the elements of local culture via their investigation and recording to the permanent preservation of traditional knowledge of the practice in archive collections, thus creating opportunities for widening its visibility. In practice, the local communities take part in all stages of the safeguarding: maintaining the vitality of traditional knowledge, skills and practices, ensuring their transmission to the following generations, collecting and recording the heritage (audio, photo and video documentation), preserving the collected information in archives and popularizing the local cultural traditions (Lyubenova 2017: 132–9).

One significant factor in activities to preserve the intangible cultural heritage is the cooperation and dialogue between the communities and the experts locally and nationally. Also quite important is the interaction between local cultural centres, national institutions and non-governmental organizations working to preserve this type of heritage (Lyubenova 2021: 82–196). The joint efforts and the mutual confidence between the different actors involved in the processes of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage may achieve good results when there is a dialogue and mutual understanding and when their work is

synchronized. In the circumstances of a globalizing world and of the mass migration of people in recent decades, those endeavours are and will continue to be an important factor in safeguarding the already preserved and still living elements of the traditional culture of local communities and in transmitting them to the generations to come.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention (11.11.2021).

[2] Masquerade games are a living practice today in many regions of Bulgaria, with a wide local variety of masquerade practices in terms of local name, geographical and temporal parameters. A number of researchers make typologies according to the respective features (Arnaudov 1972; Petrov 1972; Cherkezova 1960, etc.). The most common classification scheme of masquerade practices can be summarized in two terms: survakar and kuker type of masquerade (Cherkezova 1960; Petrov 1972; Stamenova 1982). The Survakar type is associated with the celebration of the New Year (the old orthodox style), and the Kuker's type – during the time of Shrovetide (see also Boyadzhieva-Peeva 2020: 109–116).

[3] On 9 September 1944 Bulgaria established a totalitarian form of government under the Communist Party. As a result, major political, economic and social changes occurred in society.

[4] Interviews providing information about these events are preserved in the Scientific Archive of the Regional Historical Museum at Pernik.

[5] At the end of nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Pernik was a significant mining centre in Bulgaria, and after the second half of the twentieth century, it experienced some large-scale industrial activity in the spheres of metallurgy and machine-building.

[6] For more on the masquerade tradition and culture policies in this period, see Bokova 2010.

[7] In 1995 the International Federation of Carnival Cities accepted the town of Pernik as its full member. In June, 2009 Pernik was proclaimed as the European capital of Surva`s and Mumers. More information about the festival can be found at: http://en.surva.org/ (11 11. 2021).

[8] https://www.treasuresbulgaria.com/main.php (11.11.2021).

[9] https://bulgariaich.com/index.php?act=content&rec=12 (11.11.2021).

[10] Chitalishte (community centres) are specific to Bulgarian civil and cultural organizations, which have a special place in modern processes of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of local communities. For more on this topic, see Nenova 2016.

[11] https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/surova-folk-feast-in-pernik-region-00968?fbclid=IwAR34-TSU_rEObfmSBpcP5WAPBIdW9hlhX_flItuDUyDjVgHJU-PQoGlIim4o (11.11.2021).

[12] https://ich.unesco.org/en/directives (11.11.2021).

[13] https://ich.unesco.org/en/ngo-centers-and-research-00329#ngos-and-the-2003-convention (11.11.2021).

[14] More on the role of the non-governmental organizations in safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage see can be found in Kwang Hee Kim 2014: 53–65; Babić 2015: 27–34; Lancere and Vaivade 2017: 100–111; and Sousa and Refólio 2018.

[15] In the settlements with living masquerade tradition, besides the chitalishta [culture centres], some associations function, which are registered as legal entities, the so-called survakar associations, or others, registered with a wider sphere of activities, connected to safeguarding of the local cultural heritage.

[16] https://lokalnonasledstvo.com/ (11.02.2021).

[17] For more information about the website, see https://survakari.com/ (11.11.2021).

[18] The author of this paper also participated in the interviews.

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PARODIES OF RELIGIOUS HYMNS IN ŽEMAITIJAN CARNIVAL: SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION: EVERYDAY LIFE, FESTIVITIES AND RITUAL FORMS

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Abstract. On costumed processions in Žemaitija on Shrove Tuesday, the 'beggars' were and are among the main characters, as attested by the mask's distribution area, the name 'Shrovetide beggars' being given to the whole band of masked people, and the relative abundance of the costumed "beggars'" songs. This study examines some examples from the repertoire of Shrove Tuesday carnival songs in Žemaitija, parodies of religious hymns and folk songs, which the performers called hymns and which were performed in imitation of sacred singing. The present analysis identifies their features, origins and function at the Shrove Tuesday carnival.

Keywords: parodies of religious hymns, Carnival, Shrovetide, Žemaitija (Samogitia)

Introduction

The Žemaitijan (Samogitian) Shrove Tuesday festival is the most documented and longest-lived traditional carnival in Lithuania. Carnival characters have a unique repertoire of musical and oral folklore, including songs of costumed 'beggars', 'Jews' and 'Gypsies', parodies of religious prayers and orations, and good luck wishes.

The article analyses a part of this repertoire, namely parodies of religious hymns and folk songs, which the performers called hymns and which were performed in imitation of sacred singing. The goal of this article is to reveal their features, origins and function at the Shrove Tuesday carnival. The object of the research does not include a large number of song samples. The article presents one of the most widespread and well-recorded bands of costumed 'beggars' singing songs and religious hymns as parodies at Shrovetide, songs like 'Aš užgimiau prasčiokėlis' ('I Came from Humble Origins') (33 examples), as well as a song/hymn parody 'Žalias kopūstėli' ('Green Cabbage') (3 examples) and a contaminated song 'Kad aš ėjau į Šidlavą' ('When I was walking to Šidlava') (1 example). These statistics are conditional for several reasons. First of all, in presenting the research object, attention must be paid to the principles of the selection of materials. Considering a song to be the unity of a text (lyrics) and a melody, only fully recorded examples were analysed. Another important point is that, although the types of songs mentioned here are shared all over Lithuania, these songs are not sung at Shrove Tuesday carnivals in all regions. Finally, attention should be drawn to the genre's the improvisational nature, the values attached to it and the imperfect documentation, aspects related to both factors.

These songs and parodies of sacred hymns are the only examples in the repertoire of the Shrovetide carnival group that are related to religious music. These examples in the genre classification system of Lithuanian folk songs are assigned not to the calendrical songs, but to the didactic or humorous ones. The songs mentioned above also comply with the concept of calendrical songs. They used to be performed during certain festivals of a year or a festive season and were an integral part of the ritual.

Parodies of religious hymns as a separate object of Lithuanian musical folklore are almost entirely unexplored. They are mentioned in the analysis of other genres of folk songs: feasts, songs about drunkenness, humorous, etc. songs. Analysing Shrovetide songs in Žemaitija, the author has discussed the variants of a parody of religious hymns (Laurinavičiūtė-Petrošienė 2015, 2019),

but a specific study of a parody of a religious genre in the Žemaitijan carnival has not been undertaken. Lithuanian folklore researchers pay more attention to the analysis of parodies of contemporary oral folklore (Anglickienė 2009, 2020; Anglickienė and Grigonytė 2016; Krikščiūnas 2008).

The word 'parody' is derived from the Greek *parōidía*, a 'song sung alongside another one' and has been known since ancient times. The pioneer of parody is considered to be the ancient Greek poet Hipponax. In literature, a parody is an imitation of the style and manner of a particular writer or school of writers (EB; VLEb). In music, a parody is a compositional technique, namely the use of a previously created piece of music in a new one. The term 'parody' has been used in music since 1587. The rules of parody are described in detail in *El melopeo y maestro* (1613) by the Italian musician Pedro (Pietro) Cerone (WDB). From the nineteenth century, the concept of parody is usually associated with comic, satirical pieces of music that use banal, deliberately obscene, or simply inappropriate musical and poetic texts (VLEa).

Parodies of religious forms in folklore are a well-known phenomenon of oral tradition. According to Peter Burke, who studied popular culture in early modern Europe (1500–1800) and the 'world of carnival', 'Any list of the genres of popular culture would be seriously incomplete if it omitted parody, notably the parody of religious forms. <...> There were parodies of the Catechism, the Commandments, the Creed, the Litany, the Psalms, and, above all, the Our Father from the medieval *Paternostre du vin* to the political parodies of the Reformation and the wars of religion' (Burke 1994: 122). It may be added that research on European carnivals is incomplete without an analysis of religious parodies, which have been analysed in the studies of many authors (Burke 1994; Scribner 1978: 303–29; Bakhtin 1984; Monteiro 1964; Kuha 2012; Turkson 1995).

However, speaking of parodies of carnival 'mock battles', 'mock weddings', 'mock funerals' and religious forms, and basing himself on Claude Lévi-Strauss's insights, Burke doubts whether the adjective 'mock' is appropriately used and understood:

> what seems to have been intended was not a mockery of religious or legal forms but the taking over of these forms for a new purpose'. […] It looks as if the creators of popular culture took over ready-made forms from the official culture of the church and the law because for certain purposes they had

> *no equally appropriate forms of their own, a procedure which illustrates the dependence of popular culture on the culture of the dominant minority and thus offers important evidence in favour of the "sinking" theory'.[1]*

Religious forms could be easily intercepted because the audience knew their structure and sequence of content, and could easily focus on the message being conveyed (Burke 1994: 123). Specific, completely unrelated and different examples support this idea. Turkson, who researched the contrafactum and religious musical traditions of Africa, found that

> *The Roman Catholic missionaries gained a great deal of influence over their congregations by introducing popular songs which were used as a means of religious propaganda. It became the policy of the Church to replace the secular texts of popular songs with sacred ones, usually in the vernaculars. [...] The priests were aware of the fact that a well-known and catchy melody, particularly one that belongs to the culture, was likely to give wider currency to the religious version. (Turkson 1995: 165)*

This example illustrates the shift in the opposite direction: how parodying popular culture serves to establish an official culture.

The parody of the religious hymn 'I Came From Humble Origins', which is explored in this article, and the circumstances of its creation show a different direction of cultural exchange and confirms the idea that parodies of religious forms were not always and in all cases considered mockery. The parody of this religious hymn or contrafactum was represented in literary work by the Bishop of Žemaitija Motiejus Valančius (see below). Both examples, the folk song-religious hymn parody 'I Came from Humble Origins' and 'A Song of Beggars', in Valančius' literary work, can be seen as supporting the 'sinking' theory. However, the use of a parody of a religious hymn at the Shrove Tuesday carnival is at least partly related to ridiculous situations and mockery.

In twentieth-century folklore, the parody was understood as 'borrowing' or 'adaptation'. In academic discourse it was considered plagiarism, and folklore of this genre was deemed to be inferior. According to Peter Narvaez, this is related to the theoretical doctrine of folklore science that prevailed at that time. Parodies have evolved not only from traditional sources but also from popular culture, so folklorists did not collect such material because it lacked 'purity'. This viewpoint was supported by the most influential twentieth-century folklorist,

Alan Dundes. As he has pointed out, it has been the value judgement of many folklorists that the older the folklore the better it is, later folklore being less valuable (Narvaez 1977: 32). This attitude has been very pronounced in Lithuania since the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, much of the later folklore material was not included in the archives and collections of folklore. Therefore, Lithuanian parodies of religious genres are poorly documented and remain almost unexplored.

Begging and the Shrove Tuesday carnival 'beggars'

In descriptions of the Shrove Tuesday carnival processions in Žemaitija from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the bands of costumed characters were described in a rather similar manner:

> *If the morning (before midday) in the village was silent and mysterious, things would start happening in the afternoon, as the 'visitors' ('Jews', 'Ape', 'Heron', 'Goat', 'Horse', 'Beggars', 'Kanapinis' [Hempen Man, Hemper], 'Lašininis' [Porky, Fatso], 'Grim Reaper', 'Devil', 'Angel'), walking door-to-door, would start their activities, frequently accompanied by shouting, singing, speaking, laughing – with hubbub'. (Trinka 1935: 210)*

In the costumed processions held in Žemaitija on Shrove Tuesday, the 'beggars' were among the main characters, as attested by the distribution area of the mask and its character, by the name 'Shrovetide beggars', given to the whole band of masked people and their procession, and the relative abundance of the costumed "beggars'" songs. There is no clergyman (priest) character in the

Fig. 1. Costumed Shrovetide characters in Žemaitija (1935) (LIMIS)

Lithuanian Shrove Tuesday carnival. Dressing as the dead is not typical of Lithuanian calendrical holidays (Vaicekauskas 2005: 126), and 'funeral processions', in which a 'priest' usually participates, are also very rare. Parodies of religious hymns are performed by the whole group of disguised 'beggars'.

The genesis of the costumed beggars' parodies of songs and hymns at Shrove Tuesday, which became part of the calendrical folklore, is directly related to begging as a social phenomenon, mentioned as early as in written sources from the Middle Ages. As stipulated in the 1st Synod Decree of the Žemaitijan Bishop Jurgis Tiškevičius in 1636, permission to ask for alms at churches was only granted after the beggars had mastered the basics of the Catechism and provided they sang Catholic hymns when collecting alms. When travelling in the surrounding areas and stopping at farmsteads, beggars would also sing some hymns (Motuzas 2010: 18). The Žemaitijan Bishop Motiejus Valančius has giving us a picture of a physically healthy professional beggar, a gifted manager and an admirable hymn singer who lived in the mid-nineteenth century. This specific individual was a beggar, a pious hymn singer, who, thanks to his particular abilities, was able to earn substantial financial rewards, and sometimes even an important position and respect, in local village or township communities.

In Western Europe, travelling entertainers were frequently mistaken for beggars. Sometimes it was difficult to distinguish between professional singers and beggars who also made their living by singing and playing musical instruments. Some vagabond-entertainers were blind, while others just pretended to be blind. Therefore, the activities of vagabond-entertainers were first regulated as early as the sixteenth century. They were forbidden to wander far and wide or to beg without licences in the prescribed form (Burke 1994: 99).

The phenomenon of begging existed in reality, but the beggar as a representative of a social group whose external features and mode of behaviour were embodied in the figure of the 'beggar' was one of the main anthropomorphic characters of the Shrovetide carnival, mostly typical of Žemaitija. The negative features of the "beggars'" lifestyle and behaviour included greed, impudence, aggression, drunkenness and laziness, which occasionally were quite strongly pronounced. Therefore, at all times, attempts were made to control the lives of this particular segment of the marginal society and to provide them with somewhat more stable support. Both the positive and negative features of

Fig. 2. Present-day character of Shrovetide 'beggars' (Alkas)

the actual lifestyle of the beggar were exploited in the role of the Shrovetide costumed 'beggar'. At all times, more frequent and easily observable negative reasons were given for why the priests of quite a few parishes criticized the costumed processions of Shrove Tuesdays and tried to ban them.

Parodies of religious hymns at the Shrove Tuesday carnival

In the late twentieth century, Žemaitijan presenters remembered the significant moment they entered the host's home:

Well, now I shall tell you how we walked around as 'Jews' and 'beggars' on Shrove Tuesday. [...] So we would walk, and sing songs and the like, and we had a diatonic-button accordion and played it. As we came in, we would sing the Shrovetide hymn, which was known by all. And if you did not know the hymn, the door would be closed on you and you would be asked to leave if you did not know the hymn. (ŽKT 2010: 42)

As the performer pointed out, that well-known hymn was 'Aš užgimiau prasčiuokieliu' ('I Came from Humble Origins'), which is one of the objects of this study.

The songs of the costumed beggars were called both songs and hymns by their presenters. Recalling the behaviour of the beggar procession inside her

When I was walking to Šidlava,
I sat down at the ditch.

Fig. 3. When I was walking to Šidlava (ŽKT 2010: 10)

home, the presenter said: 'Well, and that song ('Kad aš ėjau į Šidlavą', 'When I was walking to Šidlava'), we called it a Shrove Tuesday hymn. And all of us would get down on our knees, and no jokes, no tricks. [...] We sang so beautifully, like hymns are sung in church' (ŽKT 2010: 53).

The only sample of the song took the form of an obvious combination of the melody and lyric of another song/hymn parody, such as 'I Came from Humble Origins' (discussed below). From Stanza 6 of the song 'When I was walking to Šidlava', begging started for fat pork, typical of the versions of the song 'I Came from Humble Origins', promising a good place in heaven as a reward. In Aukštaitija, the songs and hymns of the group singing 'I Came from Humble Origins' were sung to the tune of 'When I was Walking to Šidlava'. This set of features, namely the circumstances and manner of performing the song indicated by the performer and the contamination of the poetic text, allow this song to be considered a parody of religious singing.

The main example of a parody of a religious hymn sung at the Žemaitijan Shrove Tuesday carnival is a group of songs called 'Aš užgimiau prasčiokėlis' ('I Came from Humble Origins'). One can assume that the parody of a Catholic hymn sung by costumed 'beggars' was a kind of a substitute for ritual calendrical songs that had been sung previously. The folk singing of Catholic hymns has been popular in Žemaitija from the time baptism was introduced there, when it filled a void in the sacred moments of calendrical festivals. The still

popular folk singing tradition in Žemaitija also penetrated into the folk songs of the rural Shrovetide festivals. The 'beggar' song/hymn 'I Came from Humble Origins' can be related to the so-called *kantička* hymns.

One of the oldest printed texts of the hymn 'I Came from Humble Origins' appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. In the story 'Palangos Juzė',[2] published by Motiejus Valančius in 1863 (Valančius 1863b), this beggars' song, 'I Came from Humble Origins', appeared with information that 'the tune is of the [hymn] 'Vardan Tėvo galingiausio' ('In the Name of the Powerful Lord our God')':

'A Song of Beggars' (the tune as in 'In the Name of Powerful Lord our God')

I came from humble origins
And became a beggar.
I wander in the world praying,
Extolling my benefactors.

When people do not see me,
I enjoy good health.
All the joints are strong,
I could even do work.

As soon as I meet a man,
I immediately become lame.
I have a poor coarse homespun overcoat
And bow as low as I can.

Using two sticks to support myself,
I take a whip with myself
That I beat dogs with
When they attack me walking on the path.

I put on my 'nagines',[3]
And sometimes I obtain boots.
I have a nice cap,
Made of a piece of an old sheepskin.

I have a lot of beggar's sacks,
Five old ones and one new.

The old ones are from sackcloth,
And the new one is from tough leather.

My belts are also from leather,
And rich men are envious of me.
Copper buckles shine from afar
Like a general's stars.

I now have a small cart,
A good horse, and a pig.
When I no longer want to walk,
I can have a nice ride.

As a really strong guy
I yell loud in the markets:
'Put at least a chunk of bread
Into my leather sack'.

I get abundant alms
And fill all my sacks.
I feed my horse on bread
And fatten up my pig.

As I come to some house
Or get a slice of fat pork,
I cook delicious dumpling soup
Or sour potato soup.

And when I slaughter a pig,
I make thick pease pudding
And invite lots of beggars
For that fat meal.

After the meal I can lie down,
I don't care about ploughing or thrashing.
I can sleep to my heart's content
And nobody tries to wake me up.

Things are getting on well,

And girls like me.
I am going to get me a wife,
A red-cheeked beautiful Agatha.

*Let great lords put on airs*
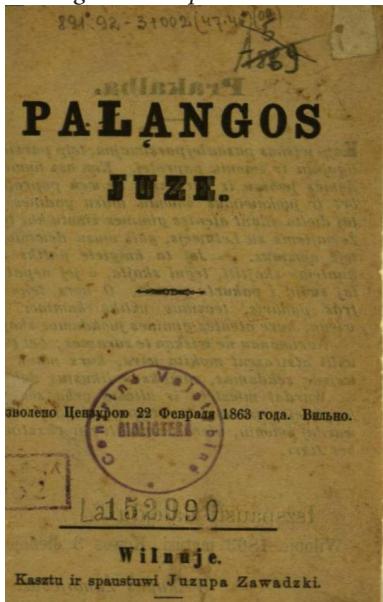
Fig. 4. 'Palangos Juzė' by Motiejus Valančius (Valančius 1863b)

Fig. 5. 'Kanticzkos' by Motiejus Valančius (Valančius 1863a)

As well as people who have homes.
Even though I am more humble,

I am much happier than they. Amen. (Valančius 1863b).

'A Song of Beggars' is composed in the style of a contrafactum. The term 'contrafactum' is given to a vocal composition in which the original text is replaced by a new one, particularly a secular text by a sacred text, or vice versa (Turkson 1995: 165). In this case, the words of the religious hymn are replaced by secular ones, but it is sung to the tune of a particular religious hymn.

The performance of the song to the tune of the hymn 'In the Name of the Lord our God' in 'Palangos Juzė' by Valančius should be discussed separately. It is impossible to say exactly which melody he had in mind because there are no melodies in the book of hymns called 'Kanticzkos' that he published in 1863.

A variant of the same St. Francis hymn, 'Vardon Tievo to Praam eus' ('In the Name of God Praam eus') was published with a melody in the 'Gismiu lobynas' ('Thesaurus Lietuvanorum Hymnorum'), compiled by the priest Kazimieras Ambrozaitis (GL 1924: 405). Upon comparing one version of the melody of the hymn 'In the Name of God Praam eus' with the folk song/hymn parody 'I Came from Humble Origins', some similarities in the melodic line and the metrorhythmical structure (alternating triple and quadruple meter) were identified (see Figs. 6., 7. and 8.).

Fig. 6. In the Name of God Praam eus (GL 1924: 405)

I was born a beggar,
and grew up into a poor man,
I am wandering in misery,
praising good days.

Fig. 7. I was born a beggar (ŽKT 2010: 3)

From the content of the story, it can be seen that Juzė from Palanga knew 'A Song of Beggars' very well and once sang it during the after-funeral meal, after he had lost patience with the bad singing of the beggars who had come to the meal. In that context, the performance of 'A Song of Beggars' was in no way related to Shrove Tuesday.

In the ethnographic material which was first systematically and purposefully collected in the first half of the 20th century, one can find reliable evidence that the song/hymn was performed by costumed characters on Shrove Tuesday: 'Shrove Tuesday 'beggars' were walking from door to door and singing funny songs, extolling hosts of the homesteads and asking for alms. They were funny creatures, and their 'hymns' were even funnier'. The 'beggars' sang:

As for the examples of the folk song group singing 'I Came from Humble Origins', recorded in the twentieth century, one can say that some texts are more developed, others less so, though they consist of similar motifs: the 'beggar's' introduction of himself, fake lameness, working tools, the declaration of possessed 'property', begging for alms, the organisation of the 'beggars' ball', the advantages of the status of a beggar, and the motifs of flirtation or an imaginary marriage. Many of the texts are slightly shorter and, after the beggar sings about his possessions, the text ends with a specific request: do not give me bread, or

groats, or flour, just give me some fat pork, which the beggar promised would be repaid by a holy, good, warm place in the Heaven.

