

INSTITUTE OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE
VILNIUS UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF ASIAN AND TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES
MARTYNAS MAŽVYDAS NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LITHUANIA, JUDAICA RESEARCH CENTER

Reading Vilna in Jewish Writing and Urban History:

A Collaborative Conference



PROGRAM | **Vilnius, 5-7 August 2019**

The conference is organized by

the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore
in collaboration with Vilnius University,
Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies
and Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania,
Judaica Research Center

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the Research Council of Lithuania (grant No. S-MOR-19-25)

Chairman of the Conference Committee

DAVID G. ROSKIES (Jewish Theological Seminary / Hebrew University)

Conference Committee

AUDRIUS BEINORIUS (Vilnius University)
DAVID FISHMAN (Jewish Theological Seminary / YIVO)
AVNER HOLTZMAN (Tel-Aviv University)
MIKHAIL KRUTIKOV (University of Michigan)
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Cover illustration: A. Międzybłocki. *Vilnius. Jewish Quarter* (ca 1930).

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Every great city deserves a Baedeker, and Wilno-Vilna-Vilnius has had several, none more capacious than Zalmen Szyk's *1000 yor Vilne* (1000-year Vilnius), published in 1939. In 520 densely-printed pages, it covers the major historical landmarks and urban habitats. Here, every site matters – to more than one people – for Szyk's itinerary respects all populations native to the city: Jews, Poles, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Karaites and Tatars. Optimally, he recommends four days to do them justice.

On this, the 80th anniversary of the publication of Szyk's monumental guide, we have chosen to follow in his footsteps and hold a three-day collaborative conference made up of lectures, discussions, a walking tour, and one exciting public program.

- Like Szyk, our inquiry includes history, literature, politics, art, architecture, photography, and other media.
- Like Szyk, we delight in the juxtaposition of sacred and secular, rich and poor, popular and highbrow, center and periphery, fact and fiction.
- Like Szyk, our cut-off point is 1939. Bad things have happened in the past. But there is no apocalypse.
- Like Szyk, we walk in a city where Yiddish matters. It is not only one language among equals. Yiddish is also the one language best suited to mediate the fiercely competing claims on the past, present and future of the city.
- Like Szyk, we try to imagine a vital Jewish presence in Vilna on the threshold of a new millennium.

Please join us!

DAVID G. ROSKIES
Chairman of the Conference Committee

ווילנע

[...]

דו ביסט אַ טונקעלע קמיע איינגעפֿאַסט אין ליטע,
און ס'טל'ען קוים געשטאַלטן אין דיין אומרויקן גרונט:
די ווייסע, בלאַנקע גאונים פֿון ווייטער ליכט,
מיט ביינער שמאַלע, האַרטע, אויסגעשליפֿענע פֿון מי;
דאָס הייסע, רויטע העמדל פֿונים שטאַלענעם בונדיסט;
דער בלויער תלמיד ויצנדיק ביים גרויען בערגלסאַן,
און יידיש איז דער פראָסטער קראַנץ פֿון דעמבנבלעטער
אויף די אַרײַנגאַנגען די הייליק־וואַכיקע פֿון שטאַט.
דאָס גרויע יידיש איז דאָס ליכט, וואָס פֿינקלט אין די פֿענצטער –
אַ, ווי אַ גייער בײַ אַן אַלטן ברונעם אונטערוועגס,
זיך איך דאָ און האַרץ די רוע שטים פֿון יידיש.
און אפֿשר רוישט עס אַזוי שטאַרק דאָס בלוט אין מײַנע גלידער?
איך בין די שטאַט! די טויזנט שמאַלע טירן צו דער וועלט,
די דעכער איבער דעכער צו דעם בלאַטיק־קאַלטן בלוי.
איך בין דער שוואַרצער פֿלאַם, וואָס לעקט דאָ הונגעריק די ווענט
און גליט אין שניידיק־שאַרפֿן אויג פֿון ליטוואַק אין דער פֿרעמד.
איך בין דאָס גרוי! איך בין דער שוואַרצער פֿלאַם! איך בין די שטאַט!

