

FOREWORD

The 43rd volume of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies starts with the articles focusing on the classical Baltic heritage and the traditional worldview, i.e. those deep roots of the modern culture, which one should not become too distanced from. Nijolė Laurinkienė presents a wide and detailed historiographic survey of the beer, as the ritual drink of the Balts, particularly concentrating on the mythological background of this subject. Drawing on the oral folk tradition as well, the author emphasizes the role of beer as means facilitating the individual communication or that of the village community with deities, and also the popular images regarding the impact of beer consumption on the fertility of the crops. In her analysis of the traditional Lithuanian riddles, Aelita Kensminienė focuses on only one image – namely, the horses, employing semantical analysis in her investigation and searching for parallels of this image in a broader cultural context. Also she attempts looking for the archaic information related to the worldview, accumulated in the riddles, and establishing the measure of reliability of this information and possibility of using it for various mythological reconstructions.

The second chapter – “Folklore in the Modern Contexts” – is essentially dedicated to the importance of folklore during certain periods of personal age and maturing both in the modern and traditional societies. Evaluating the part of folklore meant for the smallest ones, e.g. lullabies and playful rhymes, in terms of the modern psychotherapy, Jurga Sadauskienė tries establishing the therapeutic value of these folklore pieces, as well as their role in the process of infant’s socialization. Ingrida Šlepavičiūtė in her turn concentrates on the analysis of folklore created by considerably older children, teenagers and young people – namely, the internet stories sharing their impressions on the encounters with the supernatural or various paranormal experiences. The author tries to define the ways that these narratives reflect the idea of the young people of the afterworld, also pointing out the connections of these stories with the traditional folk-belief legends.

The articles comprising the third chapter deal with various aspects of regionalism in relation to the traditional culture. The author of the first article, bibliographer Tomas Petreikis presents a detailed analysis of the specifics of an interesting cultural phenomenon, i.e. the regional Samogitian publications of the first half of the 20th century, and the impact of this phenomenon on the regional Samogitian identity. The author concludes that emergence of the patriotic Samogitian publications, as well as

the regional Samogitian movement of the first half of the 20th century in general, was a regular rather than accidental phenomenon, determined by the inner needs of the sub-ethnos. Further, a young researcher Alma Ragauskaitė tackles a more general problem in her article, i.e. establishing of the complex concept of the cultural region. On the basis of analysis of the cultural region of Dzūkija (southern Lithuania), the most important criteria of shaping and determining the cultural region are elucidated: i.e. the cultural characteristics, the social connections of the inhabitants, the territorial organization and the self-consciousness. The concept of the ethnographic regions and what belonging to a certain region means to the contemporary young people is in the focus of attention in the article by ethnologist Žilvytis Šaknys. His analysis is based on an extensive fieldwork carried out in 2002–2009 in as many as 150 localities of Lithuania. Its results also formed the basis for the first Lithuanian map of the ethnographic regions, based on the ethnographic self-identification of the young people. Ethnologist Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė presents a similar view of the regionalism and tradition in the contemporary culture, based on the modern changes of the social legitimization rituals of the newborns. According to her, the regional specifics of the ancient customs is especially rapidly disappearing because people attempt at choosing aspects of tradition to their liking from internet and other mass media, abandoning instead those inherited from the older generations of their families.

In the chapter on folklore of the national minorities, an interesting publication of Polish songs, recorded in the Middle Lithuania (namely, in Kaunas, Kėdainiai, Panevėžys and Radviliškis districts) and edited by the ethnomusicologist from Cracow Gustaw Juzala, is presented. The songs are published along with melodies and an introduction by the editor, in which he explains and summarizes peculiarities of these songs, emphasizing that majority of texts and melodies of the published Polish songs have their parallels in the folksong tradition of the Eastern Lithuania.

There is a new chapter, introduced for the first time in this volume of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies and reflecting on the experiences of folklore collection by the students. Here, in the wake of numerous Contests of the Young Philologists, taking place every year and significantly enriching the collections of the Lithuanian Folklore Archives, a survey by the teacher of Kražiai Gymnasium Emilija Kvietaukvienė is published, presenting collections of folklore recorded by the students of this gymnasium, as well as their attempts at investigating these recordings. It is evident that students have succeeded in recording interesting and even unique materials – narratives and memoirs, revealing painful moments of Kražiai history.

Further, the 90th anniversary of an industrious folklorist, researcher of the Lithuanian folksongs Pranė Aukštikalnytė-Jokimaitienė is commemorated. Her fellow-countryman, a journalist from Biržai Algirdas Butkevičius describes

P. Jokimaitienė as a talented poet and a gifted personality, yet her self-expression was unfortunately hindered by her tragic life-time.

The 200th anniversary of the first Lithuanian museum – Baublys by Dionizas Poška, celebrated this year, is commemorated in our publication from a rather unexpected angle, namely, by publishing a detailed survey by Virginijus Jocys of the spread of little wooden chapels and miniature “houses” carved from the tree-trunks following the example of Poška, and their symbolism during different periods of the Lithuanian history.

In this volume, there are four reviews of publications related to folklore and traditional culture. Radvilė Racėnaitė discusses the monograph by the experienced folklorist, researcher of the folk narrative, Professor Bronislava Kerbelytė “Meanings of Lithuanian Folklore”. Dainius Razauskas shares his impressions and wishes to the author after having read a book by Radvilė Racėnaitė on the concept of human fate and death in Lithuanian folklore. Lina Būgienė introduces a study by philosopher Jurga Jonutytė “Changes of the Concept of Tradition”, which is in numerous ways highly relevant for the folklorists as well. Last but not least, a playful and intriguing review by a Hungarian folklorist, a long-term member of the editorial board of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies, Professor Vilmos Voigt on a British publication from the Animal series, namely, the book by Desmond Morris on owls, is published.

The volume concludes in the usual manner, by the chronicle of the most recent events related to folklore, ethnology and traditional culture: conferences, seminars, awards, etc.