In some parodies, the melodic line is less developed and sometimes transformed into a recitation. Thus, in the song 'I grew up a beggar', the hymn of the 'beggars' and a parody of the *žegnonė* folklore genre, consisting of a short saying

1. I grew up a beggar,
as I was born a beggar,
and was a commoner.
I am wandering in misery,
extolling my benefactors.

Fig. 8. I grew up a beggar (ŽKT 2010: 6)

The parody of prayer, intervening in the parody of the hymn, is performed as a recitative:

3. Amen, amen for those souls,
Where does the straw fall,
For one back, tail like awl.
Mėnski Papalėnski, [5]
In the name of the tekšt,[6] here through that tekšt,
Here's a girl's breast, here's a loaf of bread,
No one here, and no one left here.

accompanying by crossing oneself, are intertwined.[4] Upon singing a promise to secure one a place in heaven in exchange for a piece of fat bacon, the text describing one's crossing oneself follows. This combination of the genres is also evident in the melody: the stanzas of the hymn are performed in a primitive varying motif at an interval of the minor third, which, as soon as one starts to cross oneself, is recited as follows:

Two examples of the relationship between songs and hymn parodies can be clearly seen here, being instead unrelated to Shrove Tuesday (as in the already mentioned 'Palangos Juzė' of Valančius) and in the Shrove Tuesday environment.

Another parody, of the song or religious hymn called 'Žalias kopūstėli' ('Green Cabbage'), consists of a combination of a prayer (recitative) and a religious hymn (an imitation of the melody and style of the performance of sacred hymns). These genres and their mixing are well-known and characteristic forms of European carnival folklore (Burke 1994: 120–2). This parody of the hymn is quite well-known throughout Lithuania, but it is very poorly documented. The text of 'Green Cabbage' was collected without its melody by the famous twentieth-century local historian Jurgis Dovydaitis in Suvalkija (southern Lithuania).

The author of the article heard 'Green Cabbage' while singing with a folklore group of students from the Klaipėda Faculty of Music in 1987–1989, led by the folklorist Irena Nakienė. During the preparation of this article, three interviews were conducted with folklorists for information about this parody, and they sung three versions of it.

Nakienė remembers this parody of the hymn from her childhood, and she heard it at Shrovetide in Žemaitija around 1950. Later, working in cultural and educational institutions, she sang this song herself and taught it to ensemble participants and students. She also heard 'Green Cabbage' in the surroundings of Luokė, Telšiai and Šiauliai around the end of the twentieth century but did not write down. Nakienė said that 'Green Cabbage' is an improvisational piece, sung according to the situation and the need. In preparation for the Shrovetide procession, couplets singing humorously relevant content about local events or characters were created in advance. Sometimes they wrote them down on paper sheets, which, after singing, were thrown into the Shrovetide bonfire together with the burning stuffed effigy of *Morė*. These pieces seemed artistically worthless, and no one collected them. Sometimes they would mentioned

1. Oh, cabbage cabbage, how were you when a woman sowed you?
   Chorus: Though you turn over your head.
           What cares about you, fool!
2. Oh, cabbage cabbage, how were you when a woman sowed you and you sprouted?
   Chorus...
9. Oh, cabbage cabbage, how were you when a woman sowed you / 2. and you sprouted / 3. and you grew up / 4. and you spread out the leaves / 5. and the woman cut you off / 6. and you were chopped up / 7. and you were fermented in the barrel / 8. and the woman ate you / 9. and the woman had diarrhoea?
   Chorus...

Fig. 9. Oh, cabbage cabbage. Transcription by Lina Petrošienė

things that were unacceptable to the Soviet ideology of the time, so it was safer to destroy them (I. Nakienė, personal communication, 01-02-2021, Klaipėda).

The ethnomusicologist Rimantas Sliužinskas spoke about the 'Green Cabbage' in a very similar way. He heard this song in Aukštaitija (north-eastern Lithuania) about 1979 and later, when he was working in Klaipėda (R. Sliužinskas, personal communication, 01-02-2021, Klaipėda). He sang the full version of the nine stanzas:

Parodies of religious hymns as a form of composition have the formula of a cumulative song consisting of two parts. The first part is performed as a recitative, imitating a prayer read by a 'priest'. In the second part, the chorus, the "parishioners'" answer is sung with an unchanging text and a typical motif of the religious hymn's melody. Female voices sing the first line of the chorus, 'Though you turn over your head'. The second line, 'What cares about you, fool!' is sung by male voices.

Alvydas Vozgirdas, the leader of the folklore ensemble 'Kuršių Ainiai', said that he sang this parody of the hymn 'Green cabbage' around 1990–1995. He learned the song in a folk group of students, later singing it himself in the

folklore ensemble 'Kuršių Ainiai' led by Nakienė. The couplets were created before the Shrove Tuesday carnival, sometimes being improvised, but he never had a written text or melody. While studying folk music and later starting to conduct 'Kuršių Ainiai', Vozgirdas collected the authentic folklore of Žemaitijan singers. During the interview, he sang two versions of 'Green Cabbage', though he could not say exactly what specific ritual of the Shrovetide celebration they were associated with. The Žemaitijan singers I interviewed could not say anything about it either (e.g., A. Vozgirdas, personal communication, 09-02-2021,

1. Oh, cabbage green,
What suffering you suffered.
The girls sowed you
And weeded you. 2x2

2. Oh, cabbage green,
What suffering you suffered.
The girls fermented you,
The women ate you. 2x2

Fig. 10. Oh, cabbage green. Transcription by L. Petrošienė

Klaipėda). The versions of 'Green Cabbage' sung by Vozgirdas are close to the version 'Oh, cabbage cabbage' presented earlier (see Fig. 9.). These too are formula (cumulative) songs and parodies of religious hymns. However, one of them, 'Oh, cabbage green', is a formula song with a slightly different structure. It has no recitative, but the style of chanting is maintained:

The features of the melodies

From the musical perspective, the melodies sung by the costumed 'beggars' are rather late compositions. Their songs and hymns present a mixture of the elements of folk songs and Christian hymns. The songs of the costumed characters demonstrate the typical features of Žemaitijan melodies: a homophonic style, sung in a major scale, and specific incipits and cadences.

A distinctive feature of the Žemaitija region's musical dialect is their polyphonic character. From that viewpoint, Shrovetide carnival parodies of religious hymns are no different: almost all of them can and are performed in parts, the melody being accompanied in a traditional way (see Fig. 7).

The circumstances of the performance of Shrovetide songs predetermined their improvisational character: in a costumed procession, they are sung when communicating with people they have either visited or met on the way. Even if the model of the texts, especially that of the costumed 'beggars', seemed to have been established, in their live performance, different melodic and rhythmic variations were created.

The spontaneity of situations, the musical memory of the presenters, and the content of the texts of the hymn parodies were what accounted for their metro-rhythmical variety.

Conclusions

The first parody of a religious hymn to be recorded in the middle of the nineteenth century was described by the Bishop of Žemaitija, Motiejus Valančius, in his fictional work of literature. It is not possible to determine whether the parody of the religious hymn is his own work or whether only the oral folklore circulating among the folk people at that time is included in the literary work. Valančius' authority was very significant in the education of the masses of that time. It can be assumed that, thanks to his literary work, the parody of the religious hymn 'I came from humble origins' became well-known throughout

Lithuania, acquiring folklore versions and a fixed place in the calendar holiday, the Shrove Tuesday carnival in Žemaitija, in the early twentieth century. These folk parodies of a religious hymn could easily have spread in Žemaitija because their melodies, although making a clear reference to religious music, are very close to the traditional musical folklore of this region. The humorous content of the hymn parodies caused no resentment among the priests and ecclesiastical authorities of that time.

'Green Cabbage', the parody of religious hymns and prayers presented on a calendrical holiday in the second half of the twentieth century, functioned rather obscurely and spontaneously. Its function and relationship with the rituals of the Shrove Tuesday carnival have not yet been established entirely clearly.

Given the evidence of written sources and the sociocultural context, it is clear that the origin of the songs examined here cannot be related solely to the Shrovetide environment. The 'beggar' songs and hymn parodies existed in two contexts. They have always been a syncretic genre, related both to the sociocultural and the calendrical festival environments. On the other hand, independent fields of their existence are also evident.

Notes

[1] The 'sinking' theory proves the idea that Great and Little Traditions have interactions between them. The lower classes, which cultivate the Little Tradition, borrow many things and adapt to their needs from Great Tradition of the upper classes. In fact, Burke sees some defects in the 'sinking' theory (Burke 1994: 58–64).

[2] The most famous work of literature by the nineteenth-century Lithuanian author, educator, historian, initiator of a temperance movement and Bishop of Žemaitija (1849–1875), Motiejus Valančius (1801–1875), is the story 'Palangos Juzė' (1863), which tells of a travelling village tailor, Juzė Viskanta, who comes back to his native home after a long tour of Žemaitija and Aukštaitija, and of the places he visited and their residents. Juzė tells his stories over thirteen evenings, and the literary work has thirteen chapters. Each chapter deals with an individual region of Lithuania and the everyday life and customs of its people. The book contains abundant ethnographic and folklore material. 'Palangos Juzė' is a kind of the first textbook of Lithuania's geography and culture written as a work of fiction. Peripatetic tailors in Europe in the sixteenth to the eighteenth century were a widespread phenomenon, simultaneously creators and transmitters of popular culture (Burke 1994: 105).

[3] Sandals made of a single piece of leather.

[4] *Žegnōnė* also refers to making the sign of the cross (crossing oneself). Short saying-type parodies (e.g., a parody of the text accompanying the action of crossing oneself) are humorous sayings imitating serious texts with a religious or ritual content.

[5] Names in humorous form.

[6] 'Tekšt' is an onomatopoeic interjection, meaning a slight beating.

Abbreviations

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III

Spirituality, History and Religious Practice

ESTONIAN PROPHETS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Abstract: Compared to famous Estonian prophets of the eighteenth and ninteteenth centuries who have left a deep mark on culture, prophets of the twentieth century have received less attention. This paper accordingly examines four prophets of the twentieth century: Aleksander Toom (Habakkuk II), Aleksei Aav (Seiu, Orthodox), Karl Reits (market place prophet, Protestant) and Priscilla Mändmets (1939-2003, global prophet, Protestant). Three of them belonged to the Brethrens congregation, while the fourth, Aleksei Aav, was Orthodox. The paper explores how upheavals in political and social life, including secularization, influenced these prophets, as well as the events in their lives that led them to become prophets. Among the main features of their activities, such as healing diseases through prayer, in our cases disseminating visions and the word of God, making doomsday predictions and predicting national or international disasters were the most important. The prophets were all literary prophets who prophesise in writing, they used to alternate between oral and written prophecy. An interesting aspect is the visions and their explanation by means of biblical passages, or the use of these passages in daily dialogues with other people.

Keywords: prophet, doomsday, Soviet time and prophets, Estonian literary prophet, vision

Mare Kõiva

Introduction

While prophets have been a part of all cultures from early history to the modern period, their role in early Estonian culture is difficult to define and remains rather speculative. There is more material and research from the period between the 17th and 19th centuries, when pietism and the Brethren movement led to the emergence of a popular church and houses of worship with an approach that differed from the mainstream, through the spread of teachings of charismatic leaders and the followers and the congregations gathering around them. The Estonian prophetic tradition spread with the awakening movement of the Brotherhood movement, which saw the Brethren enliven religious life and also brought out religious leaders as well as prophets. Recognition of prophets from among the ordinary people involved a liberal and expanded approach. They interpreted the Word of God in a unique and personal way, sharing personal visions, revelations and messages. However, what they all had in common, despite their vastly different backgrounds and aspirations, was and is their personal charisma.

As well as delivering religious messages and spreading the Word of God, prophets had a number of other important functions. The role of leader and prophet included mediating social and economic hardships and offering solutions to overcome them. The same role is also seen in the context of natural disasters, such as explaining drought, torrential rain and other extreme weather conditions, where providing spiritual comfort to one's own group was an important part of the task. The emergence of prophets in a situation of social strain is natural, and we are still witnessing the emergence of unexpected advocates, most recently in relation to the climate crisis movement. In the Estonian tradition, the development of literacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially with the support of the Brethren congregation, and the process of uniting of people into a cohesive community, accompanied by an increase in self-awareness and the expansion of opportunities for emotional self-expression during church services, are highly valued. Prophetic messages differed from the positions of the mainstream churches on several points: thus, we find protest messages from the prophets of the preceding centuries against the rights of the elite and the injustices suffered by the Estonians (cf. Sild 1929; Sild 1935; on East Africa, Kustenbauder 2008). In the case of Estonia, for example, the leaders of the Brethren movement, led by Zinzedorff, financed the printing of a full version of the Bible in Estonian in 1739.

The twentieth century is a very interesting period in the culture of the small nation, characterized as it is by winning independence from and then losing it back to the Soviet Union, living in an empire with various restrictions on religious activities, and then the second restoration of independence. The fate of the prophets of the 20th twentieth century has so far attracted less attention, even though that century was characterized by turbulent events and unprecedented periods of religious persecution and social stress that led to the growth of prophetic messages.

Vernacular or folk prophecy in Estonia in the twentieth century has been directly linked to the spontaneous, ill-considered and illogical behaviour of the prophets. It has been pointed out that for their part the church members and disciples of a charismatic pastor do not control what they hear or experience rationally when being together with that individual (Bloch 2005). Today, almost every preacher talking about the future is called a prophet in everyday language, and it is customary in the media to attribute the title of prophet to prominent analysts and predictors of social and economic processes.

This study is based on a corpus of studies covering ten Estonian prophets and focuses on the activities of four of them, their written legacy and the folklore about them: Aleksander Toom (also known as Habakkuk II), Karl Reits, Aleksei Aav (also known as Seiu) and Priskilla Mändmets. The personalities selected for this study were influenced by the Brethren and Baptist movements and, in the new socio-cultural and political circumstances, continued the traditions of previous centuries, leaving behind personal letters, prophecies and biographical notes. Through the legends surrounding their personalities, they have become part of popular folkloric communication. Their lives and teachings have been revisited at moments of social or economic crisis, parallels have been sought with their predictions, and their messages have been used to interpret current events.

My main research questions are the following: (1) How did historical events influence the prophets, and what events in their lives led them to become prophets? (2) What are the main features of their activities and prophecies? (3) What beliefs are associated with their prophecies and, in turn, into which types of folklore does this associated folklore fall? (4) What are the similarities and differences between these twentieth-century prophets and earlier traditions of prophesy?

Brief overview of earlier studies

Nonetheless prophetic lore was the focus of scholarly interest in a couple of periods, especially between 1920 and 1940. Much has been written about certain outstanding individual prophets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Tallima Peep (Sild 1929) and Lüütsepa Jaan or Taeva Jaan (Põldmäe 1937), who were active as prophets in the eighteenth century.

Järve Jaan, an eighteenth-century prophet represented by a number of texts in the Folklore Archives, was categorized by the folklorist Johann Matthias Eisen (1921) as the one of those influential individuals who belonged within the discourse of earlier prophets about whom peoples told stories even at the end of twentieth century. The next wave of researchers dealt with the origins, destinies and revelations of individual prophets, and their impact on their close religious groups (Põldmäe 1935, 1937; Sild 1929, 1935; Masing 1993 [1934–1935]; Salve 1998, 2000). Primarily, the relevant observations extended to the religious leaders and prophets of the awakening movement of the Brethren congregations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The more extensive prophetic movement – the so-called 'heaven-goer' movement – was practised at the beginning of the 19th nineteenth century. Among the prophets of the time there were also women and teenage girls (Põldmäe 1935; Sild 1935; Kalkun 2006). In Põldmäe's opinion, the 'heaven-goer' movement embraces abundant general human characteristics, which are apparent in every nation if the appropriate circumstances arise. The major prophets of the nineteenth century also included Maltsvet from north Estonia (Masing 1993 [1934–1935]), Kordo from the southeast of the country, Vastseliina (Salve 2000) and others.

In the late twentieth century, church publishing houses began to record the experiences of evangelists and clergymen (Kirjamägi 1997, 2004, 2006; Sirel 2012, 2013), as well as memoirs, which also provided information about the lives of the prophets (Hahn 1999). Jaanus Plaat published overiew of Estonian prophets from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries (Plaat 1994).

This article continues my project on mediums, prophets and the magic of words. Previously, I looked at the evolution of the religiosity of the first promoter of Buddhism, Karl Tõnisson (Karlis Tennisons), popularly nicknamed Barefoot Tõnisson and known by the moniker Brother Vahindra. Based on his written legacy, I briefly characterized his religious and political quests and doomsday proclamations, his formal and informal education, his behaviour in his homeland and his fate in the Buddhist world (Kõiva 2010). Tõnisson was

an important figure in the religious life of the twentieth century, comparable in fame to Prophet Maltsvet, a symbol of earlier religious movements. Looking at the topic of prophets from a somewhat different angle, namely the wider scope of prophetic predictions, in my studies I discussed the folk end-of-the-world premonitions (Kõiva 2007) and the written legacy of the Brethren, especially the heavenly scriptures (Kõiva 2019), as well as the example of some folk healers who were called prophets (e.g. the Witch of Äksi). All these themes are linked to the earlier charismatic movements of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

Aleksander Toom, Habakkuk Ii (1823–1907)

Aleksander Toom, also known as Männiko Sander, though mainly as Habakkuk II, was the most famous prophet from Saaremaa, about whom his contemporaries and future generations of islanders have much to say. The prophet completed Valjala parish school and then trained as a weaver in Riga. From 1844 to 1850 he was a sacristan under the pastor of Anseküla, M. Körber, and was associated with the Brethren movement. Körber was renowned for his literary talent, and several of his poems were still circulating as folk songs among the islanders as late as in the second half of the twentieth century. From 1854 to 1874, Toom worked as a forest warden at Lööne Manor in Kogula village, and from 1876 he lived on Kissa farm in the village of Uduvere.

Figure 1. The prophet Habakkuk II. Private collection.

He started prophesying in Saaremaa, in the Haage prayer house of the Brethren, near Tõnija, where he became a popular Reader. A good knowledge of the Bible and church conventions, literacy and a personal relationship with God and faith also characterized Toom, wrote local pastor Traugott Hahn in his *Memories of my Life* (1999: 271):

> *A man of barely average height, with reddish hair and a beard, which was actually more a goatee. An old grey felt hat covered his head and tangled hair, a grey homemade robe covered his body. His face was skinny, almost gaunt, his facial features sharply drawn, his grey eyes mostly flared restlessly, but he could also look at you quite kindly as he hoped people would understand his prophecies.*

However, Toom was expelled from the Brethren because of angry landlords, as he severely criticized landlords and church elders in his sermons. Young pastor Hahn describes how a man who introduced himself as a prophet urged the pastor of the Pöide Lutheran Church to cooperate, which the pastor refused to do. Hahn had chosen the Pöide congregation in Saaremaa, where Lutherans had become a minority after the massive conversion to the state church of the empire, the Russian Orthodox Church, in the nineteenth century, that is, from 1860 onwards (Plaat 2001). However, there was another attraction in the parish, namely the Brethren movement, which, with its prayer room, had an important role in the community. At the same time, the region's school buildings were in a poor state of repair, so that some schools were housed in farms, while the small Lutheran congregation was unable to support their renovation.

Prophet Habakkuk II was deeply offended by the pastor's refusal to cooperate. At the same time, Hahn, who had grown up in the spirit of the classical Lutheran Church and was a follower of its customs, was surprised by what he experienced at the congregation's prayer service: unlike at a normal service, people's behaviour was very emotional, and they even shed tears.

Pastor Hahn of Valjala Church recalls:

Shortly afterwards, one Sunday morning, when I went to church, Männiku Sander was standing in the church gate preaching, gesticulating and shouting fiercely. I asked the people who were standing quietly nearby to go to church. When they followed me, he left, cursing loudly. Similar behaviour happened again soon. But even his own relatives, his wife and children, no longer wanted to listen to him. (Hahn 1999: 272)

The young pastor's Estonian was still not yet perfect, but his innovations and kind attitude towards people meant that support for the Lutheran Church was growing. The landlord and the clergy took action against members of the Brotherhood who were more critical of social conditions, including the prophet Habakkuk.

There are several versions of how the prophet got his name. In one, during a quarrel with Valjala pastor Hahn, Toom claimed that if the pastor was Kukk (German 'Hahn', or cock), then he was Habakkuk (Hahn 1999: 272) – a linguistic joke. In Hahn's recollection, this is associated with Toom's attempt to call on him to cooperate, because

> [---] all this was allegedly clearly foretold in the Bible. Prosperity was supposed to begin from Valjala. If a rooster ('kukk' in Estonian, 'Hahn' in German) is at the top of the church steeple, a Kukk is in the pulpit, and Habakkuk is outside among people, then there would be bliss. 2 Peter 1.19 makes it clear that the prophetic word is to be taken heed of 'until the day dawns and the morning star rises'. Now he, Habakkuk 2, is the star of the morning star, because he comes from the village of Koiküla (Koikla) [--]. Koiküla – the village of dawn.

A second version involves a personal vision after the expulsion, or later, when praying in a pasture.

> One morning the prophet, who had not yet called himself a prophet, went to his pasture to have a look at the hay barn. There he spent time praying reverently. Suddenly God revealed Himself in the form of a fiery red disk, on which the following words were written: 'You must be called the Prophet Habakkuk 2.' So he received a task and duty from God to become a prophet called Habakkuk 2 on the island of Saaremaa. He also learned the actions and manner of speech from the ancient Israelite prophet Habakkuk. (Hahn 1999: 272)

There have been arguments for and against this version, and Toom is said to have invented the story himself. Different views highlight the attitudes of the community.

Toom describes his calling as follows:

> I, upon the commandment of the Lord, and the casting and sending of God of the Holy Trinity, had to go to the doors of the church in 1871–1878

with the Bible. For seven years I had to read and explain how evil and sinful they are; read about His death, the story gone wrong, and shout... (Kallas 2005)

We can find in his descriptions critical attitudes towards the Lutheran Church and conflicts with the clergy, based on theological differences.

Toom grew up in the spirit of the Brethren movement, but he also saw the rise of new movements that criticized the religious apathy of the Lutheran Church as well. Even after a quarrel, his mission remained to proclaim his message in the Church of the Brethren, to awaken people to the faith and to warn against a lack of faith, which would be punished. The second topic is connected with social criticismof the ways of life of the manor and church rectory, which rested upon the work of the peasants, the harsh treatment of the ordinary people and the formality of religious life.

Habakkuk II's credo is summed up in the old-style message of his epitaph:

Oh surrelik mind mäleta. Siin hingab nüüd see hüidja häel. Sõddis kurratitega Kuressaares ja saadanatega Saaremal nähtavalt 1871-1878 ja sõdis veel 1881-1900. Pangem ometi tähele mis Jumala suu on räkinud. Nenda teen veel hauast oma tööd.' 'Oh you mortal, remember me. Here rests the voice of the crier. He was at war with devils in Kuressaare and brutes in Saaremaa from 1871 to 1878 and was still fighting from 1881 to 1900. Let us take heed what the mouth of God has spoken. I continue my work from the grave.' (EFITA F01-028)

The Market Place Prophet, Karl Reits (1885-1941)

Karl Reits was popularly nicknamed 'The Doom is Nigh!' His most important prophecy is considered to be his prediction of the destruction of the Estonian state because the people had lost faith. Reits acted as a prophet during 1929-1941. He belonged to the congregation of the Brethren and prophesied the coming of the beast as a great calamity and as starting a time of slavery for Estonians and urged people to repent in order to be saved. A 1933 newspaper depicts him in a suit and hat, ascetic-looking with a distant yet nervous gaze, walking around Tallinn marketplace and shouting: 'Doom! Doom! Doom! Fallen is Babylon the Great!' (Päevaleht 1933).