און אויף דער אַלטער שול אַ וואַסער־טרעגער אַ געפֿראָרענער, –
דאָס בערדעלע פֿאַרקאַשערט – שטייט אין ציילט די שטערן.

Moyshe Kulbak

VILNA

[...]

You are a dark amulet set in Lithuania.
Figures smolder faintly in the restless stone.
Lucid white sages of a distant radiance,
Small, hard bones that were polished by toil.
The red tunic of the steely bundist.
The blue student who listens to gray Bergelson –
Yiddish is the homely crown of the oak leaf
Over the gates, sacred and profane, into the city.
Gray Yiddish is the light that twinkles in the window.
Like a wayfarer who breaks his journey beside an old well,
I sit and listen to the rough voice of Yiddish.
Is that the reason why my blood is so turbulent?
I am the city: the thousand narrow doors into the universe,
Roof over roof, to the muddy-cold blue.
I am the black flame, hungry, licking at these walls –
That glows in the eyes of the Litvak in an alien land.
I am the grayness! I am the black flame! I am the city!

And, on the old synagogue, a frozen water carrier,
Small beard tilted, stands counting the stars.

Translated by Nathan Halper

PROGRAM

MONDAY, AUGUST 5

Vilnius University, Main Campus, J. Kovalevskis auditorium
Universiteto str. 5

9.00 – 9.30 Registration

9.30 – 10.00 Opening of the conference

MINDAUGAS KVIETKAUSKAS (Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania)

AUŠRA MARTIŠIŪTĖ-LINARTIENĖ (Director of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore)

DAVID G. ROSKIES (Chairman of the Conference Committee, Jewish Theological Seminary, USA / Hebrew University, Israel)

READING THE POLITICAL, HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SETTING OF JEWISH VILNA

10.00 – 12.00 Session 1

Chair: MINDAUGAS KVIETKAUSKAS (Lithuania)

DARIUS STALIŪNAS (Institute of Lithuanian History, Lithuania). To Whom Does Vilnius / Vilna / Vilne / Wilno Belong? A Deadlocked Debate Prior to the First World War

THEODORE R. WEEKS (Southern Illinois University, USA). Reading Vilna during during the First World War: Clashing Images and Interpretations

12.00 – 12.30 Coffee

12.30 – 14.30 Session 2

Chair: JUSTIN CAMMY (USA)

CECILE E. KUZNITZ (Bard College, USA). Vilna Decentered: Working Class Life from the “Ghetto” to the “Cheap Houses” in the interwar Period

MIKHAIL KRUTIKOV (University of Michigan, USA). Border City: Vilna between Old and New, East and West

14.30 – 16.00 Lunch

16.00 – 18.00 Session 3

Chair: DARIUS STALIŪNAS (Lithuania)

DAVID E. FISHMAN (Jewish Theological Seminary / YIVO, USA). Yiddish Education in Vilna: Mythologies and Realities

ANDREW N. KOSS (“Mosaic”, USA). Urban Space of Jewish Vilna in the First World War Memoirs

**18.30 WALKING TOUR IN JEWISH VILNIUS
GUIDED BY ILYA LEMPert**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

**Vilnius University, Main Campus, J. Kovalevskis auditorium
Universiteto str. 5**

**READING URBAN GEOGRAPHY
AND ICONOGRAPHY OF JEWISH VILNA**

9.00 – 11.00 Session 4

Chair: LARA LEMPRTIENĖ (Lithuania)

JUSTIN CAMMY (Smith College, USA). The Poetry of Landkentenish: Litvish Landscapes and Vilna Peoplescapes in the 1930s

VLADIMIR LEVIN (Hebrew University, Israel). "Zey lign zikh ale vi perl tshshpreyt, avu s'zaynen yidn in shtot nor farzeyt": Vilna kloyzn, Jewish urban geography, and Zalmen Szyk's *1000 yor Vilne*.