Karl Reits was born into a wealthy merchant family and grew up with two brothers and sisters. He was well-educated, having graduated from the Tallinn City School and while young having married a girl from Central Estonia who was ten years his senior. Their son Voldemar was the couple's only child.

Being imprisoned by the Germans during the First World War was a life-changing period in Karl Reits' life. Over the course of seven years, he survived a series of life-threatening situations when it was uncertain whether he would survive or be shot. Although he was, for example, an overseer of other prisoners and an interpreter during his seven years in prison, his years of imprisonment left their mark on his personality and influenced his behaviour. After his return from Germany in 1921, he went to work as a turner at the Ilmarine factory, but was dismissed in 1932. From then on, his livelihood depended on donations and other precarious sources of income from believers and those who listened to his preaching.

The evangelist Andres Kirjamägi (2004: 37), who has written about Reits, points out that, in spite of his pre-military promise to devote his life to serving the faith, Reits did not immediately fulfil it, but led an ordinary life. After serious bouts of sickness, from which he was healed by prayer, he finally turned to faith only after his son's severe middle-ear infection, which was also healed by prayer. These events took place in the four years after his return home from Germany and led to a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Bible. His final crisis probably came during the illness of his 24-year-old son, who caught a cold in 1927 when visiting his fiancé and died of pulmonary tuberculosis in January 1930. Reits' wife died of cancer in 1938.

Figure 2. Karl Reits. Press photo..

Despite his educational advantages, Reits' life was difficult: on the one hand, it was determined by the First World War, which was prolonged by his imprisonment and took its toll on his mind and body; but also his health and job prospects were not the best when he returned home. He had a responsibility for his family but was also bound by the religious vows he had made. According to his interpretive model, personal misfortune can be overcome by prayer, which led him to an interpretation of wider events.

His major revelations began in 1929, when he was 44 years old. On the morning of 23 July 1929, at 5 a.m., he received the first divine revelation: 'When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, flee to the mountains, because its desolation is near.'

On 30 July 1930, he received the second revelation: a heavenly voice said to him, 'Write on the door at your work – the time of grace will soon be over!'

The third revelation came on 3 August 1931 at 8 a.m. with the words from the Book of Revelation: 'The plagues of God are coming upon the people, for the people are wicked.' Then Reits began to preach the gospel of grace, first in the churches, and after being expelled from them, in the market place. He was repeatedly punished and arrested for holding unauthorized meetings in public places and for obstructing traffic (Kirjamägi 1997).

On 16 October 1933, the newspaper *Päevaleht* wrote about the celestial task that had been given to Reits:

> *Preach to the people, for the people are evil and ungodly, that it is the end time, and the people must reconcile themselves to God in good time, before peace is taken from the earth… The sea of wickedness is full of those drowning; go to big markets and fairgrounds, people come there from every corner of the city. Speak what has been proclaimed through the prophets and what God is going to do at the end of time.*

The first period included preaching in the market place and the city, where he prophesied even long years of tribulation for the Estonian people based on biblical passages. As a result, he was banned from churches and other places of worship. There were many who mocked him in the market place, calling him crazy or a false prophet. According to folklore, the prophet's tormentors would always lose their health and sanity, and a predestined calamity would befall them:

Once a woman in the market threw a rotten cucumber at him. Reits turned to her pensively and said, 'You threw this at me as a human being, but know this, you threw it at a prophet of God!' Later, the woman met a believer in her village and told them what had happened, adding: 'My right hand is weak and withering. This is God's punishment to me for throwing a cucumber at his prophet.' (Kirjamägi 2004: 25)

Or another example:

A rich lady became irritated at the prophet's words and snarled viciously: 'Why are you talking nonsense and disturbing the peace of people?'. The prophet's answer to the angry lady was brief: 'God's punishment is not far off!'. A few days later, the same woman's dead body was lifted into a car in front of the prophet and taken away. (Kirjamägi 2004: 26)

This message, written in the 1950s, is typical of prophecy, as the author recounts several events and gives details of the fulfilment of the prophet's predictions. It is also typical to include a broader characterization of the person in question and to add one's own knowledge of his or her life and background, which are not covered in the article for lack of space.

It happened in late winter/early spring of 1939, when there were rumours that there was a man in the marketplace in Tallinn, walking among the people in the marketplace and proclaiming doom for Tallinn.

At the time when such rumours were circulating, I was in Tallinn one day in March, in the marketplace, and I saw the man who proclaimed doom for Tallinn. He was walking in long, smooth strides along the paths of the marketplace, bareheaded, holding his hat in his hand. Hair carefully combed, face sad and serious, dressed neatly and tidily. As he strode through the crowd, he shouted loudly: 'Doom is nigh, doom is nigh! Your walls will be torn down, so that not one stone will be left standing upon another! Doom is nigh, everything will come to an end!' His next words were those found in the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation to John.

Some time later, I saw this man again in the marketplace in Tallinn, and then I heard almost the same chants from him that I had heard before.

This time he was followed by a gaggle of young boys laughing and talking to him; some even threw scraps of food and fish heads at him.

Then he stopped and said to those who were mocking him: 'The time will soon come when you won't have what you're throwing at me now - the fish and the bread will be gone.'

It was also said that the man had been told by the police not to have such conversations in the marketplace, but then he responded to the police by saying: 'You can ban me, but my words will still stand, while you will die!'

And on the evening of the 9th of March 1944, a large number of planes (a squadron) with flares appeared over Tallinn and dropped firebombs and destructive missiles on Tallinn. Houses were set on fire and buildings collapsed, and many people lost their lives. Many were left homeless, and many suffered from wounds and had to continue living as cripples.

And so the prophecies, which had been ignored when he proclaimed them in the Tallinn marketplace, were fulfilled. [--] (RKM II 110, 401/6 Tallinn, 1961)

Power and the prophet (Reits)

All the popular prophets in earlier centuries had encounters with public officials, the police and the judiciary, who were not comfortable with their existence. As a rule, any attempts by the authorities down the ages to stop such prophecies have merely had an encouraging effect on both the prophet and especially on his disciples (Põldmäe 1935; Kõiva 2007). Reits was constantly at odds with the leaders of the church and was chased away from all major churches and houses of worship in Tallinn. The posters containing the word of God that he hung on church doors were immediately taken down, to which the prophet responded with a prophecy that the preachers and the pastors themselves would be put on trial (RKM II 110, 401/6 Tallinn, 1961).

There are also stories of Reits receiving advice from those in power:

[--] Seeing his courage, the authorities later became more lenient towards the prophet. One of them approached the prophet and said kindly: 'If you want to proclaim your message to the people in a public place, don't stand, but walk slowly and speak. Then there will be no gatherings and the authorities will have no reason to harass you.' The prophet began to follow this advice. (RKM I 23, 262/8 (6) Vastseliina, 1990)

Figure 3. President Konstantin Päts and General Johannes Laidoner in 1938. Private collection,.

At the same time, the police had even responded to his annoying predictions by saying, 'Such people should be wiped off the face of the earth!'. It should be remembered that the ideas of eugenics began to spread in both Estonia and Europe generally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While in Estonia the attention of both doctors and politicians was focused on the question of how to increase the number of children and on the temperance movement, the idea of forced sterilisation was also on the agenda (see Sõnumed 1933; Kalling 1998, 2007). Dissidents were not favoured in the silent era of the 1930s, and many memoirs have documented frequent arrests.

Kirjamägi (1997:18; also Sirel 2012: 64) reports the following:

While in prison, I [Reits] was accepted by secular people and unenlightened pagans. They sympathized with me and said: 'We are the guilty ones, and we have to go to prison, but you have no guilt! Preaching God's Word is allowed, after all!' Such persecution is easier to endure than persecution by believers who are spiritually blinded.

Besides the clergy, the police and the prisons, Reits had frequent encounters with members of the government. It is known that General Laidoner (served as an Estonian general and statesman, was Commander in Chief of the Estonian Armed Forces during the Estonian War of Independence, and was counted as one of the most influential people in Estonian history between the world wars, died in GULAG 1953) had him repeatedly arrested and even beaten with a truncheon (Sirel 2012: 58).

There are even more folklore records of meetings with President Konstantin Päts (1874-1956), the head of government in the silent era of the 1930s. It is known that Reits met Päts approximately three times and that the President promised him a pension for life if he stopped parading around and intimidating people. To this the man of God allegedly replied: 'It is not in your power to promise me this, for your own pension is not certain either!'

Another popular story is about how Päts had an expensive crypt built for himself in the Forest Cemetery near his farm, about which Reits prophesied: 'You can build this crypt, but your bones won't be buried in it!' Päts listened politely to the prophet's speech, then put his hand on the man's shoulder and said condescendingly: 'Listen, man, you have gone mad with hunger. Go to the kitchen, the women will feed you. 'Understandably, the stories about both leaders have attracted a lot of popular attention, as President Päts died on 18

January 1956 in a mental hospital in the city of Kalinin in Russia, and General Laidoner perished in a Siberian prison camp.

A major concern was the diminishing importance of religion in society, as reflected in Reits' notes and preaching. The same concern is also at the heart of the opinions of other prophets, as well as of ordinary people. In 1941, on one of his evangelical journeys, Reits encountered a Latvian death squad near his wife's birthplace and began preaching to them. It is thought that he may have been shot because he did not speak Russian and could not understand the orders they gave him. He is buried in the cemetery on Otti Farm. The following letter was found in his pocket:

> I want to inform you of everything that Jehovah God has told me about the Estonian state. This beautiful republic, which God has given to the people of Estonia, will be taken away from them because the leaders and the people have forgotten their God. And it will be given away. The head of state gives the state up voluntarily. For what wisdom has the leader who doesn't know God?

> A great fright will come upon the leaders: they will be imprisoned and taken away, and the people will fall under the yoke, where they will suffer from hunger and thirst and anguish. The fire suddenly descends on its wings over the cities, and no one has peace. And the cities of many lands shall be destroyed, and many nations shall be afflicted. The Estonian people will be dispersed until the nation has perished. And I heard a loud voice on the right side of heaven shouting, 'Ask the Lord Jehovah, who made the heavens and the earth and the fountains of waters!' (Kirjamägi 1997: 40)

This is undoubtedly one of the most poignant texts of a prophecy to describe the calamities of the near future, and as such a very influential text that was later repeatedly referenced.

Aleksei Aav, Prophet Seiu from Saaremaa (1909-1996)

Seiu was born on Matsi farm, in the village of Metsara, Saaremaa, but from the first year of his life he lived with his foster parents, Ekaterina and Daniel Aav, on Allaniidi farm, in the village of Reina. His foster parents raised him from the age of one. Seiu's parents had seven children, and according to the custom,

relatives helped to raise children if necessary. Seiu himself also had a large family, a total of nine children, some of whom had interesting Estonian-style first names, in keeping with the fashion of the time (Tõeleid 'Truth', Õnnepäev 'Happy Day', Õiguleid 'Righteous' - GENI.com).

He was one of the most interesting and versatile prophets of recent times, many of whose writings have survived, including correspondence, but this is still largely unexplored. In the 1980s, Seiu's manuscripts were collected by Juhan Saar, a local bibliophile from Eikla, and it is thanks to Saar that they have been preserved. The manuscripts were among the attractions that the bibliophile loved to show to his book-loving guests. Although the prophet lived a long life, much of which was spent in the family circle, that rural family had no interest in literary culture.

Seiu was a successful breeder, grafting compatible varieties and breeding apples, pears and other species. Many of the species he created are still grown today (e.g. the pear called Seiu). The variety's pedigree information describes it as suitable for home gardens, with fruit ripening gradually, keeping for a few days and being juicy (SESTO). Seiu was well known in the neighbourhood for his fruit trees and also for his peculiar behaviour. A local resident recalls:

> The people of Pöide municipality remember the use of the loudspeaker in their Facebook group. Evi Klooster used to work in Tumala Library at that time and was asked to count apple trees in the gardens of Reina village. 'There were a lot of them at Seiu's place,' Evi Klooster recalls. 'I also remember him singing through his megaphone in a tree at the gate of Pöide Cemetery'. (EFITA F01-028)

In 2004, locals recalled that he was kind enough to give children a ride in his horse cart: 'He was my grandpa's brother. We often got a ride in his horse cart when we came home from school.' (EFITA F01-028)

Power and the prophet (Seiu)

Seiu became more widely known by sending memos to both Hitler and Stalin, saying it was necessary to enter the Millennial Kingdom of Peace. During the Soviet era, he preached wherever the people gathered, e.g. standing on a wall or even climbing a tree on Cemetery Day. This is another remarkable quality that he was remembered for in the stories that spread in the village. 'We must

be hot, not lukewarm, in our faith. And make the world a great kingdom, a country of Christ, where people do not even learn to fight', Seiu wrote in one of his booklets. 'Even on his deathbed, Seiu did not think about worldly things, but pleaded: "Do, my children, everything to reconcile Palestine and Jerusalem," says Rutt Kivipõld about her father Seiu, the prophet of Saaremaa. 'His main concern was that the Millennial Kingdom of Peace should be established and that Estonians should start working for it to happen' (EFITA F01-028).

Seiu had mysteriously been given visionary or prophetic messages, which he himself calls the prophecies of the Spirit of Truth. As he recounts, these prophecies were revealed to him on the night of 6 October 1938 between 2 and 4 a.m. in his semi-awake state by a spirit in the form of an unknown man of medium build, clean-shaven, in a grey outfit, middle-aged or younger, very kind and polite, with a strong desire to make these prophecies known to all nations.

Exactly one month later, on the night of 6 November 1938 between 2 and 4 a.m,he had the same vision. Seiu was therefore a little anxious and wrote the prophecies down on paper, but delayed making them public, wishing to wait for things to proceed. On the night of 6 December 1938 between 2 and 4 a.m., he had exactly the same vision for the third time. Now Seiu could no longer resist the urgent desire of the man in grey clothes. It had become an inner urge for him to make the following prophecies public:

1) About the Estonian state, the Spirit of Truth says:

A small young man among his brothers, who is considered poor and insignificant and despised by all, will save Estonia and pull her out of the swamp into which Estonia and her sisters have been dragged, and will take her out of the claws of black vultures into the large house of her parents, into the upper room, where Estonia and her saviour will become engaged as a solemn bride and groom. (EFITA F01-028)

2) About the German Third Reich, the Spirit of Truth says:

Behold, with the palm of my hand I will beat down the two and a half feet of the man that is painting with blood, and from head to toe, has stained his garments with the blood of my saints and the righteous of my Father, which has dried and turned brown. You shameless beast, who is watching on the hill and bargaining like a white-robed Jew frrom the south, to get

their 'oxen' for very little money. Behold, I will squeeze thee with my right hand, so that thy bones will crack, and I will set thee on your back before the men of the north, and lay upon you three crosses to be a burden. But this stubborn seed will still get up to sit, and then I crush him for good and lay upon him three other crosses. And so, I put him under the burden of six crosses for twenty hours, leaving him under the control of these grey-robed men of the north. (EFITA F01-028)

3) About general truths, the Spirit of Truth says:

I want to disturb the enemies and jumble all the enemies of the enemies together and mix them well. The nations must see how I have done everything in the right way, so that you must believe and respect the One who is doing everything. And you, human beings! Why do you rush back and forth like crazy from one place to another and search but can't find what you're looking for?! Stop for a moment and search through my Ark of the Covenant, plated with pure gold, inside and out, thoroughly and freely, and very decently. For that, I have put in place everything you are looking for. And I will be able to lift the lid, so that you may correctly see and recognize everything you have been looking for. (EFITA F01-028)
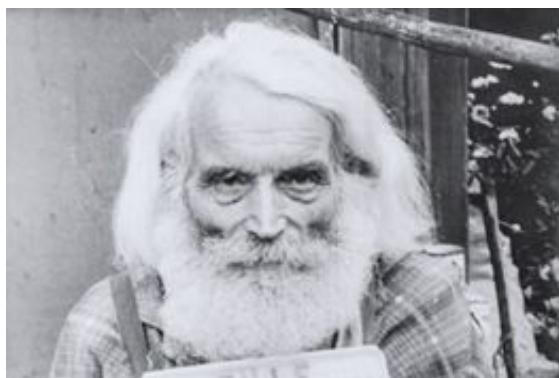

Figure 4. Prophet Seiu was a successful breeder. Private collection..

As Seiu explains, further explanations of the last prophecy were promised so that it be understood correctly.

If we were to highlight one of the guiding ideas of his prophecies, it would be the dream of a world without wars. Given that his life was marked by the First World War, the War of Independence and the Second World War and their consequences, this dream seems perfectly logical.

Priskilla Mändmets: God's Envoy on Earth (1939-2003)

Priskilla Mändmets was born on 7 February 1939 in Tallinn. She studied at the University of Tartu and the Modesto Bible Institute, majoring in history and journalism, and she called herself a missionary evangelist.

'The Jewish conspiracy' was probably what Priskilla feared most, because she touched on that topic whenever possible. She spoke about it on 29 August 2001, at a rally against the sale of the Narva power plants in Toompea. She considered her mission quite important. She even founded the Union of Prophets. The question is – when have prophets been right in the head, and when have they been able to behave in a socially correct way?

Mändmets' activities were widely covered in the press, and as a logical follow-up to this attention, Jaan Kolberg made a documentary film about her in 2004. This eccentric lady ran for a large number of different high positions, seized every opportunity to appear in the media and delivered apocalyptic prophecies to the Estonian people. A schoolteacher and local correspondent, Kaleph Jõulu, wrote about his encounters with Priskilla. Jõulu recalls:

It was in late September 1992. I was in Haapsalu, in the neurology and orthopaedics hospital at Suur-Mere 30, receiving remedial treatment. One day I had a visitor, a short, brown-eyed middle-aged lady who, with her sporty travelling outfit, gave the impression that she was into hiking. Her looks didn't show that she was already 53, because she was bursting with energy and in perfect health. She immediately told me that she had got my contact details from a friend of mine (a young disabled man from Paide) whom she had met by chance in Haapsalu. Priskilla Mändmets, that was the name of this nice lady, remembered me from the time I was the principal at Roosna-Alliku school (Paide district) (1962-1965); she was a teacher in Väätsa and became the director of studies at Roosna-Alliku school after I had left. Priskilla was educated in Haapsalu and graduated

from Tartu Pedagogical School. In 1969, she graduated from the Faculty of History at the University of Tartu, and in 1991 from the Faculty of Journalism. She had been an educator for 32 years. She now made a living by selling handicrafts and preached God's truth to the people. Priskilla told me that she was born in Tallinn as the eldest daughter of a missionary father (a Pentecostal) and an evangelist mother. Her name comes from the Bible: the biblical Priscilla was one of the founders of the early Christian church. Her father saw in his six-week-old daughter his successor. She was consecrated in this faith on the day the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed. 'Nothing happens by chance in this world; we are led by the Spirit of God,' insisted Priskilla.

At the hospital, she would distribute religious scriptures to patients and invite those who were mobile to prayer meetings. A young fellow from my ward went to one meeting and told me about the experiences they offered. I was not interested. Recently, Priskilla as an Envoy of God had started to receive more press coverage. (RKM I 30, 233/4 Viljandi (1992)

Figure 5. Proskilla Mändmets in TV show. Screenshot.

Priskilla's letters reveal her ongoing missionary work among members of the government and the leaders of political parties, as well as communications with many people whom she happened to meet. Here are some examples from her letters of 1992:

I need to go to Ülo Vooglaid (he's in the Parliament, I am on first name terms with 16 members of the Parliament) and establish a 'faction of saved Christians' and God will work through that faction. Lauristin (needs to be saved), Raave, Alli Toomik - my 1st benchmate, a doctor from N-Jõesuu, a distance student of journalism… (RKM I 30, 235/6 Viljandi, 1992)

The next example describes missionary work among members of the government and military people:

On the 24th I was in Tallinn and I caught seven big fish: Aino Barbo, Kajane Kurbanova [?], Indrek Toome, Kalle Kulbok, Colonel Laaneots, Aare Uind (Pärnu Defence League) and Rein Põder (military commander). This one got the most decent strike from the Holy Spirit, he was so distant at the beginning, afterwards it was difficult to get rid of him. Hallelujah. (RKM I 30, 237 Viljandi, 1992)

On her programmatic doctrines, she said:

I need assistants and support. I am about to go to Juhan Sepp to publish Listen to the voice of your heart in Õhtuleht. Children at school need to listen more to 'The Heartbeat' by the Sõnajalgs [the Sõnajalgs are Adventists, twin brothers who married twin sisters, musicians, later businessmen. MK]. Every decision and every step is so important here, leading either to God or away from Him.' ER is going to sing this song.

At the same time, her campaign also focuse on simpler issues, such as a peculiar assessments of folk customs and a view of Christmas. In this assessment, her personal opinion – 'I like it' – clashes with her Christian views. The New Year goats, an ancient New Year's Eve tradition, mainly prevalent in western Estonia and Saaremaa, is associated with charity and is supported by the Word of God:

While Christmas is made up by the people, I don't resent them for it. They are people, after all, spirits in the flesh, and they may have a few little 'things of their own', and I like Christmas as a holiday. There is peace and joy and

great food and lots of beautiful and strange things that are not present in other times. I don't resent anything about Christmas. Not even the New Year's goats. Let them come and knock on the door! They are knocking on people's conscience, reminding them that they need to share their wealth with others, that there is no point in hoarding wealth on earth, that the real wealth is in heaven and that one must start gathering it on earth. (RKM I 30, 238 Viljandi, 1992)

Priskilla also visited museums, but her main aim was still to spread her message. Those who met her on rare occasions remember her as an interesting personality:

Priskilla was very direct, simple and straightforward. I do not remember much about her, only her dark complexion, golden eyes and short black hair. She herself approached me. For some reason, she mentioned Eenok Haamer. That she knew the man very well. [Eenok Haamer, clergyman, member of a Pietist-leaning family, head of the Institute of Theology. MK] (EFITA F01-028)

Overall impression: unforgettable, slightly crazy, but enchanting nevertheless. Um, and very open: in retrospect, it seems that she was trying to get information from everything around her. I guess she approached me at that far-off moment, because autumn and young me – we formed an idyllic sight, and it impressed her. (EFITA F01-028)

The second example describes a young person's chance encounter with Priskilla.

What is noteworthy is the lack of biblical quotations and her written visionary legacy. It is possible that more of her letters and other writings have been preserved in Estonia, and that in the future it will be possible to discover more about her personality.

Similarities and differences compared to previous traditions

There are reasons and opportunities for prophesizing in all eras, but especially so in the difficult circumstances of the twentieth century, when religious behaviour was changing. During the long Soviet period, every clairvoyant, fortune-teller or psychic who had anything to say about the future of Estonia

was called a prophet. Some of these sayings quickly spread in oral folklore (e.g. the saying attributed to the witch of Äksi that the borders of Russia will be seen from the Kremlin window; Kõiva 2014: 177). There were also prophecies like the prediction that Estonia will be destroyed, that only Sweden will survive and that believers should therefore flee to Sweden), which remained short-lived popular beliefs, street rants and speeches, provoked by political uncertainty and destroyed by common sense.

It is also evident from the biographies of the twentieth-century evangelists and the material collected about them that people interpreted every curse, every saying, every response to improper behaviour as a prophetic message, even though it did not have the characteristics of this genre in folklore's inventory of genres. Rather, it is a situational statement, interpreted primarily in the context of the 'evil eye' phenomenon.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, alongside the Lutheran Church, the Brethren Church and the Orthodox Church (there being a more massive conversion from Protestantism to Orthodoxy in the early 1840s due to severe weather conditions and diseases), several revivalist movements spread to Saaremaa and Läänemaa (Plaat 2001) and from there further north and south. The year 1873 saw the rise of the Free Church movement among the Swedish-speaking population of Läänemaa, initiated by schoolteachers Thure Emanuel Thoren and Lars Johan Österblom. The Estonian congregations of the Free Church started to emerge during the revival movement of 1879-1882. This religious movement of free people did not recognize christening in church; listening to the sermons of clergymen who were considered sinners was seen as harmful; and the right to preach was reserved to all the brethren who spoke out of their own inspiration. The Free Church movement was not officially allowed in the Russian Empire. Other branches of the Protestant church emerged in roughly the same period. For example, the first Baptists were baptised near Haapsalu in 1884; the Seventh-day Adventist movement spread in the late nineteenth century, while in the early twentieth century Methodism took off in 1908 and Pentecostalism in 1909. At the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the Baptist church was one of the fastest growing religious movements in Estonia; and since the movement had the official support of the landlords, the persecuted free-believers tried to save themselves by joining Baptist churches. For the record, the Baptist Church, like the original Brethren movement, arrived via the Baltic German nobility and was therefore

more popular than the Free Church movement. In 1945, the Free Church was forced to merge with the Baptists for good.

In the Brethren church, the preacher was expected to have a good knowledge of the Bible and church customs, while in the Free Church the believer's personal vision was all that was needed. The 'Heaven-Goers' (a religious movement in nineteenth-century Läänemaa) also expected people to have visions and to explain them to others. While the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century were religiously diverse, with new doctrines and religious movements, esoteric teachings and health movements being introduced from the West, and also from the East, an ethnic religion, paganism, or Taarausk (Taaraism), as well as Maausk, which translates as 'Earth Religion', started to form in the Baltic region. The latter became one of the most influential trends in the final decades of the twentieth century, during the decline of the socialist period (Põldmäe 2011, Plaat 2003). Although not may people joined the movement, more than 50% supported it (Census 2011), and we can speculate that the reason for this was that the movement was seen as ecological, protectionist, etc. These new faiths did not add any prophets, but in the 1950s members of the Brethren, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses and evangelists with a prophetic vocation started to return from prison camps and deportation.

Stanislav Sirel, for example, summarizes in his book the lives and writings of female evangelists, missionaries and prophets in the twentieth century. This shows how important the unexpected healing that came through prayer was for many, in gratitude for which they went on missionary work to Africa or Asia. One of the female prophets, Viiu Junmann (1883-1969) from Hiiumaa, describes her spontaneous journey to Saaremaa, where she set out to heal with prayer:

> [--] Earlier, I visited her mother, who was poorly. I got down on my knees, and we spoke to Jesus about the woman's plight. The woman was healed at the same moment, praising and worshipping God. From there we went together to Aleksander. He was in his forties or fifties. He lay in his bed, rolling about in great pain. He had been to Tartu, where one of his kidneys had been removed, but the pain still persisted. We prayed together from the bottom of our hearts for this unfortunate man. At the same moment, the Holy Spirit fell on the sick man, and he jumped out of bed, straight and healthy and very happy, praising Jesus Christ. (Sirel 2013:54)

It should be noted that, as with many of the prophets described above, it was common for female evangelists to prophesy small curses and misfortunes in response to adverse circumstances.

Conclusion

The emergence of prophets and their activities are in no way limited to external socio-political, economic or identity issues. They relate to religious changes or the need for them; they originate from or are influenced by the behaviour and messages of the prophets themselves.

1) Looking at the traditions related to the ten prophets, it can be said that the events that have had the greatest impact are those related to upheavals in political and social life: major wars, outbreaks of disease (World Wars I and II), the collapse of the Russian Empire and Estonian independence, that is, situations in which power structures changed, the community was being subjected to anti-religious measures and the prophets believed that society was moving away from the word of God and the kingdom of God. Criticism of the authorities and the clergy led not only to arrests (this also happened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), but also to expulsions from the house of worship and the congregation. This extreme behaviour was directed against the official Protestant church, which the prophets considered to be detached from faith: it included hanging posters on the church door, preaching in a tree, preaching through megaphone during church events, disturbing the sermon by preaching at the same time, preaching in public places outside the church premises. At the same time, prophets also took a stand against their own congregations. The prophets of the twentieth century did not build their own congregations, but instead acted alone. Since none of them achieved the position of a charismatic leader, they either travelled because of their mission or moved within a certain area (Tallinn and market places, also rural areas – Reits, various institutions, towns, offices, the parliament – Priskilla, nearby villages, vicarage – Seiu, his own house of worship and the area around the church – Habakkuk II).

One of the triggers for these activities was the religious diversity of the twentieth century; however, like the prophets before them, these prophets preached about the arrival of Doomsday because people were becoming increasingly irreligious. While in previous centuries it was the upper classes that were predicted to be doomed, now there was growing concern for the Estonians or the state.

As with earlier prophets (also, for example, shamans and folk healers), the prophetic vocation is accepted after repeated ordeals (Bulgakova 1995, Sirel 2012, Kirjamägi 1997, EFITA F01-028).

2) The main features of the prophets' activity are the healing of diseases through prayer, in our cases spreading visions and the word of God, doomsday predictions, and predicting national or international disasters.

There are no predictions on the organization of future society or technological innovations. There are also no special requirements for their clothing: they themselves appear in the normal clothing of the era, using the technical means of their time. There are no particular requirements for leading an ascetic lifestyle, nor for clothing or jewellery, although there is a somewhat disapproving attitude towards profligacy and showing off. There are no associations with unusual atmospheric phenomena and no interpretations of cosmic phenomena as the sign of Doomsday.

3) These are prophets who prophesize in writing, in a similar tradition to the prophets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For the most part, they used to alternate between oral and written prophecy. Conversely the prophets of the twentieth century, especially those in urban settings, preferred, because of the briefness of the contact, to share individual experiences, focusing on belief, curses, prophecy, and descriptions of the prophet and of his or her appearance. Thus, for the most part, the stories are recollections and relate personal experiences in shorter one-episode narratives

One interesting aspect is the visions and their explanation by means of biblical passages, or the use of these passages in daily dialogues with other people, closer analysis of which is a future research topic. As their prophecies and social predictions were primarily about matters of faith and the kingdom of God, and as their activities took place either in the private sphere or around churches, they did not experience significant problems, for example, during the Soviet era.

In conclusion, there are similarities, but there is also a narrowing of tradition, a multitude of non-narrative plots.

Acknoledgements

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THE TATARS IN LITHUANIA AND THEIR ETHNOHISTORY

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Abstract. This article focuses on the interpretation and re-interpretation of the history of the Tatar community in Lithuania. It is the result of field studies conducted in 2012, 2015 and 2016 and draws the reader's attention to Tatar ethnohistory, understood as a story of the past, tracing its main narratives: the settlement of Tatars in this region of Europe, their past and their family genealogies. The analysis finds that the mythology of the settlement is heroic, the central role in it is played by the great prince Vytautas, and the ancestors are presented as noble and loyal warriors. In its main elements (plot, characters), Tatar mythography follows the trajectory of the dominant national narrative, emphasizing the heroic and dignified participation of Tatars in it.

Keywords: historical memory, interpretation and re-interpretation of history, mythography, ethnohistory, national narrative, Tatars in Lithuania.

Introduction

The Tatar Muslim communities in Poland, Belarus and the Baltics (Lithuania) represent an important part of the historical heritage of the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In modern humanities, their cultural specificity is associated with the ideas of the border and of intensive intercultural interaction and

cultural synthesis, especially between the Baltic, East Slavic and West Slavic cultures (Cohen 1994; Sadowski 2001; Norris 2005, 2009). Today, the Tatars in this region of Europe represent a typical historical diaspora preserved in Christian cultural and religious conditions. The Tatar communities living here are not homogeneous in composition and were formed as a result of different settlements at different times. Their existence in independent nation states accounts for some of the differences between them, but they all recognize their common historical heritage, which gives cultural specificity to the whole region. Recent research has shown that their community identification is characterized by 'enhanced' orientation to the past as a value guideline, and since the end of the last century close processes of identification have emerged among them, for which images of the past are evoked and updated (Assmann 2010; Giordano 2015).

This text is part of a broader study on conceptions of the past and interpretations and re-interpretations of history in both the Balkan and Baltic cultural contexts (Burke 2001, 2005; Yankova 2019a, 2019c). It is the result of an individual research project and fieldwork conducted in September 2011 in Poland in the Podlasie region (Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, Sokółka, Białystok) and in 2012, 2015 and 2016 in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Trakai, Nemėžis, Raižiai, Keturiasdešimt totorių, Subartonys) (Yankova 2019c: 185-275). The focus of the analysis is on surveys among the Tatars in Lithuania, and comparison with and supplements to these observations are provided with parallels to those recorded in Poland. Later on we will be particularly interested in the issue of so-called ethnohistory, that is, building one's own story about the past (images of the past in the minds of the community, family genealogies, family traditions, etc.) and its correlation with the Lithuanian national narrative, the so-called 'grand narrative', to use the terminology of J.-Fr. Lyotard (Lyotard 1979). The theoretical basis of this research is the concept of *historical memory*, understood as a generalized image of knowledge about the past, built from many interacting ideas, and recognized as information, functions and processes of representation, constructiveness, updating, etc. (Yankova 2019b). In turn, ethnohistory is understood as a specific type of history of the people and communities being studied and their concepts of their own past (Augé 1999: 8-9), which, unlike professional historiography, are often 'multifaceted, controversial and absolutely unstable' in the words of Smith (cf. Smith 1999: 28).

Brief historical notes

Defined as 'early Muslim communities in Europe' (cf. Norris 2009), Tatars have lived for more than six centuries in this part of the world (Lederer 1995; Larsson 2009; Jakubauskas 2012; Potašenko 2002; Davies 2012; Nielsen et al. 2014; Bairašauskaitė and Miškinienė 2014; Svanberg and Westerlund 2016). Their settlement in these lands is associated with a period in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (late fourteen to early fifteenth century), a federation between Lithuania and Poland. The mass settlement of a compact Tatar population on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is dated to the reign of Prince Vytautas Didysis (Lith.), or Witold Kiejstutowicz (Pol.), who ruled from 1392 to 1430 and who attracted them to his side as a military guard force to strengthen the state border and protect it against external enemies. In exchange for their military duties, Tatars received land and religious freedom.

The Tatars mainly served as soldiers in an independent unit of the light cavalry (Kryczyński 1938: 118; Tyszkiewicz 1989: 19). Until almost the sixteenth century, the Tatar military organization relied on family ties, and by the end of the eighteenth century, they were using *tamgas,* that is, tribal and family symbols on their official seals as a symbolic link with their family tradition and ancestors (Kryczyński 1938: 71). As a military force, they took part in important battles of historical significance to European peoples, such as the battle of Grünwald / Tananberg / Žalgiris against the Teutonic Knights in 1410 and the defence of Vienna against the Ottoman Empire in 1683 (Norris 2005: 120; Pociūnas 2007: 3-13). The Uhlan Tatar Regiment took part in military operations against Napoleon's army in Prussia (1806-1807), Belarus (1812) and Germany (1813-1814). The compact settlement of the Tatars in this region, their religious independence and the long-term preservation of family ties in their military organization are important prerequisites for the formation and preservation of Tatar communities in these lands.

In the period after the 1920s, there was a real cultural and religious efflorescence of the Tatars in the area, defined by experts as an 'ethnic revival' (Bohdanowicz 1942; Norris 2009: 45; Račius 2014, 2016). In 1926, a new Tatar organization was established in Vilnius, the Association of Culture and Education of the Polish Tatars / Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy Tatarów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, which organized a variety of cultural, scientific and publishing activities. They give a particularly important place to the annual publication *Rocznik Tatarski* or *The Tatar Year* (Miśkiewicz 1990: 125; Borawski

1986: 299-300; Tyszkiewicz 1989: 142). At that time, a large-scale programme of historiographical, cultural and ethnographic research was carried out, during which valuable sources for the Tatar past were documented and systematized. The period between the two world wars (1918-1940) was one of significant events, which later had a decisive influence on the formation of their historical memory and ideas about the past.

After the 1990s, along with the democratic changes in the countries of the former socialist bloc, religious freedom was restored, new opportunities for cultural and religious organizations of minority communities were created, and favourable conditions arose for rethinking one's own historical heritage. The ethnic upsurge in the last quarter of the twentieth century also intensified the increase in multifaceted relations with the past in terms of history, memory, tradition and heritage (Hartman 1972; Nagel 1994; Norris 2009: 1-3). Due to the growing mobility and the new information technologies, intensive contacts between Tatar organizations around the world help maintain active cultural exchange, the construction of traditions and the formation of a new Tatar image. Globalization and enhanced mobility should be noted as contemporary trends with global dimensions that affect the dynamics and specifics of these processes among the Tatars in this region, including their historical memory (Norris 2009: 127-30). In this socio-cultural context, one matter of key importance is the community's physical survival, as their genetic reserve is being tested under the influence of mixed marriages and expanded emigration. All this strengthens the sensitivity of European Tatars to what is happening not only at the local and regional levels, but also on the old continent and in the Tatar world in general (Sirutavičius 2013). What follows quite naturally makes problematic the identification and correlation with patterns from the past that convey stability in the rapidly changing world of the present day (Bairašauskaitė 2009; Czerwonnaja 2017).

Legendary history

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, as a source of information about the past of the Tatars, scholars collected legendary written and oral testimonies. They also studied Ottoman documents and preserved folklore texts (Muhlinskiy 1857; Tuhan-Baranowski 1896; Kryczyński 1938; Borawski and Dubiński 1986; Miśkiewicz 1993). But if the professional approach to these sources analyses them through criteria such as truth versus untruth, objectiv-

ity versus fiction, etc., the concept of historical memory makes it possible to approach them as written fixations of their own legendary accounts of the past, which legitimizes significant moments in the history of the community. In this process, researchers may find themselves in the role of registrars and of conductors of fragments of the collective memory. Through the authority of the recorded text, scholars may place a higher value on these fragments, thus engaging themselves in the social construction of memory.

Examining the historicity of the oral tradition, Jan Vansina points out that historical consciousness operates on two levels only: the beginning and the recent past. The temporal scope of memory is directed to different stages in the formation of ideas about the past, in which the topos of the original sources and the experienced recent past stand out, marking the chronotopes of the legendary history (Vansina 1985: 24). This determines the main narratives of Tatar ethnohistory today: stories about the settlement of Tatars in this region of Europe and stories about the past of the family and tribal genealogies.

Mythology of the settlement: images and characters

Stories about the beginning of the Tatars' legendary history follow the invariant model of the mythology of migrations, representing the movement from the starting point of the origin of the migration to the end point of settlement. Due to the remoteness of the events from the Middle Ages, not enough data about the migrations as a process have been preserved, while information about the departure lands is stored in summarized and symbolic forms. This lack of information is compensated by stories about Tatar settlement in the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which build a living mythography up to this day.

The migrant stories develop as cosmology, the establishment of a settlement at new place being the creation and arrangement of a new world with its own demiurge and its own centre (Vansina 1985: 22). A variant of the legend about the origin of the Tatar village of Nemėžis in Lithuania and the popular etymology of its name connects Tatar settlement there with the activities of the great Lithuanian Prince Vytautas:

> *Here was the family castle of Vytautas the Great. The most prominent part of the Tatars was settled in Nemėžis to protect the prince. His wife died here. As a sign of gratitude for the devotion of the Tatars, this land was given to them without boundaries, without being measured. The name*

comes from the Polish word niemeżąna, 'take land without measuring it!', 'unmeasured, immeasurable land'. There is a river called Nemėžanka here. Here everything is connected with the Tatars, all the land belongs to the Tatars. (TK, Nemėžis, 2012.03.20)

In the recorded legendary version, the ruler's residence is understood as an archetype of the centre, around which the foundations of the new Tatar community were built. It emphasizes the close connection between the suzerain and the ancestors, the forefathers and the founders, based on their devotional service and their nobility.

For the local topography, the events of the past and the participation of Vytautas the Great in them acquire a paradigmatic and meaningful character. According to a legend about the founding of the village of Studzianka (Poland), Grand Duke Witold passed through this area and especially liked a place with clean and cold spring water, where they had sunk a small well (Pol. studnia, pl.). Because of this, the Tatars who settled here began to call the settlement Studzianka (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 231-2). The legend of the origin of the village of Forty Tatars (Lithuania) is also associated with the activities of the great ruler and the settlement of Tatar warriors in the area (ibid.: 2323). A legend about the name of Tatar village of Lukishki (Lith., Lukiškės) in the suburbs of Vilnius, which is considered to be one of the oldest Tatar settlements ('neighbourhood'), is associated with a Tatar who served in the army of Grand Duke Witold and ruled these lands, which were probably granted for devotional service. It is known from documentary data that from 1559 to 1567 Lukishki belonged to two Tatar brothers, the name of the village coming from that of their grandfather Luka, who lived around 1500 (Jakubauskas 2009: 16).

Portrait of Vytautas the Great in the Tatar club in the village of Raižiai (Lithuania - 03.2012)

Tatar settlement in these places is related to Prince Vytautas the Great, a cultural hero who regulates the basic principles in the lives of the newcomers (Giordano 2015: 41-6). The preserved legendary narratives contain etiological elements: the common past of the community explains the heterogeneous origin of the Tatar community, and the local loci are conceived as their originally owned places. At the same time, the Tatars build such an idea of the distant past in which they describe themselves in general terms as loyal warriors who received appropriate reception in the new cultural environment, emphasized in the so-called 'Treatise on Lithuanian Tatars' / 'Risale-i Tatar - i Leh': 'We swore on our swords that we would love the Lithuanians, as during the war they respected us as prisoners and, when we settled on this land, they assured us that this sand and this water and these trees will be common to all of us' (cf. Muhlinsky 1857: 14). This interpretation also motivates the processes of adaptation and assimilation of the Tatars in the Baltic- and Slavic-speaking cultural environment, which would be observed in the near future.

Although the recorded legends about the circumstances of the Tatar settlement are fragmentary, they give reason to assume the existence of an unpreserved and unrecorded epic account of the most important event from the past of the Tatars in this part of Europe: their settlement and the development of their community (Muhlinsky 1857: 15-21, 48; Kryczyński 1938: 93-116). It can be assumed that its main plot concerns a devoted warrior and a noble ruler, who are correlated with famous heroes from the medieval knightly epic.


Tatars from the village Keturiasdešimt totorių (Lithuania – 19.03.2012) Photo by V. Yankova

But if the beginning of the settlement is told in condensed form, and the events take place in chronologically indefinite time indicated by 'once', 'long ago', 'six hundred years ago' and in situ, then gradually the legends are historicized, and historical realities appear in them. Some legends refer to specific events and personalities from the seventeenth century and fit into preserved genealogical narratives. This is a version of the legend from the village of Keturiasdešimt totorių (Forty Tatars), according to which the village was founded by four Tatar captains or other officers (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 233). The legends that connect the Tatar villages of the Podlasie region in Poland with historical events from the seventeenth century are of a similar genealogical nature. According to one of them, in a battle in 1683 a Tatar officer, Samuel Murza Krzeczowski, saved the life of Jan III Sobieski (Polish) / Jonas Sobieskis (Lithuanian) (1629-1696), King of Poland and Prince of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The grateful king promoted him to the rank of colonel and gave him the village of Kruszyniany. In 1688, Jan III Sobieski visited his rescuer, and until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Krzeczowski's descendants showed the chair on which the ruler sat and the old linden tree in the colonel's yard (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 234). According to another legend from the village of Bohoniki, King Jan III Sobieski endowed his faithful captain with as much land as he could ride around on his horse in one day, a motif popular in etiological legends (ibid.). Thus the preserved traditions connect the past of the community with stories about prestigious origins and shape the fragments of ancestral mythographies.

At the heart of the mythology of settlement and genesis of the Tatar community is the attachment of the Tatar warriors to Prince Vytautas the Great and their loyalty to him (Račius and Bairašauskaitė 2016: 30). The figure of the Grand Duke is represented as an ancestor and hero, who plays a fundamental role in their settlement in this European territory (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 2301; Mickūnaitė 2006: 19496).

Legends about the special attitudes of the Tatars towards the Grand Duke have been preserved since the beginning of the sixteenth century. We know about a request to Sigismund I (1519), in which a religious homage to the death of the Grand Duke is attested (Muhlinsky 1857: 14). Data on the veneration of Vytautas are also found in a treatise by Michalon Litwin (1550), where Vytautas is called 'our hero' and it is pointed out that many places are named after him (Horoshkevich 1994: 80, 91). According to A. Muhlinsky, the Tatars mention Witold with adoration and admiration, tell legends about him and even create their own etymology of his name, associated with the idea of help and support (Muhlinsky 1857: 13).
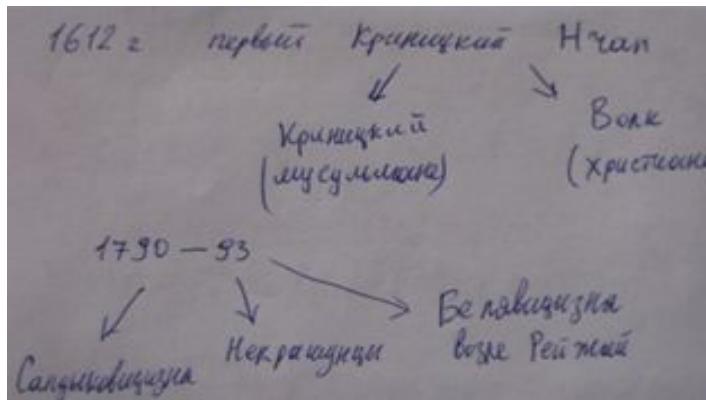
Genealogy of the genus Krinitsky (by: Eldar Krinitsky- 30. 04. 2016). Photo by V. Yankova

In modern biographical narratives and family memories, Vytautas the Great is presented as an ideal wise statesman, who, with his skilful policy and benevolent attitude towards newcomers, creates favourable conditions for their settlement in a foreign land. In the stories of the beginning, preserved through family memories, Prince Vytautas personifies the earliest period of the Tatar settlement, being a kind of demiurge who lays the foundations of the community in the new cultural environment:

> *In our family there was always a portrait of Prince Vytautas on the wall ... Vytautas was such a wise prince, Lithuanian, Žemaitis; he was the great prince who accepted our ancestors as his own people, and here our ancestors were honoured 600 years ago and up to this day. For our family, Vytautas is the reason for us to be here ... (K. Sh. 22.03.2012)*

Vytautas the Great occupies an important place in the national memory of the peoples who are considered the heirs of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and in today's Lithuania he is regarded as a national hero (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 2301; Mickūnaitė 2006; Sužiedėlis 2011). Therefore, the Tatars' respect for Witold should also be seen in the context of the Lithuanian national narrative. There is evidence that the myth of him as a hero and as a saint spread as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century (Nikžentaitis 2000: 18 - 19). The era of Vytautas's rule is still considered the 'golden age' of Lithuania. This is the

time when the state reached the apogee of its power and its greatest territorial size, which spread from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. At the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, when the Grand Duchy of Lithuania suffered territorial losses, the images of Witold and other great Lithuanian princes and their role in strengthening statehood were updated as an expression of 'historical nostalgia' for the lost greatness (Mickūnaité 2004).