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee

11.30 – 13.30 Session 5

Chair: DAVID FISHMAN (USA)

DIANA SHAPIRO (Hebrew University, Israel). The Image of Prewar Vilne / Wilno Projected by Its Ethnic Enclaves: The Clash of Historical Narratives in Jewish and Non-Jewish Travel Writing

LAIMA LAUČKAITĖ (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Lithuania). The Iconography of Jewish Vilna during the First World War

17.00

**PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM "ZALMEN SZYK'S VILNA
IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM"**

**Martynas Mažvydas National Library of
Lithuania, Judaica Research Center,
5th floor Auditorium, Gedimino av. 51**

For the program of the Symposium see p. 10-11

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Vilnius University, Main Campus, J. Kovalevskis auditorium
Universiteto str. 5

READING JEWISH VILNA IN LITERATURE, FILM AND MEMORY

9.00 – 11.00 **Session 6**

Chair: DAVID G. ROSKIES (USA / ISRAEL)

LARA LEMPETIENÉ (M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Lithuania). Zalman Shneour's and Moyshe Kulbak's Vilnius: Poetic Reality vs Glorious Construct

MINDAUGAS KVIETKAUSKAS (Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania). The Avant-garde Imagery of Vilna: Moses Vorobeichic, Yung Vilne, and the Multicultural Urban Context

11.00 – 11.30 **Coffee**

11.30 – 13.30 **Session 7**

Chair: MIKHAIL KRUTIKOV (USA)

DAVID G. ROSKIES (Jewish Theological Seminary, USA / Hebrew University, Israel). Speaking of Vilna: The Dialogical Voices of Ayzik-Meyer Dik

AVNER HOLTZMAN (Tel Aviv University, Israel). Vilna as a Hebrew Literary Center: The Journal ha-Zeman

13.30 – 15.00 **Lunch**

15.00 – 17.00 **Session 8**

Chair: AVNER HOLTZMAN (Israel)

JAN SCHWARZ (Lund University, Sweden). Goodbye Vilna! American Yiddish Film Representations of Vilna, 1939-1940

RADVILĖ RACĖNAITĖ (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania). The Vanished Jerusalem in Postwar Memory

17.00

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Chair: IRIS MILNER (Israel)

PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM “ZALMEN SZYK’S VILNA IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM”

6 August, 2019 at 17:00

**M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania,
Judaica Research Center, 5th floor Auditorium, Gedimino av. 51**

Vilna Memory Sites

VLADIMIR LEVIN. The Great Synagogue and Shulhoyf

THEODORE R. WEEKS. The Strashun Library

JAN SCHWARZ. Yatkever str. (now Antokolskio str.)

AVNER HOLTZMAN. The Tarbut Hebrew Seminary, Zavalne str. 4
(now Pylimo str. 4)

ANDREW N. KOSS. The Vilna branch office of Mefitsey Haskole /
the Society for the Dissemination of Education among Jews,
Zavalne str. 21 (now Pylimo str. 21)

MINDAUGAS KVIETKAUSKAS. The houses on Wielka Pohulanka str. 14
and 16 (now J. Basanavičiaus str. 16 and 18) where M. Weinreich,
S. Dubnov, R. Gary and other important personalities lived

DAVID FISHMAN. The Kehile building at E. Orzeszkowa str. 7
(now V. Kudirkos sq.)

MIKHAIL KRUTIKOV. Bernardine Gardens

DAVID ROSKIES. The house on Kleyn Stefan str. where A.-M. Dik lived
(now Raugyklos str.)