The basis of the Lithuanian national narrative is the romantic image of Lithuania as the 'land of princes' and the 'land of heroes', and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is presented with mythologized symbols. The growth of the cult of Vytautas in the period between the First and Second World Wars was inspired by the patriotic-nationalist movements for the establishment of an independent Lithuanian Republic (1918). This new beginning sought its ground in antiquity: the myths of the 'golden age', of the 'great princes', of the 'historical battles with the Crusaders' are updated (Čepaitienė 2013). Contemporary researchers add another reason for Witold's heroism – the need for an appropriate historical model to legitimize the authoritarian political regime of President Antanas Smetona (1926-1940) (Vilimas 2004: 516). The culmination of this process came in 1930, when, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of the Grand Duke, a nationwide memorial campaign was carried out (Nikžentaitis 2000: 21 – 31; Mickūnaité 2004; Jankevičiūtė 2010: 158–180). The organizing committee for the celebrations proclaimed the image of Witold as a symbol of a great ruler who united all his possessions in a free and independent state with an ancient historical tradition and his centre (Nikžentaitis 2000: 27-8). It was at this point that 'Great' was added to the name of Vytautas. At the same time, the cult of the Battle of Grundwald from 1410 emerged, the historical memory of this event also becoming part of the homage to the Grand Duke (Vilimas 2004: 517).

In the context of these processes at the beginning of the 21st century, the historical figure of Grand Duke Witold and the state he ruled are perceived as a symbolic element of the historical heritage of the Tatars and are updated in the political uses of the past (Cohen 1985). In post-communist Lithuania, Tatar leaders actively confirmed the idea of their ancestors' loyalty to the Lithuanian state and nation. As an expression of the Tatar community's respect for Vytautas the Great, a monument to the Prince was built in Raizai, the only settlement in Lithuania with a dominant Tatar population and an ancient mosque, called the 'capital of Lithuanian Tatars' (Račius and Bairašauskaitė 2016: 30).

Another historical figure who does not have the magnitude of Witold in the national memory, but for the modern Tatars acquires increasingly prominent symbolic dimensions, is Hadji Giray / Girey, Khan of Crimea (ca. 1428-1456; 1456-1466) and founder of the Crimean Tatar dynasty, the Giray. According to a semi-legendary account by Mihalon Litvin, Hadji Giray was born in Trakai (Horoshkevich 1994: 64). The hypothesis of the Hungarian Turkologist Gyula Németh connects the adoption of the dynastic name Giray to events surrounding the birth of Khan Hadji Giray in historical Lithuania (Ivanics 2012: 479). The oral legend part of this information is supported by arguments from written historical documents about the relations between the Crimean Khanate and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Muhlinsky 1857: 57). Today, the suggestion for the birthplace of the founder of the Tatar dynasty is associated with an emblematic topos in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Trakai, where the ruler's castle is located, once guarded by Tatars and Karaites. The image of the dynasty's first creator multiplied his greatness and power and legitimized the Tatars' status and affiliation to this place. By placing a monument to Hadji Giray in Trakai, actions are taken for a symbolic return, a re-mastering of his place, centred around the figure of the mythologized ancestor of the community.

It is necessary to specify that, according to modern sociological research, the heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the mass consciousness of Lithuanians occupies a significant place, but not the most important place, and that it is compatible with the ideas of civil society, an independent Lithuanian state and European values (Čepaitienė 2013: 3823). Its outlines for the Tatars in Lithuania are very different. For them, the image of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has a mobilizing and consolidating character, being complemented by the idea of its integration and of a polyethnic model, sometimes even being claimed as a prototype of the European Union (Strumiłło 2008).

Genealogy and family traditions

Genealogy has many ideological and symbolic dimensions (Rose 1996). It focuses on the diachronic projections of ancestral memory and the role of the genus around which this memory is formed, as well as their possible reconstruction and arrangement. The interest in genealogy has its traditions among certain strata of European Tatars. It is possible to assume that this is a relic of inherited notions of a united community with its own privileged elite (Chazbijewicz 1993).

According to historical research from the beginning of the sixteenth century, among Lithuanian Tatars there was a desire to prove their noble origins, which affirmed their rights as landowners and created a precondition for ascent in the social hierarchy (Dumin 2010: 17-18). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under the influence of the expanding contacts with Crimea, the addition of the title 'Mirza' to the surname spread among the Tatar aristocracy as a kind of fashion (ibid.: 19). The interest in genealogy became especially active after the accession of the lands inhabited by Lithuanian Tatars to the Russian Empire in 1793–to 1795 (Muhlinsky 1857: 389). Then they, like all other nobles, had to prove their noble origins with documents. In the nineteenth century, as a result of the liberal attitude of the authorities, almost all Lithuanian Tatar clans had noble rights, i.e. about two hundred families. However, these processes stimulated an additional resource for mobilization, which is also aimed at understanding the ancestral past. Then the coats of arms of the Lithuanian Tatars were formed. This 'need for genealogy' leads to the emergence of pseudo-historical legends linking a family with a prestigious Tatar past (Dumin 2010: 19-20). It is significant that, as an echo of the interest in the Orient and the ideology of Sarmatism, in the second half and end of the seventeenth century many Lithuanian, Belarusian and Polish clans linked their origins with the Tatars, justifying this through semi-legendary and imaginary testimonies. It is known that, at the end of the –eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries the 'Tatar titles' or Ulan and Mirza/Murza) and Tatar origins were associated with having a particularly high rank among the Polish aristocracy.

A reflection of the vital public interest in genealogy are the family legends that give reasons for their aristocratic origins and connect them with semi-legendary, imaginary events of the past and with the highly valued Tatar past (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 2412). In the ancestral legends recorded in the twentieth century, historical facts are mixed with legendary motifs in which the memory of past generations is located between the tangible time horizon of the heirs and the generalized contours of the mythological beginnings. Such is Major Amurat Bielak's story about his great-grandfather Kara Mirza, who fought against Prince Witold, being wounded and captured along with his horde. But the merciful ruler gave him land, called him Bielak (White), unlike the old name Kara (Black), and thus turned him into a faithful warrior (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 242). The genealogical legend of the Bielak clan is a fragment of the mythology of the settlement and repeats its prototype. The image of Witold

in it also corresponds to the model: he is a merciful ruler, creator of the family name and family foundations. A material testimony to the reality of the past is the bow of Kara Mirza, the 'material memory' of domestic history that was turned into a relic for his descendants. It can be assumed that such legendary stories formed a significant fund in the oral history of many families and clans, being kept alive until the late 1970s.

Genealogical stories are a product of the communicative memory of generations: historical experience functions through them within the framework of the individual biography. It is known that for centuries military service has been a traditional profession among settlers from the east (Muhlinsky 1857: 46-7; Kryczyński 1938: 136-46; Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 27-183). It is not by chance that the motifs for military service and the military genre are too often found in the family legends and biographical stories, and famous commanders with high military ranks are pointed out as role models. In terms of family memory, the Tatar narrative and the participation of ancestors in it are rethought from n the perspective of national and European history. The past, especially the family's heroic military past, is perceived as a value and as a reason for pride. The memories are dominated by heroic patterns, reproduced through popular historical knowledge, printed publications and visual documentation. Such an attitude towards the past plays an important ethno-consolidating role for the Tatar community and contributes to the implementation of policies of recognition by the macro-society. In other words, the consistently constructed legendary Tatar narrative connects the mythologized past of the community with its present in order to legitimize the modern social order (Giordano 2015).

Some tribal studies, published and widely popularized during the so-called 'Tatar Revival' (1920-1930s), have had a serious impact on the interest in Tatar genealogy. The critical scientific approach to them and the revision of their basic concepts and arguments do not significantly affect their prestige in popular opinion. Their reception is a good example of the constructive nature of the images of the past and their updating for modern purposes. For example, in search of information about the distant past of his family in his book *On Lithuanian Muslims* (1896) Maciej Tuhan-Baranowski created the theory of the Caucasian (Dagestani) origin of the Muslim elite (the gentry) in Lithuania, which has long been rethought, despite which it still finds its modern followers (Borawski and Dubiński 1986: 243-4). Analogically, the work on *Emblems of the Tatar clans in Poland* (1929, 1986) by Dziedulewicz has its uncritical successors, who search

it and find within it their necessary identification with prestigious ancestors (Dziedulewicz 1929).

Today, genealogical research among the Tatars is the subject of increased public interest. They include professionals but mostly amateurs; clan genealogies and family coats of arms are created, while biographical memories convey the motif of the family's prestigious and noble origins. In most cases, this activity is preceded by work in the archives and a reference to Dziedulewicz's book. Apart from having a historical and documentary basis, it also rests on uncritical personal interpretation of the sources and the construction of facts and events from the past. The rationale for such an approach is the popular understanding of special origins as an expression of social prestige, a source of pride or other social needs. This necessity for elitism, a noble origin, belonging to a privileged class and distinctiveness can be seen as a reaction against unification and is what motivates the modern world interest in genealogies (Novak 1971).

Conclusion

The main body of historical memory among the Tatars in Lithuania is due to their indirect, assimilated, retransmitted experience and knowledge, acquired through various memory media, and not to the direct life and sensory experiences of those who remember (Assmann and Conrad 2010: 49; Assmann 2011). This largely determines the intensity of the processes of the 'invention' of ideas about the Tatar past today (cf. Hobsbawm 1983). The period of nearly a hundred years during which Tatar ethnohistory was formed constructed an idea of the past as heroic and dignified. In modern ideas of the Tatars about themselves, the past is understood as a heroic story, as 'heroic annals' for 'great men' (Hartog 2002), as a reason for pride, and the ancestors are seen as heroes, warriors and nobles. This attitude to the past as something of value plays an important consolidating role for the Tatar community and supports the policies of recognition by the macro-society.

The mythology of Tatar settlement in the region is one of a heroic 'history of kings and battles' of great men, and in it the history is shown as a 'metaphor of mythical realities' (Hartog 2002). Central to such a narrative of the past is the demiurgic role of Witold, forefather and hero of the ancestors, perceived as a noble and loyal warrior. Toponyms, toponymic sagas and etiological legends point to local versions of this mythological text and outline the topography of Tatar settlement in the region and its various traces in local memory. They

constructed a more complete and harmonious account of the genesis of the Tatar community in these lands. It is obvious that in its main elements (plot, characters) Tatar mythography follows the trajectory of the dominant national narrative while emphasizing the Tatars' heroic and dignified participation in it. The semantics of the heroic notion of Tatar ethnohistory has become a justification for national unity in the present and a guarantor of its common future. This heroic past is the focal idea that unites every nation. As Renan reminds us: 'Heroic past, great personalities, fame (the real one), this is the public capital on which a national idea rests' (cf. Assmann 2004: 174).

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FEMALE SPACES IN ETHNICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY MIXED SHRINES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: CASES IN MONTENEGRO AND KOSOVO

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Abstract: This paper discusses female spaces and rituals in two sacred sites in the Albanian-Slavonic borderlands that are shared by Christian and Muslim communities. Based on fieldwork material, the article first gives an overview of the infrastructure, various functions and female interrelations of the 'Ladies' Beach' in the city of Ulcinj, Montenegro, which brings together stable local and spontaneously emerging female communities from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The second part explores an example of a mixed pilgrimage in the village of Letnica in Kosovo, paying special attention to female ritual practices related to fertility and childbirth as an integral context for the different scenarios in which the shrine is visited. By examining rituals experienced by women, the paper shows that female practices aimed at reproductive well-being play a specific role in inter-group contacts in shared shrines and have an impact on the process of sharing by different ethnic and confessional communities.

Key words: Female rituals, fertility, mixed shrines, shared shrines, religion, Western Balkans, Albanian-Slavonic contacts

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Introduction

The first time I visited the city of Ulcinj in Montenegro was in 2014, when with a group of colleagues I made a stop there on the way to an expedition in Albania. The head of our expedition suddenly remembered the women-only beach located in the city and offered my female colleague and myself a chance to see it. At the entrance to the beach we were greeted by an elderly woman dressed only in a topless bikini. Access to the beach was fee-based, and the woman sold us some tickets. The tickets showed the silhouette of a nude female body, which echoed the image on the main beach banner featuring the perfect figure of a naked woman, walking away from the viewer into the depths of the sea (Figure 1). In a similar way, the images echoed the real women who were practically all resting on the beach naked. Having received these tickets, there was a feeling that we had not just paid for our stay on the beach, but had won tickets to some 'women's club' or 'women's paradise', to quote enthusiastic impressions that can often be heard from visitors, as I later explored on the Internet. The considerable fame of the resort in Ulcinj, in the far south of Montenegro, which is not the most popular tourist destination, seemed unusual and amazing.

Figure 1. The main banner of the Ladies' Beach. Ulcinj, Montenegro. 2018. Photograph by the author.
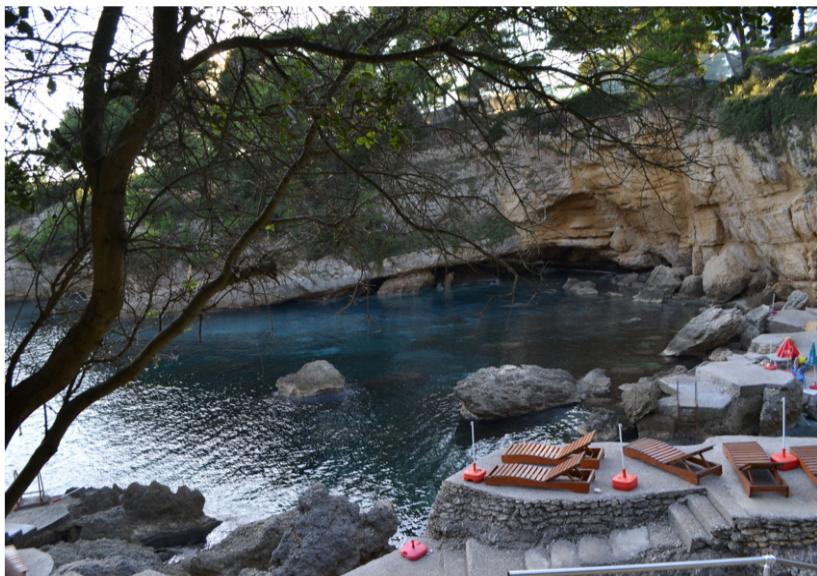
Figure 2. The Ladies' Beach (Ženska plaža / Plazhi i femrave). Ulcinj, Montenegro. 2018. Photograph by the author.

Four years later, I went back to the beach with the intention of observing it in detail and met the same elderly topless woman at the entrance. She was a custodian of the beach who dealt with tickets, first aid and the maintenance of order. She comes from Kosovo each summer season and has been doing this job for more than forty years. In addition to organizational activities, she also tells guests about the fertility rituals that are practised on the beach. Besides rest and relaxation suitable for an urban female community and a touristic female audience, the 'Ladies Beach' was originally known as a place of ritual healing from infertility due to the specific natural environment of pine-tree air, seawater, a mineral spring and miraculous stones. Thus, the location of the beach attracts specific groups of women who seek healing from reproductive problems. The female rituals, imaginaries, popular beliefs and narratives that occur in the place have much in common with those practised in sacred locations all over the Balkans: religious shrines and places of worship are integrated with the mineral and vegetal world and are noted for their sacredness and healing powers (Krstić 2010). Located in the Albanian-Slavonic borderland, the Ladies' Beach in Ulcinj turns into a space for various ethnic and religious

contacts: a female clientele from Albanian, Slavonic, Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic communities represented in Ulcinj and beyond meets here for leisure or healing purposes and experiences a special situation of inter-ethnic and inter-religious contact. Is this the same sort of contact that takes place in the mixed or shared shrines that are widespread in the Balkans as inter-faith phenomena? Does such contact, based on the idea of reproductive well-being, construct women's interrelations and thereby transcend ethnic and religious boundaries?

I used these questions as my point of departure for comparative study of the Ladies' Beach as a religious sanctuary attracting female visitors for 'fertile' rituals, because the sacred specifics of the beach related to the miraculous healing of infertility made this possible. The mixed nature of this exclusively female site in Ulcinj suggested supporting such a comparison with a study of a sanctuary visited by heterogeneous female communities from different ethnic and religious traditions. Following the general configurations, including ethnically (Albanians and Slavs) and religiously (Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam) mixed zones, I extended the case study in Montenegro to the border area of southeast Kosovo, to an example of mixed pilgrimage to the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the village of Letnica. Although the Catholic sanctuary belongs to an official religious institution, it could hardly be considered monotheistic because the community of worshippers is not confined to any official religion. The Catholic Marian shrine is visited by Croat and Albanian Catholics, Orthodox Serbs and Macedonians, Muslim Albanians, Roma and other groups. From a gender perspective, the two cases discussed in the paper overlap with the same 'consumer' audience: the two places are closely associated with healing from reproductive problems and represent exclusive female spaces and rituals.

In addressing these female sacred places, my aim was to demonstrate different scenarios of contact situations applicable to ethnically and religiously mixed shrines in the Western Balkans, and more specifically in Albanian-Slavonic border areas. How such contact is experienced in female interrelations at these shrines? Does the idea of reproductive well-being serve as a condition for contact for representatives of different ethno-confessional groups? How do female practices aimed at fertility create a special female space at these sacred sites?

After offering some reflections on theory and methods, this article is divided into two main parts based on previous literature and my own fieldwork held in 2018 and 2019. The first part provides an overview of infrastructure, vari-

ous functions and female interrelations on the Ladies' Beach in Ulcinj, which brings women together as a stable and spontaneously emerging community of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The second part describes mixed pilgrimage in the village of Letnica in Kosovo and embraces different motifs of veneration at the shrine, as well as female ritual scenarios and the inter-group contact situation. My primary sources are observations of both sites and interviews with visitors, pilgrims, keepers and religious servants of Albanian, Montenegrin, Serbian and Croatian origin.

Theoretical and methodological backgrounds

Various examples of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations are widely represented elsewhere in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, especially in the framework of sacred sites (Albera 2008; Couroucli 2012). The mosaic-like religious landscape in the Balkans reveals the complex history of co-existence, such as rebuilding or recreating shrines at the same sites,[1] and conditions when persons are forced to 'mediate or negotiate their otherness' (Barkey 2014: 33). In the Balkans, religion remains an important factor of group identity, both ethnic and national, though as the papers just mentioned show, the post-socialist 'open market for religiosity' (Elbasani and Roy 2015) makes this experience of religiosity more mobile, more individual and less institutionally controlled (Darieva, and et al. 2017).

Studies of sacred places shared by members of more than one religious or ethnic community have developed a specific anthropological concentration on pilgrimage and on crossing the frontiers between religions over the last years. Provoked by a paper by Robert M. Hayden (2002), several volumes and collections on joint worship and shared shrines in various regions all over the world have been published (Albera and Couroucli 2012; Bowman 2012b; Katić and Eade 2014; Barkey and Barkan 2014; Hayden et al. 2016). Hayden suggested there was a scenario of 'antagonistic tolerance' in respect of the concept of the competitive sharing of sacred sites when real and symbolic contest for dominance of the site exists among different religious communities (Hayden 2002). Hayden argues that sharing often implies using tolerance as a pragmatic strategy of passive non-interference in the form of 'temporal manifestation of relations between social groups' until conflict occurs (ibid.: 205–7). This suggests that syncretism is based on power relations between communities, and that the avoidance of confrontations over shared religious spaces makes the

costs of intolerance too high for the dominated group (Ibid.: 218). Although antagonism, competition and conflictual situations take place at shrines venerated by heterogeneous communities, many scholars found Hayden's approach too processual and monochromatic and claimed that further research had proved him wrong (Albera 2008, Bowman 2010, Barkey 2014, Katić 2013). Albera argued that sharing and destruction, tolerance and antagonism, should be investigated as a minor instance of interplay by paying specific attention to intercommunal interactions in the *longue durée* (Albera 2008: 40). This historical and comparative approach, notes Barkey as well, helps to understand the phenomena of surviving spaces of sharing throughout periods of violence, such as religious, ethnic and national conflicts (Barkey 2014: 35).

For Bowman, intercommunal relations in and around holy places are the essential context for studying sharing: 'there are multiple ways in which individuals and groups approach and relate to the sacred objects' (Bowman 2012a: 4). Bowman stresses that social fields surrounding sacred places include spontaneous and traditionally regulated activities, the character of religions, the nature of communities and the different identities that influence the process of sharing. It is evident that military, political and interethnic conflicts destroy the relations of local groups, as well as scenarios played out in sacred places. Exploring the spaces of sharing may lead to the obvious forces that damage ties being neglected in order to focus on the ethnographic contexts of action and belief that contribute to dialogue and cooperation between cultures (Bowman 2014: 117).

Such a context of coexistence is key, for instance, for Georgieva, who examines the shared female networks and rituals of Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria as one of the mechanisms of tolerant neighbourliness that are embedded in everyday life (Georgieva 1999). As may be supposed, female practices and the way women relate to the rituals could also occupy a separate niche in ethno-confessional interrelations in mixed or shared sacred places. Thus, besides the universal search for miracles, health and happiness by people, a concern for reproductive well-being in respect of pregnancy, childbirth and healing from infertility may act as an important reason for convergence and sharing a sacred space by women from different communities. Female rituals related to fertility closely correspond with the general social and traditional attitudes to the basic aspects of female life. In the case of Balkan cultures, although extensively transformed in socialist and post-socialist circumstances, until today

woman's work has basically seemed reproductive according to traditional gender hierarchies (Spahić–Šiljak and Kosović 2012: 129–42; Schubert 2016). Besides changing status, the position of a mother in traditional society offered rather more benefits in respect of her customary, kinship, economic and personal well–being. Such female social spaces in which women acquire power after becoming mothers and are therefore able to find hidden possibilities of having their needs fulfilled was determined to be an example of a female subculture in the dominant patriarchal family organization by Rihtman–Auguštin (1982). Behind the images of modernity, reproductive potential, family and kinship are still of the greatest importance in life, and as Blagojević claims (2004), many women voluntarily choose this traditional role. In that sense it is not surprising to find Radulović explaining the continued importance of visiting sacred locations for women with reference to the fact that women thereby resume their traditional roles by establishing themselves as mothers (Radulović 2010).

While it is difficult to determine exactly whether female ritual spaces in sacred places represent special 'female subculture', as they include multiple variations, in this paper I will consider female rituals and contacts as a separate context for the process of sharing. Addressing two examples of mixed sacred sites in Montenegro and Kosovo in which female practices are an integral part of the ritual activities, I will elaborate my argument that the idea of reproductive well-being constructs women's interrelations and has an impact on their overcoming ethnic and confessional boundaries.

The Ladies' Beach in Ulcinj

The Ladies' Beach (Montenegrin '*Ženska plaža*' or Albanian '*Plazhi i femrave*') is located in the city of Ulcinj, in the far south of Montenegro, in the borderland with Albania. The beach is located in a small rocky bay surrounded by a dense pine forest. Women can get to the beach only from the spiral mountain road by going down to the coast along a narrow path. Since 1999 the beach area has been private and has become highly commercialized, with an entrance fee, sun umbrella and sun-bed rentals, massage, blue claying treatment, coffee and other café facilities.

Ulcinj is inhabited mostly by Albanian Muslims (more than 70%), but the ethnic and religious city landscape is also made up of Albanian Catholics, Orthodox Serbs and Montenegrins, Montenegrin Muslims and others minorities, making Ulcinj a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional urban centre. This resort

location on the Adriatic Sea explains the availability and relative popularity of the Ladies' Beach for different groups of tourists, especially regionally. The official bilingualism in Ulcinj, Montenegrin and Albanian, creates a comfortable linguistic environment for different Albanian- and Slavonic-speaking groups of tourists from Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia. Touristic portals recommend having a rest on this beach to women seeking a nudist vacation far away from men. In practically all the advertising annotations, it is stated that the main advantage of the beach, among others, is that women traditionally go about without clothes here: '*women have been swimming here without clothes for centuries, and men are forbidden to visit it*'.[2] Actually, the entrance is controlled by security, which is the only constant male presence

Figure 3. Miraculous stone with votives on the Ladies' Beach. Ulcinj, Montenegro. 2018. Photograph by the author.

in the area. Since the women are mostly naked, photographing the beach is strictly prohibited.

As the Ladies' Beach is the only beach on the Adriatic coast that is considered as safe from the prying eyes of men, it is regarded as an acceptable rest and recreation locale for Muslim women from the Western Balkan region, that is, from Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Albania. For the Muslim community, the idea of appropriateness is also supported by the image of halal leisure on the beach due to its medicinal waters and pure nature. Moreover, these feelings are enhanced by the impression that Ulcinj has the atmosphere of a Muslim city. In one Bosnian female internet-blog I found a special group discussing why it is worth taking a vacation in Ulcinj: 'I constantly hear that Muslim women (and those with a covered head) go to Ulcinj ...'. 'I heard from Muslims that it is good in Ulcinj, that there is a feeling that you are in a Muslim city. There are mosques, azans ... And this beach was used and is used till today to treat female diseases with the help of the sea, mud ...'.[3]

Besides the aspect of the women's-only vacation, the Ladies' Beach seems to be the very definition of a gender-marked urban social space. Townswomen like to spend their spare time on the beach for health and recreational purposes, swimming, talking and having coffee there – in other words, supporting their neighbourhood networks. It is worth noting that, except for the strong ban on taking photos, nudist leisure is welcomed on the beach, and body behaviour is extremely liberal and basically free of any regulations.

Taking into account the wide range of facilities and vectors of visitors' interests mentioned above, the Ladies' Beach, especially during the summer season, brings together geographically, ethnically and confessionally mixed groups: Slavic and Albanian, Muslim and Christian townswomen, as well as women from neighbouring regions and countries. In so far as the atmosphere of female-female interrelations is quite peaceful and tolerant, it raises the question of what makes the space of the beach the only female location except the absence of male visitors? What is the context that creates a space shared by various religious and ethnic communities and that regulates the social and cultural mechanisms of women's sharing?

The issue is that, according to local narratives, the Ladies' Beach was originally known as a place of ritual healing from infertility. It is popularly believed that seawater, enriched with a sulphur-mineral spring coming up on the shore, as well as the sun and pine flora, have a therapeutic effect on the female re-

productive system. The ritual of healing from infertility finds its connections with local folklore referring to the beach. The motif of 'desired' and 'suffered' mothering is often used in symbolic interpretations of the beach's ambient and natural features. For example, multiple caves and flat stones surrounding the beach are interpreted as the stony tears of women seeking to become pregnant. Local women visit the beach to improve their health and maintain the youthful appearance of their bodies: the water spring is considered to provide benefits to the skin, teeth and hair, as well as helping with gynaecological disorders and digestion problems. Besides the idea of natural resources curing infertility, the beach also has a miraculous stone (*Kamen želja*) that is used ritually by women in order to become pregnant.

A general overview of the beach space shows that there are two main ritual arenas, one around the spring, the other around the stone, regulated by special prescriptions and rules of interactions among women. Willing or not, every woman visiting the beach both either leisure or healing adheres to the 'ritual' rules transmitted orally by the beachkeepers or visible in written form on numerous billboards (e.g. 'do not spread black sand in order to protect the environment. The beach is special for barren woman and it is therapeutically' [4]). I will focus here on some specific features of ritual behaviour I observed during my field research. One of the essential rules is the way women use the spring. Swilling the water from the spring should be practiced on the naked body, starting with the head, but also focused on the reproductive organs. For better affect women are advised to take some water home with them in a bottle and to avoid using ordinary water (from the shower, for example). There are some important concepts involved in the washing ritual: women have to use special scoops that are placed around the spring and to fill the scoops with the sacred water when they have finished washing. It is important to keep a distance from one another and to swill the water away from the spring. Here the idea of sharing the spring as well as the tools is closely interrelated with the idea of maintaining the healing place in 'ritual purity' since such purity is associated with the holiness of pregnancy. Despite the total accessibility of the spring and the non-stop spouting of the water, this ritually marked handling connotes the notion of the 'holy water' to be found in sacred locations. In this sense, washing and swilling the spring water are close to the experience of ablution performed by pilgrims at the water reservoirs in Christian shrines. As Kormina states in her monograph, ritual bathing is often understood as provid-

ing direct contact with 'grace', imagined by worshippers. The body turns out to be an instrument for experiencing the sacred, and bodily sensations become a convincing argument for the authenticity of this experience (Kormina 2019: 93–99). Since the temperature of the spring is relatively cold, +14 degrees, for women such ablutions could be understood as a sort of extreme experience of healing in order to find a new self.

Another important ritual object is a stone (*Kamen želja / Shpella e Qelbët*) which is located in a bay inside a cave. The ritual instructions suggest an early-morning dip around the stone on the last day of staying on the beach. The associated belief is that a woman should swim around it three times repeating her wish or prayer, then find a red spot on the stone and touch it. Finally some personal object should be placed on the stone, mostly panties, hairpins, hair-binders, bracelets, wristlets, earrings, necklaces, etc. These things and accessories no doubt have certain gender semantics associated with them, as they are used as healing votives in a ritual framework. One version I noted is that women should come for the ritual hungry, and that after leaving the cave they need to eat boiled eggs they have brought with them, suggesting folk semantics of reproduction and fertility as well.

The ritual around the stone requires more awareness and 'knowledge' on the part of the women, more ritual instructions that underlie the crucial aspect of inner female interactions on the beach. Traditionally the ritual was guided by an 'experienced' old woman who was 'a dab hand at something' ('*mora imati dobru ruku*'). Now this mediating role is performed by an elderly lady from Kosovo, the same custodian of the beach, who dealt with tickets, first aid and the maintenance of order. During my observations on the beach, I saw how she was instructing women about the 'script' of the ritual and telling folk tales about the site. Sometimes she herself assisted women in performing the ritual. For her the form of the miraculous 'stone' is seen as the head of a man with a cap, which some women called 'Sultan kamen' or 'Kapetan', a reference to Captain Ali, the legendary medieval pirate whose wife managed to get pregnant only after swimming around the stone. In the context of the gender connotations of various objects located on the beach, this stone is obviously a manifestation of male involvement in these ritual practices. In addition, mutual help among women is also specific to relations among the beach visitors. If somebody needs instructions, the 'sacred knowledge' is easily transmitted to the newcomers by local women or by women who have had experience of healing, even in cases

when instructions are needed for women who don't speak South Slavonic or Albanian languages. In such situations translation performed both orally or by body language attracts more women to help and to share their competence.

Generally, the Ladies's Beach in Ulcinj represents a specific female space that creates stable local and spontaneously emerging female communities, especially in the summer season. This coming together of traditional practices and tourist female-only recreation makes the beach open, accessible and flexible to a vast range of demands, including tourist economics. Functioning as a commercial tourist site offering a women-only nudist vacation, as an urban social space for local women's leisure, as an acceptable site of rest and recreation for Balkan Muslim women and as a place for ritual healing, the beach attracts women from the region and beyond for tourism and 'ritual recreation'. The assumptions of nudity, bodily freedom and women's reproductive well-being creates a specific environment for the consolidation of different female communities, while the idea of fertility, ritual rules and knowledge being shared by women create female interrelations that go beyond all ethnic and confessional frameworks.

The sanctuary of Letnica in Kosovo

Letnica is a small village located in the county of Vitina (Serb.) / Vitia (Alb.)[5] in southeast Kosovo on the border with the Republic of North Macedonia. The county has an ethnically and confessionally mixed landscape representing a Slavonic-Albanian contact zone. Before the collapse of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s, the village was one of the centres of the Croatian Catholic community (about 4,000 people), whose members have almost entirely migrated outside Kosovo. Letnica and the surrounding villages are also inhabited by Albanian Catholics and Albanian Muslims, with small enclaves of Serbs, Orthodox Roma and Muslim Roma, but most of them, like the Croats, left Kosovo in the late 1990s (Duijzings 2000: 37–58). For several centuries, Letnica was the administrative, economic and religious centre of a Catholic parish due to the high status of the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the miraculous statue of Madonna placed above the main altar. Between the end of the Second World War and the 1990s this sanctuary was the main Catholic Marian shrine in southern Serbia, being visited by a heterogeneity of worshippers. The church, locally known as the 'Church of Our Lady of Letnica' (Serb., Croat. *Crkva Letničke Gospe / Alb. Kisha e Zojës së Letnicës*) is not only a famous centre of pilgrimage for the Catholic communi-

ties of the region, but also a place of worship for Muslims (Albanians, Roma), Orthodox (Serbs, Roma, Macedonians) and other ethno-confessional groups from various regions of the former Yugoslavia (Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, etc.) (Zefi: 169–175; Urošević 1934). Despite the global changes that affected ethnic and state borders during the period of military conflicts, and even after the sudden interruption of pilgrimages in 1999, Letnica and the sanctuary of Our Lady (Serb.–Croat. S*vetište Gospe Letničke / Alb. Shenjtërorja e Zojës në Letnicë*) is still attracting a large number of pilgrims from different local traditions annually on 15 August the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Sikimić 2017a, 2017b).

Figure 4. Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Letnica. Kosovo, 2018. Photograph by the author.

The phenomenon of a mixed pilgrimage in Letnica has been understood as a 'laboratory of identity' (Duijzings 2000) or as an example of 'overcoming religious boundaries' (Zlatanović 2008), comprising both tolerance and conflict between local communities. Trofimova has examined the process of creating a poly-confessional pilgrimage in Letnica as a social and cultural project of the Catholic diocese that was designed to unite various communities in what is an ethnically and confessionally mixed region (Trofimova 2020). For heterogeneous groups of pilgrims, visiting the sanctuary is mostly motivated by its miraculous healing of physical and psychological diseases through the power of the statue of Our Lady of Letnica, especially by pieces of her dress and the healing water. For some ethnic groups – Serbs from South Kosovo, Roma and especially for displaced Kosovo Croats – visits to the shrine became part of a special 'memory' voyage to see their motherland and abandoned houses again (Zlatanović 2008: 183–4). Besides, Letnica is also closely intertwined with the image of Mother Theresa, a world-famous Catholic nun who is believed to have miraculously felt called to her religious vocation during a pilgrimage to Letnica church when she was seventeen (Aikman 2003: 199–203). Thanks to Mother's Theresa Albanian roots and her image currently being promoted as the 'Mother of Albanians' all over Albania and Kosovo (Endresen 2015), the sanctuary in Letnica is quite often venerated by all religious Albanian communities.

For whatever reason, the main object of veneration by pilgrims in Letnica is the statue of the Virgin Mary (Croat. *Letnička Gospa, Gospa, Majka Božja Crnagorska;* Serb. *Мајка Божја, Слатка Мајка;* Alb. *Zoja Cërnagore, Zoja e Letnicës, Zoja e Bekuar, Nëna e Letnicës, Zoja e Madhe;* Rom. *Virgyuni Mari*). In the narratives recorded from pilgrimage participants by missionaries and researchers in different years (Zefi: 169–181; Zlatanović 2018: 279–80; Sikimić 2014), as well as in my field data collected in 2018–2019, the image of Madonna is closely associated with healing of reproductive problems.[6] Analysing the gender-related nuances of members of the Serb community visiting Letnica, Sikimić suggests that the veneration of 'miraculous' places like Letnica has created a special autonomous female culture based on solving problems with fertility and children's health (Sikimić 2014: 24). Interestingly, present-day parish representatives in Letnica, that is, local Catholic Albanian priest and nuns, interpret revitalization of pilgrimages after military conflicts by ethnic groups that have left Kosovo as an expression of gratitude for the children they have born: 'They come mainly to thank the Virgin Mary for giving them heavenly

gifts, in other words, children they could not give birth to' (Interlocutor A., male, Albanian, church priest in Letnica, recorded in 2018, translated from Albanian). In other words, in Letnica female ritual practices related to fertility and childbirth are an integral context for the different scenarios in which the shrine is visited, and they seem to play an important role in the process of sharing the shrine and of peaceful intergroup interaction.

Figure 5. Statue of the Virgin Mary above the main altar. Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Letnica. Kosovo, 2019. Photograph by the author.

Rituals aimed at solving reproductive problems are both canonical (like participation in the service, night prayers and vigils, touching and kissing the statue), and vernacular in respect of various practices. Women touch the statue with personal items (underwear, T-shirts, swaddling clothes) or with photographs belonging to the person for whom they are seeking healing, or they write names and prayers on the walls behind the altar. Once a year, on the feast of the Assumption, the Virgin Mary's clothing (Croat. *košulja, plašt* / Alb. *teshat e Zojës, veshjet e Zojës, fustan e Zojës*) is changed. The church's officials cut the wide cloak made of embroidered white silk up into small pieces (Croat. *košuljica, krpica* / Alb. *petk*), which are shared among the pilgrims. The latter take these fragments of clothing as talismans and as evidence of sacred contact with the statue of the Madonna (Alb. *Marrin si një shenjt* '[people] take it as something sacred': Interlocutor T., a nun of the parish in Letnica, Albanian, recorded in 2018, translated from Albanian). These pieces of the Virgin's clothing are used in ritual practices back home: for instance, women placed them in water during bathing to heal a sick child (Zlatanović 2018: 279).

A nun of the parish I talked to dismissed these 'magical' rituals in the sanctuary as the practice of those who do not know how to pray in a Christian way. For example, the ritual of wrapping a building of the church with red woollen thread, a reference to traditional ideas about the 'Virgin Mary's belt' in almost all Slavonic traditions in the Balkans (Baeva 2012), is often interpreted as a typical way of praying by Roma pilgrims (Trofimova 2018: 171). However, in this perception of the diversity of pilgrims' ritual practices, ethnic and religious identities are not contrasted. It is rather a matter of the interpretation of cultural differences, and of 'manners' that do not lead to group conflicts:

> *'From time to time we are asked: "How can I pray? I'm a Muslim". We answer them: "Pray as your heart tells you to. Pray this way because you have already come with faith". We don't say: "Pray like this", because they don't know it. Let's take a prayer to the Blessed Mary. You don't know our prayer, pray as your heart tells you. This is the best prayer you heart tells you' (Interlocutor T., a nun of the parish in Letnica, Albanian, recorded in 2018, translated from Albanian).*

Nevertheless, ritual freedom and a lack of control by the parish over the pilgrim's ritual behaviour apply not only to Muslims, but also to Christians. This pattern is especially notable at the grave of the martyr Antun Marojević, which is located

within the sanctuary that women visit, regardless of their confessional or ethnic identities. There is a popular belief that any prayer at or lying on the tombstone will help one to become pregnant. The grave of Antun Marojević is not widely known to pilgrims compared with the statue of the Virgin Mary and the various healing practices associated with her. The grave is accompanied by a plaque with bilingual information in Croatian and Albanian about the name and dates of life of the martyr: *At. Svećenik Mučenik – Meshtar Martir,* 1803–1856. The tombstone was installed in 1994 by the parish priest Nikola Dučkić with the support of the parishioners.[7] Memoirs and research devoted to pilgrimages in Letnica hardly mention the grave of the holy martyr as a separate sacred place within the sanctuary. Therefore, it is not clear when the priest's grave became a locus of female veneration, nor how that veneration is related to Marojević's life story. The narratives I recorded in Letnica, as well as a brief biographical reference provided by F. Zefi (Zefi: 70–71, 77), state that Marojević was born in Dalmatia (Hvar) and began his missionary work in Albania, then served in Prizren, and from 1938 was a parish priest in Letnica. This individual is often mentioned in the context of the tragic story of Albanian Crypto-Catholics from the villages Stubla / Stublla, Binač /Binça and Letnica (Turk 1973: 33–47; Duijzings 2000: 86–105). Inspired by Marojević's religious activities, many families openly declared themselves Catholic and were sent into exile to Anatolia by the Ottoman authorities in 1846. Kept in difficult conditions, Marojević and other families that had managed to survive only came back to Letnica in 1848 with the help of the Austrian consul at the Ottoman Porte. The martyred priest lived in Letnica until the end of his life.

The rituals practised at the grave vary considerably. According to the nun of the parish whom women mostly ask for ritual 'instructions', one could spend a little time lying on the tombstone, or an hour or even a whole night to be cured of infertility: 'Women lie there, maybe someone all night, maybe someone for one hour, praying, resting. And many miracles happened: someone got pregnant, [and] a year later gave birth' (Interlocutor T., a nun of the parish in Letnica, Albanian, recorded in 2018, translated from Albanian).

Another version is that the woman should lie on the grave until she hears a certain sound or noise from inside the grave: 'You need to hear something, some kind of noise' (Interlocuter, female, Albanian, pilgrim in Letnica, recorded in 2019); 'When you lie on it, if you hear a sound, then this woman will give birth, if she hears a sound. If she does not hear the sound, she will never give

birth' (Interlocuter, female, Kosovo Croat, pilgrim in Letnica, recorded in 2019). Women believe that this sound should be similar to the rhythmic thump of the cradle's runners against the floor while a baby is being rocked. Along with the bodily contact, women usually tend to leave small votives on the tombstone (personal things, bracelets, hairpins and so on) which are considered to be tokens of thanks (*Alb. shënj falenderime, dhuratë* 'gratitude', 'gift'). Some things left on the grave are closely related to items with reproductive semantics: clothes for babies, child binkies, or the apron from a traditional female costume. This practice of leaving personal things in a sacred space traces its origins back to traditional practices of making a covenant, when asking for help from the saint binds the person concerned to return in order to fulfil the promise of reciprocity (Kormina 2019: 115–120). For example, 'One Croat came back today. She had no children for eight years, and two years ago she came to Letnica and now she is pregnant; she says "I need to give thanks"' (Interlocuter – female, Albanian, pilgrim in Letnica, recorded in 2019).

Figure 6. The grave of the martyr Antun Marojević with a woman lying on it. Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Letnica, Kosovo, 2019. Photograph by the author.

It is essential to understand that quite often women who have come to the grave of the holy martyr have relatively vague ideas about what this holy place is and what needs to be done there: but above all they come inspired by numerous imaginations about divine intervention. The situation of 'not knowing' turns out to be a space of contact and interaction: women share their ritual knowledge and offer mutual help and experience in association with the healing. As I observed, the idea of the desired motherhood serves as a condition for the emergence of solidarity among women, when language, ethnic or confessional differences are easily overcome, resulting in spontaneous ritual mentoring. Since this process includes different participants, anyone could act as a mentor – pilgrims from far away, locals, church servants, volunteers, etc. In conditions when ritual behaviour is not specifically regulated by the representatives of the parish, as they state themselves 'All this is absolutely spontaneous, not organized, there is nothing organized here' (Interlocutor T., a nun of the parish in Letnica, Albanian, recorded in 2018, translated from Albanian), so that , the ritual is also spontaneous and created literally 'in situ'. Thus, the sacred space of the grave represents a special female space within the Letnica sanctuary, one that engages different ethno-confessional groups in numerous ritual scenarios and intergroup contacts. Perhaps such practices, which are naturally integrated into the pilgrimage tradition of seeking miracles and well-being, make it possible for the mixed pilgrimages to Letnica to remain continuously relevant.

Conclusion

By examining two sacred sites in the Albanian-Slavonic borderlands that are shared by Christian and Muslim communities in Montenegro and Kosovo, this paper has shown that female ritual spaces within these holy places play specific roles in inter-group contact and interrelations. The Ladies' Beach in Ulcinj represents a specific case of a female space combining a commercial tourist destination offering women-only nudist vacations with a sacred location attracting woman for purposes of their ritual healing from infertility. Every summer the beach becomes a space which joins geographically, ethnically and confessionally mixed female groups. Sacralization of the beach as a place of ritual healing, as well as the presumption of nudity and bodily freedom, ultimately create a specific environment for female interrelations in which the idea of fertility and practices of mutual assistance and mediation serve as a condition of contact for the members of different ethnic and religious groups.

Aleksandra Dugushina

The phenomenon of the Catholic sanctuary in Letnica as a place of ethnically and confessionally mixed pilgrimages is closely linked to the cult of Our Lady of Letnica, which, due to the various historical and social processes that have occurred in southeast Kosovo, has become an object of veneration for Christians and Muslims, Slavs, Roma and Albanians alike. Despite the global post-conflict transformations of ethnic relations, state borders and identities, the pilgrims coming to Letnica share a belief in the miraculous help of the statue of the Virgin Mary to obtain health, happiness and well-being. One currently important reason for visiting Letnica is to seek a miraculous healing from problems associated with childbearing. Women's ritual practices performed within the sanctuary occupy a special place in both the general scenario of pilgrimage and the process of interfaith and interethnic dialogue between pilgrims. Female interrelations based on the idea of desired motherhood turn out to be a space of spontaneously emerging contacts overcoming ethnic and confessional identities. Despite the obvious situational character of such contacts, female experiences in Letnica go beyond the local boundaries of the sanctuary. Numerous personal imaginaries interpreting motherhood have found favour in Letnica, creating a special narrative tradition that embraces wider networks of women's communications.

In both locations, female spaces are framed with ritual scenarios and engage women in different interrelations. As could be seen, to a large extent these interrelations are supported by the presence or absence of specific 'rules'. Relatively free from generally accepted social rules of bodily behaviour, the Ladies' Beach in Ulcinj creates its own rules regulating the way women relate to the sacred on the beach. In Letnica the contact situation is supported by a lack of control by religious specialists over the ritual behaviour that takes place there. Ritual freedom and 'not knowing' turn out to be reasons for sharing the ritual knowledge and experience associated with the healing. Despite the fact that obvious group barriers are maintain in all respects outside the sacred space at different discursive levels, the idea of reproductive well-being provides a 'lived' background for inter-faith and inter-ethnic relations. In this scenario, solidarity between women resulting from their common intentions plays an important role in situations of contact, while gender identity becomes more essential than ethnic or confessional identities.