JUSTIN CAMMY. Vilkomirer str. and Groys-Shnipishok
(now Konstitucijos av. and Šnipiškės)

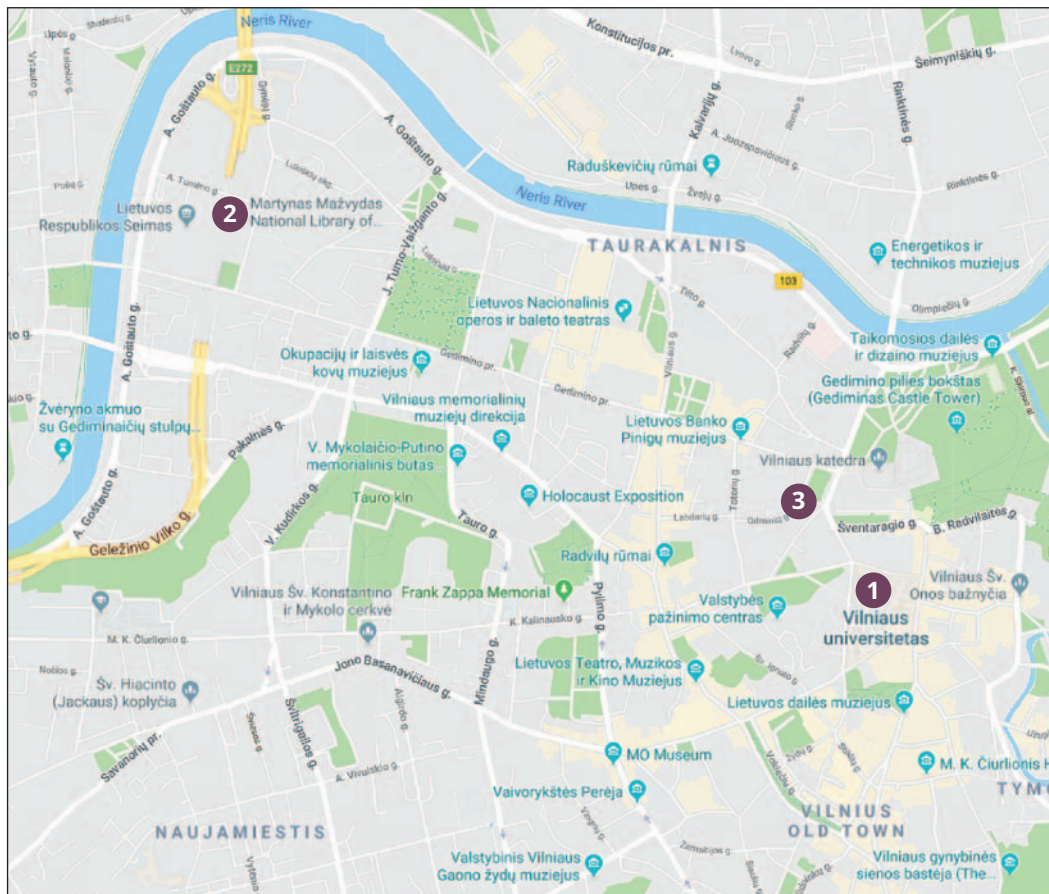
LAIMA LAUČKAITĖ. Safjaniki – old Jewish quarter at the bank
of the river Vilna (now Tymo Quarter)

CECILE E. KUZNITZ. “Cheap Houses” on Subocz str.
(now Subačiaus str.)

LARA LEMPRTIENĖ. Paneriai / Ponary / Ponar before the WWII

RADVILĖ RACĖNAITĖ. The convent of Sisters of Dominican order in
Wileńska Kolonia Kolejowa (now Pavilnys)

DIANA SHAPIRO. The new Jewish cemetery



1 Conference venue:
Vilnius University (Universiteto str. 3 and 5)



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2 Public symposium venue:
Martynas Mažvydas National Library of
Lithuania, Judaica Research Center
(Gedimino av. 51)



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3 Hotel:
Amberton Cathedral Square Hotel Vilnius
(L. Stuokos-Gucevičiaus str. 1)



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