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Notes

[1] This is similar to Christian churches and monasteries being transformed into mosques and tekke during the Ottoman period (Sobolev 2013: 135–139). See, for example, the mosque of Husamedin-Paša (the Husamedin-Pašina Džamija) outside the town of Štip in North Macedonia, which is also venerated as the Church of Saint Ilija (Crkva Sveti Ilija) by the Orthodox community (Koneska 2013).

[2] Karamanaga 2012. From http://www.visit–ulcinj.com/blog/2012/07/22/legenda–o–zenskoj–plazi/

[3] Ljetovanje na Jadranu 2010. From http://www.islambosna.ba.

[4] The translation in English and orthography is original.

[5] The following abbreviations are used to denote the languages mentioned in the text: Serb. – Serbian; Alb. – Albanian; Rom. – Romanes; Croat. – Croatian. Issues of dialectology remain outside the scope of the study.

[6] For example, even the tourist guide to Catholic Kosovo (Kott 2015: 34–39) called the statue of the Virgin Mary in Letnica a 'true treasure' in Kosovo for helping childless couples conceive.

[7] Nikola Dučkić comes from the Kosovo Croat village of Janevo, having served as a parish priest in Letnica from 1990 to 2000.

Aleksandra Dugushina

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COMMENSALITY AND INDIVIDUAL EATING: MEDIATING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS DURING WORK BREAKS

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Abstract: Based on an analysis of eating during work hours, this article looks at the issue of maintaining informal social relations. Various forms of the gathering together of individuals are important in the maintenance of social relations. Very often, casual or leisure-time gatherings, whether they are to mark an important event or celebration, or are just a coffee or lunch break during work hours, involve eating or drinking. However, colleagues and co-workers do not always eat at the same time, especially regarding day-to-day eating during work hours. In this paper, the focus is on the relative importance of eating alone or eating in a group when researching the maintenance of informal relations. The first objective of this research is to clarify the social aspects in research on eating and to survey the scientific literature on commensality and eating alone. Second the paper looks at how eating in a group as opposed to individual eating are expressed as part of the daily eating routine with ones co-workers. By going through these objectives, the question is raised – how would ways of maintaining informal relations change if there an ever greater number of co-workers decided to eat alone?

Keywords: co-workers; daily eating; celebration-based eating; commensality with co-workers; individual eating in public places; informal social relations

Introduction

Various forms of gathering among co-workers are important in the maintenance of social relations. Diet, eating, snacking or having drinks (for the purposes of clarity in this article, all of these activities will be referred to as eating)[1] at work or during work breaks is an inseparable part of daily culture, and is one of the more important times in the organization of work and in the gathering together of co-workers in their leisure time. Gatherings to mark various celebrations are one of the most conducive ways of establishing and maintaining informal social links with co-workers, often in a wider circle. In a narrower circle, for example, of several co-workers who share the same office space and have friendly relations, such links are maintained on a daily basis when drinking coffee or tea together, or going for lunch. Thus, eating together is conducive to facilitating informal relations. In this article, based on an analysis of eating during work hours, the issue of maintaining informal social relations will be analysed.

Only a handful of studies have been conducted in Lithuanian ethnology to date where social relations between co-workers have been the topic of analysis. These includes studies of collective help (Lith. – *talka*, communal work for the benefit of a group or family) in Lithuania in the late nineteenth to twentieth centuries. As Liudvikas Nezabitauskis wrote, 'The finest and most distinctive cooperation among our village populations emerged during *talka* (collective help), an expression conveying a clear sense of good neighbourly relations' (Nezabitauskis 1935: 113, 115). In terms of social relations, Nezabitauskis comment that it was neighbours and relatives who felt 'amicability' towards one another who would join in *talka* (collective help) is important (ibid.: 114). Although research on collective help in Lithuania has covered various fields,[2] for the purposes of this topic of research what is significant is the comment that one of the more important highlights of these collective aid events was the food that would be shared during them.[3] This significance is also evident in my earlier article, 'Neformalių kaimo ir miesto darbo bendrijų sąsajos socialinių santykių aspektu' (The Relationship between Informal Rural and Urban Communities in the Aspect of Social Relations; Šidiškienė 2017). Based on ethnologists' studies of such collective help, that earlier article explained how general social value was created during collective help events in village communities in Lithuania in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Among various other factors, one of the stimuli for participating in this collective help was the eating or sharing of food that went along with it (meant here in the etic sense).

In order to compare and seek out similarities between such work groups and those formed by urban co-workers in the second half of the twentieth and early 21st centuries, the statements of respondents in Vilnius were used to explain what, in their terms, constituted a group of co-workers. In the *emic* sense, it was found that, as an important stimulus for them to gather together and stay together, food (feasting) was not actually stressed, though it was mentioned (Šidiškienė 2017: 87, 90).

When analysing the leisure time and celebrations of co-workers in Vilnius, it became apparent that one of the most productive times for establishing and maintaining informal social links was the celebration of various occasions (Šidiškienė 2019b). One of the more important elements of gatherings outside of work hours was sitting down at a table together to eat. Brought food and drink, as well as gifts, were a constant accompaniment of personal celebrations among co-workers (Šidiškienė 2019b: 126). It is not surprising to find Chloe Nahum-Claudel summarizing the situation as follows: 'feasting invariably transcends the social, and eating and drinking appear to be particularly powerful mediums through which to attempt to exert control over invisible agencies that encompass human life – be it the state, the feudal order, the ecology, or the spirits and ancestors who determine life and death' (Nahum-Claudel 2016: 14). At workplaces, official celebrations are marked formally, some involving feasting, some being paid for, at least partly, out of the organisation's funds, but usually marked informally with food and drink that the employees had brought themselves to share with everyone (Šidiškienė 2018, 2019a, 2019b). However, the daily coffee or tea breaks of co-workers, or their having lunch, could either take place with other co-workers, or could be individual acts. Unlike on special occasions, the daily gathering of co-workers to eat takes place amid a smaller group than during celebrations.

This discussion raises the importance of eating together or commensality[4] versus eating individually when researching the maintenance of informal social relations. Neither eating together with others nor eating alone make direct references to the maintenance or otherwise of social relations, which is why, when researching informal relations, it is important to draw attention to both circumstances. The first objective of this research was to clarify the social aspect of research on eating, looking at the literature on commensality and individual eating. Having reviewed the research about eating with co-workers, the second objective was to expand it by including the case of daily eating among co-

workers in Vilnius. Analysis of the problem, observation and semi-structured interviews were the methods used in this research. [5]

The social aspect of commensality research

Commensality has received the attention of scholars from various disciplines. Health researchers have, among other things, analysed various social circumstances (e.g., eating with friends, with strangers, with people of the opposite gender, etc. and alone) that may affect the quantity of food the individual consumes (Hetherington et al. 2006; see Polivy and Pliner 2015 for a wider review of the literature on this topic). Others have shown that social influence on eating habits is strong and spreading (Higgs and Thomas 2016), and that when comparing themselves to other eaters, individuals can alter not just how they feel but also how much they eat (Polivy 2017). It is important to note that these researchers also found that commensality is considered to be a universal intercultural human characteristic which encourages communication and feelings of happiness (Yiengprugsawan et al. 2015).

Sociologists and anthropologists also stress the importance of commensality from the perspective of social relations because, while eating with others, individual participants establish and rank social relations and connect with each other and with power structures, while also prompting collective understanding. Claude Grignon described commensality as a gathering aimed to accomplish collectively certain material tasks and symbolic obligations linked to the satisfaction of individual biological needs (Grignon 2001: 24). When analysing the phenomenon of commensality, it is important to take into account where it takes place, the time, and the group that are eating together. Grignon mentioned several types of commensality in his article. Firstly, he distinguished types according to place – domestic and institutional commensalities (other researchers also refer to the latter as public commensality, that is, eating in school, hospital, prison cafeterias and alike). Secondly, according to time, there is everyday and exceptional commensality. Third, according to group, there is segregative commensality (in a closed group) and transgressive commensality (involving others outside the group's boundaries) (Grignon 2001). In his view, some of these groups are incidental and superficial, others, conversely, are closely related to the very principles upon which society is organised. As we know, the family is considered the main cell of society, which is why most

studies were conducted by analysing diet in the family, and less often in other sorts of groups.

Commensality and the sharing of food are endowed with social and cultural value in Western countries.[6] Feasting, where there is eating and drinking together, is associated with fun and a festive mood. In turn, in a daily sense, conviviality is related to joyous gatherings, good company and feasting (Nowicka 2020: 20). Therefore, commensality (especially during celebrations, on special occasions) is often associated with happiness in the scholarly literature: 'Conviviality through eating together is the basis of commensality' (Tan 2015: 14). As already note, eating together, not just on special occasions but on a daily basis, arouses positive feelings, lifts the mood and creates pleasant memories about the gathering, etc. However, other studies have shown that conviviality should not be identified or confused with commensality. There are sometimes incidental, temporary, business-related or other occasions that are not necessarily pleasant but more of an obligation, yet they do calm a tense atmosphere, making it easier to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. A number of studies have highlighted the positive influence of treating business partners to free lunches and dinners on the ability to reach favourable agreements (Spence 2016). Commensality studies have also revealed that sharing meals is can also be stressful for the participants. These negative feelings may encourage young adults to choose to eat alone from time to time or to make adjustments to commensal eating events (Danesi 2012).

When researching commensality from the perspective of social relations, time is very important, i.e., everyday commensality versus the commensality of exceptional occasions. Feasting organized for celebrations has attracted the broad attention of social-science researchers, who have analysed them from the perspective of their function in establishing exchange relations, social hierarchies and the sense of belonging to a group. Arnold van Gennep noted: 'The rite of eating and drinking together ... is clearly a rite of incorporation, of physical union, and has been called a sacrament of communion. A union by this means may be permanent, but more often it lasts only during the period of digestion' (Van Gennep 1960: 29). In other works, we can see how 'The table of the feast becomes a physical and symbolic place, where social inclusion and exclusion are exercised and power hierarchies are played out' (Montanari 1992, citing Marovelli 2019: 192). Researching everyday commensality from its social aspect has highlighted changes to this phenomenon, where not only

the commensality model has changed but also who participates, the frequency and also the method: eating on the run, in the car, and the consumption of fast food more generally have become widespread. Eating has increasingly become an individual affair in Western countries. A comparative study on 'Associations between meal complexity and social context in four Nordic countries' showed that daily lunches and dinners differed: lunches were most often eaten either alone or with colleagues. Norwegians and Danes had lunch alone more often than Finns and Swedes. In Sweden dinners were eaten slightly more often with relatives, friends and colleagues than in the other Nordic countries (Kahma et al. 2014: §40).

In summary, it can be said that previous studies tend to focus on where commensality is a positive phenomenon from the aspect of social relations, often being associated with conviviality and with celebrations, the family, friends and other groups, which helps those eating together to socialize and maintains their individual well-being, their productivity, etc. There are also some qualitative studies where the attention turns towards the unfavourable aspects of commensality (elimination from the group or hierarchy, the entrenchment of power positions or unbridled alcohol consumption, among other negative aspects).

Research on individual (solo) eating

Another important aspect of eating studies is research into eating as an individual. As scholars have claimed, eating habits have gradually become more individual in many wealthier countries (Sobal & Nelson 2003; Fischler 2011; Masson et al. 2018). Not only has the time for eating changed, but often lunch is not eaten at home with one's family but at the workplace (at a cafeteria or at one's work desk) or somewhere in the city, e.g. eating fast food on the run. In some cultures, it is considered acceptable to eat lunch together with one's co-workers or friends, e.g. in South Korea or the US (Moss 2020), while in others it is common for a worker to eat alone. As studies comparing Australian and Japanese ways of eating have shown, this has developed somewhat differently in each culture, where 'the growth of solo eating is shaped by daily negotiation with the following socio-cultural determinants (times, spaces, gender dynamics, and social relations) and their interactions with global trends (e.g., female participation to labour force)' (Takeda 2016). Individual eating is slightly different between our closer northern neighbouring countries: e.g., having

dinner alone was more typical in Finland than in the other Nordic countries (Kahma et al. 2014: §40).

In some countries, the social stigma associated with individual eaters remains strong, while in others it is less so. During fieldwork I held an interview with David Vekua, who, while studying business management at Vilnius University, opened an eatery in Vilnius in 2010 along with two fellow nationals from Georgia (Sakartvelo) because he was surprised 'that it was totally normal to have lunch alone in Lithuania. Large groups would gather for lunch in Georgia. One person at the lunch table arouses astonishment and pity. They look like they're unhappy' (Jančys 2014). This is evidence of the social pressure of society on solo-eaters. In a study by P. Pliner and R. Bell that involved students and soldiers, it became evident that a majority of the individuals who were surveyed felt discomfort and a sense of unease when eating alone in public spaces: that is, for many if not most people a solitary meal is a highly undesirable situation and, in some cases, not a meal at all (Pliner and Bell 2009: 174, 184). There are also data showing that eating alone is related to negative dietary results (ibid.: 184), i.e., in Western countries, eating alone has been associated with an increased risk of engaging in unhealthy eating behaviour and diet-related illnesses, such as obesity (Fischler 2011).

Research shows that eating alone provides an opportunity to escape public scrutiny and allows one to eat as one wishes (Pliner and Bell 2009), i.e., to become engaged in the eating process, to maintain a focus on it, to spend as long as one likes eating, not having to wait for others, not making others wait, etc. New research is clearly needed of individual eating experiences during work hours, especially in the somewhat new situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Already in the 2010s, various comments in the media have shown that people feel less inhibited about eating alone in public, even though there are cases such as that described by the actor Aistis Mickevičius in an interview: 'in restaurants and cafes I choose more out-of-the-way places to sit, the tables on the fringes, so that I can take the position of the observer, and not the observed' (VMGonline.lt). Introverts, or those who prefer being alone, state that eating alone is an 'infrequent pleasure' (Quora.com 2017 – Grace Gibson).

I would agree with the conclusion reached by Pliner and Bell that there is a lack of information on lay people's views of eating alone, despite the widespread views of academics on the subject (Meiselman 2009: 27): 'it is clear that there is a great deal that we do not know about the causes, correlates, and

consequences of eating alone' (Pliner and Bell 2009: 184). Much of the existing research about the increasingly common phenomenon of solo-eating stresses that, even though people do eat alone, they do still quite surprisingly eat commensal meals rather often[7] (Mäkelä. 2009: 43). Thus eating together continues to be an important activity and has important social meanings and functions in young adults' lives (Danesi 2011).

Thus, the few studies of individual eating to have been conducted highlight the negative attitudes towards those who eat alone and the individual eaters own uncomfortable feeling while eating alone in a public space. In this scientific literature, the spread of individual eating is understood as being determined by the pace of life, as well as global economic and social trends. The latest data on individual eating also signals the advantages of this kind of eating, while the challenges that COVID-19 has thrown at us can open new insights on these changes.

Everyday eating among co-workers: together or alone

When studying the leisure time of groups of co-workers in Vilnius, as mentioned earlier, on the one hand the importance of commensality in maintaining and establishing social relations was highlighted. On the other hand, commensality in workplace collectives depends a great deal on the type of management, the nature of the profession and the social relations that already exist in the collective (Šidiškienė 2019b). Studies by researchers from other countries about commensality in the workplace also draw attention to various cultural and social aspects. A number of studies have been conducted about the positive influence of commensality between co-workers during break times in upholding the organization's culture, strengthening the collective, and so on. Informal social relations are formed and maintained during these kinds of joint gatherings, including when eating together, which contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation (Waldstrøm 2001; Kniffin et al. 2015, Weijs-Perrée 2020: 785). Barbara Plester shows that it is embodied experiences regarding food and drink and the ritual aspects of the experience that create the social, inclusive component, which would appear to be a potent combination, and that it may result in (mostly) positive sense-making and the creation of an organizational culture by employees (Plester, Lo 2011, Plester 2015: 17). Other research reveals that social interaction during work breaks may provide employees with a valuable opportunity to discuss difficult issues, as well as to exchange knowledge about

their jobs (Waber et al. 2010, citing Wegener et al. 2015: 51). These kinds of social interaction between co-workers help them create strong social groups, enhance work productivity, increase motivation, etc. There are also studies where coffee breaks are viewed as a place, or more precisely a boundary zone, between what is officially considered work and not-work respectively as a way of conceptualizing such social practices where it is possible to integrate different perspectives (Wegener et al. 2015: 52). Such cases have been studied as liminal spaces which employees recursively create at their workplaces, while moving away from their work zone in order to refresh themselves (Lucas and Wright 2015).

The studies just mentioned show that little attention is given to the analysis of individual eating by workers, even though it is precisely during work hours that the employee often has lunch alone or with their co-workers (Kahma et al. 2014: §40). Individual eating in the workplace can be better revealed by analysing daily eating, i.e., having morning coffee or tea and lunch breaks. The drinking of morning coffee or tea is rarely regulated (except for those organization's where the entire employee work schedule is strictly outlined), while lunch-time in organizations is usually set out in the organization's formal rules (often based on national law). Everyday eating outside the family and not at home has not been widely researched by Lithuanian ethnologists. In her study of the dietary habits of worker's families, Regina Merkienė mentioned that until a cafeteria opened at the factory in Grigiškės in 1964, workers would go home for lunch or bring food from home to eat in their section of the factory. Once the cafeteria opened, half the workers from the same shift would have lunch there at the same time (Merkienė 1966: 132). Antanas Daniliauskas' research on the lives of factory workers in northern Lithuania covered both the interwar and Soviet years. He mentioned that before there was a canteen in the factories, the workers ate food they had brought from home by their machines (Daniliauskas 1970: 123, 1978: 82), and that in the factory from 1907 to 1924 there was a canteen that fed mostly single workers (ibid.: 117; 1978: 79). In the Soviet era too, open self-service canteens were opened just from 1965[8] (ibid.: 136, 1978: 92). Unfortunately, he does not mention whether lunch was consumed together by two or more people or whether people ate alone.

When analysing the leisure time of co-workers in Vilnius, it became evident that the morning coffee-drinking ceremony was very popular during the Soviet period and that is has remained relatively strong since the restoration

of independence, even though workers are increasingly drinking coffee or tea alone or not practicing such ceremonies at all (Šidiškienė 2019b: 173). During the Soviet period, depending on the situation regarding catering companies at a given workplace and the type of work, co-workers at lunch time in Vilnius would eat together in the cafeteria, or eat snacks at their workplaces that they had brought from elsewhere, while others would go home for lunch (ibid.). Since independence has returned, and depending on the situations just mentioned, co-workers in Vilnius often have lunch together, though individualistic ways of eating have also increased (ibid.: 174). Thus, during the Soviet period, individual acts of having a coffee or lunch in the cafeteria were rare among the Vilnius workers who were surveyed. After independence, more people who ate alone, though organizations also appeared where the practice of a group outing by all employees (usually a smaller collective) to have lunch together at a cafe once a week became common (there were some who would go on such lunches several times a week).

Today in Lithuania, as in many other countries, some organizations (especially those in more remote areas of the city, or who wish to save the time set aside for lunch) try to provide a catering facility (cafeteria, café or the like) or a kitchenette where employees can heat up food brought from home or a store, and eat it there. As respondents surveyed in Vilnius stated, ordinarily employees can have lunch at various public catering facilities if they are located near their workplace, or at home if their workplace is within a reasonable distance. It is usually employees who cannot leave their workplace who eat lunch they have brought with them, i.e., people who work at fire stations, as watch-guards or security guards, sometimes banks or other client service organizations, especially if there are no catering services within their organizations premises. This may, of course, also be a matter of personal choice, when the food offered at cafeterias or cafes is deemed unacceptable, or to save money, or for similar reasons. Some choose to go to a cafeteria if it is located within or not far from the organization. Eating at such places is not necessarily a daily event, especially if there is a larger choice of places to eat near the workplace, when the worker can eat at one place on one day, at another the next day, and so on. Single workers usually go to a café or cafeteria, whereas married workers often bring something prepared to eat from home. Workers go to have coffee, tea or lunch with co-workers with whom they maintain friendly links, or sometimes they go alone if their co-workers are busy or have other plans.

In order to observe how often co-workers eat in a group or individually, I conducted participant observation on what happens at the cafeteria of one organization which is not publicly advertised (i.e., there is no sign indicating the cafeteria exists), though it is known to the workers of the host organization, as well as by workers from surrounding organizations who go there for lunch. This particular cafeteria is also a convenient place to make this kind of observation because it has two separate entrances, one from the outside, and one from the inside that is only used by the workplace's employees, who have an electronic key-card.

In this activity, I observed clients coming into the cafeteria, most likely co-workers who might have been friends or acquaintances who had met up to come to have lunch together. I recorded whether workers came in to eat alone, in a pair or several in a group. The models were calculated as follows: model 1 for a single client, model 2 for a pair, and model 3 for three or more in a group. I counted these models and drew an average (all the participants in each of the three models were totalled up and an average for each model was calculated). I also made a record of gender, though this did not reveal any particular exceptions in the behaviour of males and females respectively (the workers in the workplace being observed were mostly female). I also compared those clients who came to the cafeteria from elsewhere, i.e., through the outside entrance, and locals who entered through the inside entrance.

My observations showed more local workers coming alone than in pairs or in small groups (on average, during the days of observing, there were twelve cases of single clients, four cases of pairs and four cases of small groups), while workers coming from other organizations came alone (on average eleven cases), in pairs (on average ten cases), and somewhat less often in small groups (on average three cases). Thus, the number of clients arriving alone from other organizations was only slightly lower than workers from the local organization who arrived alone. In total, slightly more workers came to have lunch alone. It was also noticed that among these there were on average two cases of customers ordering takeaway food (usually, several portions at a time), probably from a group of co-workers who ate lunch together at their workplace. When the research was repeated in September, over three days I observed[9] more cases of people going in to eat alone, both from the local organization and from elsewhere (eight cases each). There were somewhat more cases of customers coming in to eat in pairs or small groups from elsewhere (4 and 3.5 cases respectively)

than from the local organisation (three and one cases respectively). The total distribution of the different models of going to eat regarding both locals and other organizations' co-workers is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Eating todether or alone
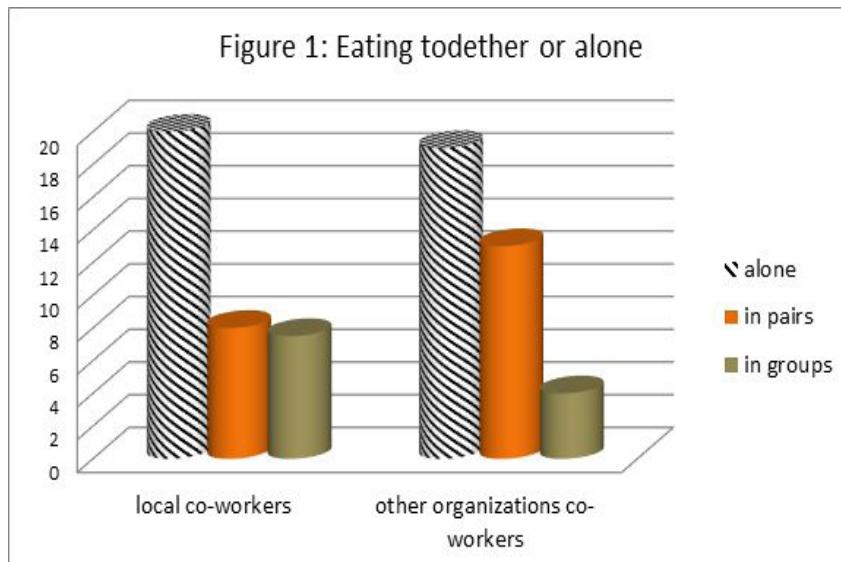
Below in Figure 2 are shown in total the common indicators of employees eating together or individually:

Figure 2: Eating todether or alone
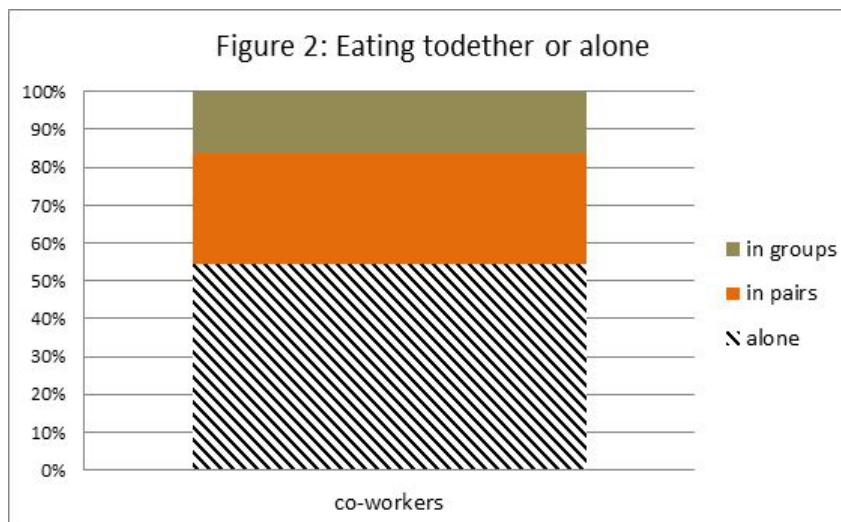
Thus, even though there is a growing trend in individual eating, it is still not dominant among the observed workers.

When observing which tables are chosen by individual eaters and which are taken by small groups, it was noticed that all eaters chose tables close to a window, while tables closer to the counter were chosen last. When there were no more vacant tables, the new arrivals would sit down at a table where there was already one client or a pair. A small group would more often sit at a table at the end of the cafeteria, usually two tables pushed together. There were no real differences in where individual eaters or pairs would choose to sit.

I suggest that analogous research involving repeated observations could provide valuable data for an analysis of the dynamics of the commensality or individual eating habits of co-workers, while observing the same in another country could contribute to comparative research. If the research were to show a growing number of co-workers eating individually, the question arises of how ways of maintaining informal social relations will change?

Conclusion

This overview of commensality research has shown that a majority of studies confirm the benefits of feasting in terms of maintaining communal feelings among people, as well as the establishment and maintenance of informal links. The concept of feasting or commensality is often associated with conviviality and an elevated mood. Eating together with others usually occurs to mark celebrations or other special occasions. As the leisure-time research of co-workers shows, celebrations are a good pretext for gathering together all or a majority of co-workers. Commensality becomes a favourable time when informal links can be maintained or revived, important matters discussed, etc. In daily life, morning coffee or tea breaks and especially lunch become an expression of individual initiative, a free choice of whether to have lunch with one's co-worker(s) or alone (or perhaps with other people, not co-workers), and whether to create a distance from one's co-workers, maintain relations only at the work level, or to simply have some time alone. Eating with someone else (or others) or as an individual in daily life depends a great deal on one's inner characteristics, i.e., the mutual desire of potential 'co-eaters' to eat together, as well as external circumstances influencing this decision. Individual or solo eating among co-workers in Vilnius is not a rare phenomenon; individual eaters feel comfortable and are not inhibited by others. It would be useful to

continue observation research in order to determine the dynamics of daily commensality both with co-workers and solo eaters. Perhaps the increase in individual eating will change the ways we establish and maintain informal relations with our co-workers?

Notes

[1] Eating is an activity that is based on physiological needs and is closely linked to the organization of society and social life (Kjaernes et al. 2007: 511).

[2] Žilvytis Šaknys analysed youth gatherings during non-intensive periods of work: their behaviour, gender distribution and the social significance of such gatherings (Šaknys 2001, 2002). Jonas Mardosa's distinguishes and analyses the main types of collective help, the ways in which they were organized and the directions in which they were organized, the social and cultural functions of collective help, and feasting and dietary models during collective help (Mardosa 1997, 2001, 2010).

[3] 'Usually, in the case of collective help, even those where one day you would help out at one collective help and the next, you would be helped: payment would be in the form of food. [...] The significance of food increased particularly in the twentieth century once the material conditions of the peasants had improved' (Mardosa 1996: 27). Then people would join in on collective help, expecting better food in greater quantities (Mardosa 2010: 12). Moreover, hired workers liked collective help for the better food and feasting it involved, with beer and vodka (Morkūnas 1977: 127).

[4] Commensality is used in the sense of 'eating together', to differentiate it from related activities such as food shopping and cooking (Kniffin 2015: 285).

[5] While the main aspects of commensality, eating alone and similar cases were analysed in the academic literature, the field research was conducted in Vilnius in 2013–2015 using my own survey of 33 respondents. In 2013 two students from the Faculty of History of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LEU) also joined in the field research, surveying a total of twenty people. In February and September 2020 I conducted participant observation at a Vilnius cafeteria (this observation is presented in the last section of the article), and several respondents were surveyed about eating during work hours with their co-workers.

[6] Scholars are increasingly doubtful whether families in Western countries always ate together at the same table (eating the same meals) (for more, see Meiselman 2009: 26). The fact that this was not characteristic of non-Western ethnic groups is evident from research into migrants eating habits. Helena Tuomainen writes, 'Indeed, the notion of the "family meal" in the literature appears to be ethnocentrically Western: the Ghanaian

Irma Šidiškienė

"family meal" is possible without company, or commensality, and [is] in line with kinship and household structures and marital relationships in Ghana' (Tuomainen 2014: §54).

[7] In researching commensality from the social perspective, I suggest that the terms 'commensal meals' and 'commensality' should not be taken as synonyms, but discussed further. In terms of diet, 'commensal meals' can refer not just to eating at a common table, but to food prepared in one kitchen with the intention of serving it to all those who have gathered together for it. Usually, 'commensal meals' refer to food prepared at home for friends and family, but I think the term could also be used to refer to food prepared at cafeterias and restaurants where those who have gathered (whether they are family members, or residents of the city, guests, people from the same workplace or participants in another organisation) also eat the same food prepared in the kitchen. Note that researchers have drawn attention to the fact that when used to refer to celebrations at workplaces, use of the term 'commensal meals' can extend to social exclusion, for example, in the case of vegetarians (Arinze 2015: 4, 58). The term 'commensality 'usually means sitting down at one table to eat, however in certain aspects this word meaning can cover all eaters who are sitting down or being in the one room, whether at home or in a public space, such as a restaurant (e.g., in the case of a smorgasbord or buffet).

[8] New research shows that the canteen network had already been expanded during the Second World War, especially in Kaunas (Lugavojus 2016: 135).

[9] The observing took place for one week (over lunch for around an hour) in Vilnius in February, 2020. It was repeated in September.

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Contemporary Udmurt Culture. I, II

Современная удмуртская культура, Том 1, Том 2, ред-сост. Ева Тулуз, Елена Попова, Николай Анисимов, Таллинн 2020-2021, Изд. Таллиннского Университета. [Contemporary Udmurt Culture.] I, II. Edited by Eva Toulouze, Nikoli Anisimov, Elena Popova. Tallinn: Tallinn University Press.

Many interesting books are born out of international cooperation. Often cooperation agreements between academic institutions are purely formal, their function primarily declarative: we have many good partners abroad, we are connected with so many international institutions. But sometimes this cooperation indeed exists and gives good results. This is the case with the two-volume work being reviewed here: Contemporary Udmurt Culture, published by the University of Tallinn, but relying on work conducted by both the Udmurt Research Institute and the Estonian Literary Museum. Behind the institutional reality, however, there is human agency: the initiators of this book, the editors, are a group of scholars who have long been acquainted through different international events and have had the opportunity to discuss several issues which led to the desire to achieve this work.

They explain all this in the prefaces to the two volumes that compose this work. The research area into which this
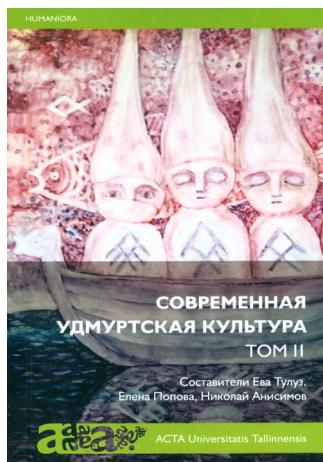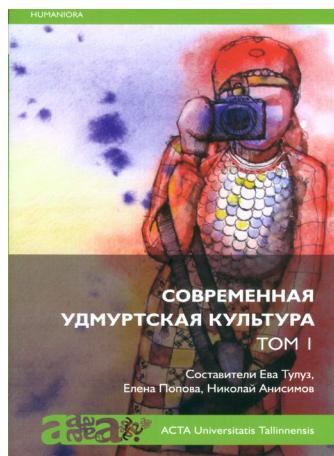
book is integrated may be called Udmurt Studies. Of course, most readers of this review will never have heard of Udmurt Studies: the Udmurt are just one of the many peoples that make up the Russian Federation, and, as is the case with most minorities in the world, they remain in the shadow of the dominant ethnic group, the Russians. What is true for most of the world, however, is not the case in Estonia, due to a curious identity phenomenon that deserves to be explained in detail. While language plays different possible roles, depending on the community, for Finno-Ugric communities it plays a most central role. Well aware that their languages differ very greatly from those surrounding them, the peoples who speak these languages – especially the three living in Europe and involved in the European national awakening inspired by Herder's ideas, namely Hungarians, Finns and Estonians, and more particularly these peoples' elites – have long been looking for their roots. Closely connecting identity and language, they have looked for the ancestor common to their languages, namely Proto-Finno-Ugric, and have attempted to reconstruct it through linguistic comparison by collecting materials in the field, accumulating data and elaborating on them. Thus, there is a tradition with respect to Finnish and Hungarian, and followed marginally by Estonians, of feeling a particular connection with communities speaking a language of the same origin. Therefore, Finno-Ugric studies are particularly developed in these scholarly communities, and it is not surprising to find this kind of cooperation project being born within this framework. It is always hard to feel alone in the world, and when small minorities have the luck to be able to rely on benevolent 'elder brothers', they take fully advantage of the fact.

This explains why the Estonian Literary Museum, like other research institutions in Estonia, has acquired pretty extensive expertise on Finno-Ugric matters and publishes abundant new research literature on these subjects. Nevertheless, as the two volumes of Contemporary Udmurt Culture reveal, Udmurt culture is still mostly investigated by Udmurt scholars. In these volumes only four scholars are not Udmurt: one Estonian, one Russian, one Austrian and one Franco-Estonian. This is actually one of the weaknesses of Udmurt research nowadays: these is too little of the external point of view, too little dialogue between insiders and outsiders.

Anyhow, the initiators of this huge achievement started from a simple observation: they regretted that Udmurt research is focused too exclusively on the past. This is, of course, understandable for those who know that the Russian

tradition includes ethnology in historical research: its goal is to reconstruct a lost past for which the only resources are the memories of the elderly. However, the three editors are all devoted fieldworkers, well aware of both the richness of current Udmurt materials and the depth of ongoing transformations. If nobody investigates now, how will Udmurt research fare in the future?

This extremely rich collection of articles, enlivened by numerous photos, is indeed the result of the cooperation of many fieldworkers. All the authors rely on their own fieldwork and experiences, which produces vivid articles in which their respective personalities appear very clearly. They have attempted to cover many fields while leaving others unexplored. They have attempted to cover ritual life today: how commemorations of the dead are performed (Anisimov), the regional ritual Aykay (Nurieva), the regular religious practice of both traditional animist 'religion' (Toulouze, Vallikivi, Chernykh) and Orthodox worship (Shushakova, Bulycheva), and current reflections on the influence of the present COVID-19 pandemic on Udmurt rituals (Anisimov, Glukhova). The authors also cover festive life and entertainment: the renovated form of a relaxing house, pukon korka (Vladykina, Boldyreva); the modern Udmurt Gerber feast (Shutova), and the equivalent in Eastern Udmurt regions, sabantuy (Sadikov); ethnic and identity mobilization, with an analysis of different ethnic projects in a touristic framework (Vlasova, Obukhov); social activism (Perevozchikov, Stepanov); and identity markers (Russkikh). One may also include in this category Popova's article about food as an ethnic marker. Other topics are more or less systematically treated: there is a category covering literature today (Fedorova, Panteleyeva, Arekeyeva, Dmitriyeva, Vekshina), and another on music both in a rural environment (Pchelovodova) and on stage (Anfinogenov). The language issue, a huge one, is brushed up on with Pischlöger's article, which awakens our appetite, although we would definitely wish for more nourishment. Other interesting chapters deal with classic ethnographic subjects, such as rural architecture (Perevozchikov) and costume (Popova), while others widen the scope with less classical issues: the ethnic aspect in art (Kovycheva), modern aesthetics (Kasimova), communication patterns (Russkikh), and ethnobotanics and food (Suntsova). Finally, one article follows one family's life through photos across one century, emphasizing its different migrations and changes in life and world-view.

In spite of the abundance of issues and the length of the two books (399 and 488 pp.), there are many fields that remained untouched, or pretty much

untouched. Certainly, there is much to say about language and many interesting sub-topics: literary language use, dialects, influences and the use of translation in everyday life. In Udmurt society, ritual life is also much richer than it appears here. Many different events are ritualized without us always using the word 'ritual' for them, such as student holidays, military service, graduations, funerals, relations between kin, weddings, communication between the sexes and generations, social stratification, drinking, driving cars and structures of power. The aim of these volumes was certainly not, as the preface admits, to cover the whole field. But they awaken curiosity, prompting the wish to know more.

What is the interest in these volumes for different audiences? First of all, there has been an attempt to make it accessible to the Udmurt. It is written in Russian, so it may be read by the people the authors talk about. This is clearly very important, in order to tighten the links and trust between the fieldworkers and their informants, who may appreciate their own contribution to scientific research and at the same time check on the output of the ethnographer's or folklorist's work. This volume may also open up more widely the huge field of comparative research in Russia: in other regions, colleagues may be inspired to follow analogous themes and to pinpoint differences and similarities.

The most important aspect, which is also the most innovative one, it how this work opens up contemporary research on the Udmurt. On the one hand, there is now a precedent, a basis allowing further work to be pursued in this direction. But also, and more importantly, many scholars have been compelled to make a fundamental effort to get off the beaten track. They have discovered new possible approaches, and some of them have continued in this spirit since writing the chapters in this work.

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Culture of (Dis)trust in Bulgaria

Ana Luleva. Culture of (Dis)trust in Bulgaria: Anthropological perspectives. Sofia. "Gutenberg" Publishing House. 2021. 325 p. ISBN 978-619-176-190-6

The concept of social trust is located at the intersection of a broad field of meaning, including various theoretical tools in the social sciences: social capital, social networks, political power. It cannot be said that ethnology in Bulgaria has never studied socio-cultural phenomena in this light. Certainly, however, the work of Ana Luleva is the first systematic, competent, consistent and comprehensive study of the issue. In this sense, the book Culture of (dis) trust in Bulgaria: Anthropological Perspectives is not just innovative or makes a contribution. Undoubtedly it is, but more importantly, we have before us a serious and, I would say, a staged theoretical contribution in the field of social trust research. In itself, even just the introductory part of the work represents a serious theoretical effort. Without reviewing the literature in its usual form, the introductory first chapter examines not only the concepts of trust and distrust, but also the related theoretical tools. It was not enough for the author to mention only the classical theories in this field, or to go through the 'fashionable' names and titles of the day: she also gives the reader the opportunity to get become acquainted with a balanced and coherent theoretical presentation, including the latest literature on the issue. Even this chapter, taken separately and on its own, represents a complete theoretical contribution. Here the author has included a paragraph dedicated to the anthropology of socialism and post-socialism: an appropriate

solution, given first, the scope of the study in terms of time, and second, the dynamics of the social processes she studies. In view of the already vast body of publications in the anthropology of socialism and post-socialism, the author has presented a synthesis of representative trends in this field.

In this review, I will not offer systematic coverage of the book's individual chapters, but rather will try and outline what is a step-by-step study in its individual parts and as a whole. First of all, the book's sound and convincing methodological basis should be noted. The methods, both empirical and analytical, are applied with uncompromising systematicity and consistency. First of all, the book is written on the basis of about two hundred biographical interviews taken conducted by the author personally. I do not remember ever coming across a book written on the basis of two hundred biographical stories. I emphasize this because this book is not based on short, thematic interviews, but on in-depth interviews, each of which requires considerable time and energy. Without this being discussed in depth in the book, the combination of the biographical approach with the study of written sources (archival in the first place) is emblematic of contemporary trends in the social sciences, such as historical anthropology or social history. In this sense, the author closely approaches these two areas without emphasizing them specifically. Empirically, archival research is just as solid a source for research as fieldwork. The large number of interviews is related to the duration of the study itself, which was conducted over a period of more than ten years.

Analytical methods combine clear disciplinary determination and interdisciplinarity. Although this is an anthropological study, it is open to the achievements of other disciplines, primarily sociology and history. In this sense, the study also has an interdisciplinary orientation. The work's clear anthropological profile is guaranteed by the nature of the fieldwork I mentioned above.

The book's individual chapters study the dynamics of social trust in different and diverse areas of social life in Bulgaria during the last hundred years of its history. It is entirely appropriate to include the problem of 'public versus private' (in the chapter 'Public vs. private in the everyday life of state socialism'), in view of the transformations of trust during this period in Bulgaria. Incidentally, as far as I know, this is the first time theories of public and private have been fully presented in a Bulgarian ethnological study. The specifics of the mutual penetration of public and private in the socialist period allow one to understand the changes in the nature of trust and distrust in Bulgarian society.

In this part of the book, the author refers to a variety of theoretical sources, including works in political science. Bulgaria's socialist regime, orthodox by its nature, was established by uncompromising violence, total supervision of its citizens and of the individual as a citizen, and voluntarism of the system of punishments in order to impose itself through fear and achieve obedience. Quite logically, the first victim, as elsewhere in the world of socialism, was social trust, which, with some exceptions, was replaced by personalized trust. The latter has led to paralysis of the ability to act collectively, and to the development instead of virtuoso skills in managing one's personal networks and clientelist relations. Although the author refers to some emblematic interviews, here the focus is rather on Bulgarian society as a whole, i.e. the macro-level of analysis.

The 'purge' and in essence the destruction of the Bulgarian elite is a special case of changes in society, discussed in the previous chapter. Here, in particular, the focus is on a certain section of the elite of Bulgaria: the academic elite of the Faculty of Law of Sofia University. Undoubtedly, the topic of this chapter is unconventional for ethnology in Bulgaria, in so far as it is a study of the elite, and not of the ordinary 'people' or of collective cultural expressions. As the author shows, the defeat of the elite and its replacement with a new ruling elite, loyal to the regime and paradoxically from lower social strata, was not patented by the communist regime in Bulgaria. This was a common strategy in all the countries of eastern Europe, starting with the Soviet Union, namely to impose the new system by decapitating society and thus cutting off options for resistance. In this sense, attention to the elite should be an integral part of the anthropology of socialism, and the author convinces us of this point.

If the chapter on the purge of the Faculty of Law at Sofia University presents a section of a social segment of Bulgarian society under socialism, the next chapter, which is dedicated to the regions near the country's state borders, draws attention to the territorial aspects of power and its regimes. The author sheds light on once-shrouded and now already forgotten or abandoned policies and practices. The state's policies towards these regions marginalized entire parts of Bulgarian society. Thus the population of the border regions, initially by imposing a regime of repression, was subjected to a process of 'cleansing' by evicting entire areas along the border, and later a regime of fear and of surveillance of the local population sprang up. The disintegration of social trust as a result of these measures and the sowing of internal contradictions in local

communities was the logical outcome. In this part of the work, the archival sources have great weight as its empirical basis.

Two of the book's chapters, the fifth and seventh, can also be seen as contributions to the anthropology of tourism, again linked to regimes of trust. These, respectively, are the chapters on 'Behind the window of socialism: trust, mistrust and informal practices in the 'Borovets' resort; and 'Ancient Nessebar: between world cultural value and the tourism business.' Studying the regimes of trust and distrust, the author develops an interesting aspect of the anthropology of socialism. Developed through central state policy and social engineering, the tourism economy of socialist Bulgaria is in fact an example of the profound transformation in then-Bulgarian society, mainly agrarian until the socialist transformation. The examples of the mountain resort of Borovets (and the population of the near-by Samokov region as a source of labour for tourism) and of a city with an ancient cultural heritage, Nessebar, show in this case the social technologies that led to a decline in social trust and vice versa, the flourishing of informal and even 'shady' practices and forms of economic behaviour. The example of Borovets is informative about the destructive economic and social processes that occurred during post-socialism (non-transparent privatization, unemployment, part-time employment, etc.). The study of Nessebar, in turn, necessarily includes a study of the problem of cultural heritage as such and as a factor in the development of recreational tourism.

The border, this time also connected with natural borders such as the Black Sea, is touched upon again in the book in the chapter just mentioned on 'Ancient Nessebar' and another chapter, 'Intercultural interactions: networks of trust and mistrust'. The Balkan's entangled history inevitably reflects on these chapters in so far as it concerns the formation, through emigration and resettlement, of coexisting post-World War I ethnic communities, Greek and Bulgarian, as well as the hostility and the mirroring of ethnic stereotypes between them. Here, as in the chapter about the border, the level of analysis is determined by the local perspective. The communities of three small Black Sea towns are described: Sozopol, Pomorie and Nessebar. Through the analysis of abundant empirical material from her interviews, the author reaches the conclusion regarding the gradual transformation, through mutual acquaintance, of the initial regime of mistrust and hostility between Bulgarians and Greeks, in which they grew closer together and reached mutual understanding and trust. This process has also led to a transformation in the region's ethnic identities.

As can be seen from this cursory review, the author studied these regimes of trust on the basis of rich and varied empirical material, which in turn required her competence in various areas of anthropological theory: from political anthropology to cultural heritage, the anthropology of tourism, the anthropology of borders, etc. This allows her to demonstrate the key role of trust in a wide range of areas of culture and social life. Together with the book's fundamental contribution to the study of trust, this enables the author to contribute significantly to various specific areas of anthropological knowledge. Remarkably rich in empirical terms, Ana Luleva's book also makes a significant theoretical contribution to theories of social trust, including but not limited to the anthropology of socialism and post-socialism.

The book is definitely a success not only for the author, but also for ethnology in Bulgaria. In it the reader will find a key to understanding many complex and painful issues about the recent past of Bulgaria, the mentality of Bulgarians and the hidden mechanisms of social agency in general. Its theoretically informative nature makes it a suitable read not only for scientists and teachers, but also for students and for a wider readership of those interested in the technologies of social life more generally.

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