

THE LITHUANIAN
FOLKLORE
ARCHIVES
OF THE INSTITUTE
OF LITHUANIAN
LITERATURE AND
FOLKLORE

LIETUVIŲ
LITERATŪROS
IR TAUTOSAKOS
INSTITUTO
LIETUVIŲ
TAUTOSAKOS
RANKRAŠTYNAS



The Archives are the largest and oldest repository of folklore in Lithuania, documenting centuries-old peasant culture as well as folklore of contemporary life.

COLLECTIONS

Manuscripts Collections by the Lithuanian Science Society (LMD, 1330 collections), the Manuscripts of Lithuanian Folklore (LTR, over 7690 collections, still being complemented), collections by the students of Vilnius Pedagogical University (VPUTR, 995 collections). Altogether the Archives now store over 10 000 collections comprising over 1,9 million folklore items, including over 696 000 folksongs, over 195 000 folk narratives, over 390 000 short sayings, and 655 000 miscellaneous materials.

Sound recordings 117 phonograph wax cylinders, comprising 330 recordings (1908–1949); 980 phonograph discs, comprising approximately 6700 recordings (1935–1949); over 5460 magnetic tapes, containing almost 263 000 recordings (1952–1994); over 1200 audio cassettes, comprising over 52 000 recordings (1971–2008); 225 DATA mini discs, comprising about 280 hours of recordings (2000–2007); and almost 300 CDs, comprising about 400 hours of recordings (2004–2008).

Visual materials Over 42 000 photographs and their negatives (1907–2008).

Video materials Over 300 hours of video recordings (1995–2008).

The electronic archive (1998–2008)
Databases; digital versions of manuscripts; digitalized sound recordings, photographs and manuscripts; digital photographs and sound recordings.

The oldest available manuscript dates back approximately from 1800;
photograph from around 1907;
sound recording from 1908.

The origin of the Archives can be traced back to the activities of the Lithuanian Science Society (1907–1939), which was established in Vilnius. Its chairman, Dr. Jonas Basanavičius, and other members actively promoted the collection of folklore and attempted to gather the already collected materials in one location. Upon acquiring a phonograph, the Society produced early recordings of Lithuanian folk melodies. Although World War I and the Polish occupation of Vilnius from 1920 till 1939 considerably subdued the activities of the Society, the process of folklore collection continued. The archival funds acquired by the Lithuanian Science Society include folklore manuscripts written by renowned Lithuanian writers and public figures of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century such as Simonas Stanevičius, Antanas Baranauskas, Simonas Daukantas, Žemaitė, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, and others.

Because the archival funds of the Lithuanian Science Society remaining in occupied Vilnius were unavailable to scholars from independent Lithuania, a group of prominent Lithuanian cultural figures, including Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, Balys Sruoga, and Mykolas Biržiška, established the Folklore Commission. From 1930-1935, this group was responsible for collection, management, and publication of folklore. As the majority of folksong recordings of the time contained no melodies, only verbal texts, the Commission for Gathering Folk Melodies was established in 1934, which functioned about one year, till 1935. After purchasing a stationary phonograph, the Commission began

HISTORY



Jonas Balys, apie 1935 m.
LLTI BR 427/17285

producing audio recordings of instrumental and vocal folk melodies.

In 1935, the Folklore Commission and the Commission for Gathering Folk Melodies merged to form the Lithuanian Folklore Archives (1935–1939). A young but experienced folklorist, Dr. Jonas Balys, was appointed as its director. The Lithuanian Folklore Archives was a modern scientific center by the standards of the time, well equipped with facilities and qualified staff. The results of their work were published in the Archives series “Folklore Studies”. A broad network of individual folklore collectors was established upon introducing financial reimbursement for the collected materials. Thus, the year 1938 was especially productive: as many as 80 000 folklore recordings were received by the Archives. Well-known informants (folk singers, musicians, and narrators) were invited to the Archives to record their repertoire on phonograph discs.

Following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940, the funds of the Lithuanian Folklore Archives were moved to the retrieved capital Vilnius, to the Institute of Lithuanian Studies. Here, the property of the Lithuanian



Zenonas Slaviūnas prie fonografų, 1937 m. LTRFt 337a

Įrašinėjama juostiniu magnetofonu, 1960 m. LTRFt 657



Science Society had already been stored. In 1941, the collections of the Archives and those of the Society were merged and placed under the provenance of the newly established Lithuanian Science Academy at the Institute of Ethnography (after the war at the Institute of History). All the archival funds comprised in total about 0,5 million folklore items. In 1952, everything was transferred to the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature, working at the historical location of the former Lithuanian Science Society. During the years of Soviet occupation, the folklore research was limited by Marxist ideological constraints. Ideologically “unfit”, folklore was either discarded or stored at a special archival fund with restricted access.

During the postwar years, the process of developing a systematized folklore gained impetus. In 1956, the Institute began compiling card file catalogues of folklore texts and melodies. Over the course of many years, the card catalogues of folk narratives, folksong texts and melodies, proverbs, and riddles were created.

In 1990, after Lithuania regained independence, the Institute was divided into the Institute of Lithuanian Language and



Vykstant į ekspediciją, 1952 m. LTRFt D 1869

Instituto darbuotojos tvarko katalogą, 1960 m. LTRFt 744



the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. Since then, the Archives were augmented by the acquisition of several large collections, especially those of Zenonas Slaviūnas (comprising over 20 000 folklore items), Stasys Paliulis (over 15 000 items), and Jurgis Dovydaitis (over 100 000 items). The Juozas Būga Collection of Lithuanian emigrant folklore (over 2000 folklore items) was transferred from the USA. The Archives also received the folklore collections compiled by students of Vilnius Pedagogical University, comprising approximately 57 000 items. On average, the Archives now receive 15 000 new recordings per year. These include collections made by Institute researchers during collective or individual fieldwork sessions, donations from various cultural and educational institutions, and the work of individual folklore enthusiasts.

Over the years, the accumulated folklore materials have been under the care of numerous folklorists. Of these, Klimas Viščinis and Povilas Krikščiūnas have served at the Archives the longest. Kostas Aleksynas, Ph.D., was the head of the Lithuanian Folklore Archives Department from 1994, and Rūta Žarskienė, Ph.D. has been the head of the Department since 2002.



Atlaidai kaimo bažnyčioje, 2005 m. LTRFt 10500

Pučiamųjų orkestras iš Salantų, 2004 m. LTRFt 8215

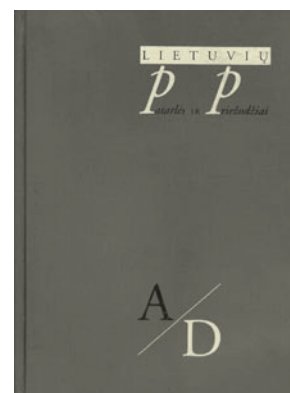
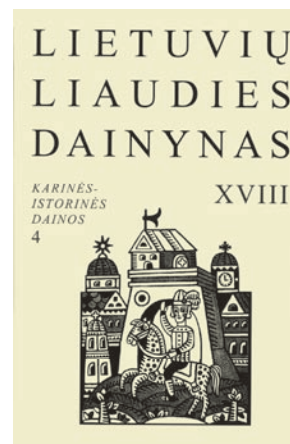


The scholars of the Institute are constantly engaged in publishing and studying the materials stored at the Archives. Selections of various folklore genres have seen publication already, including 3 volumes of “Sutartinės: Polyphonic Lithuanian Folksongs”, edited by Zenonas Slaviūnas and published in 1958–1959, and 5 volumes of “Lithuanian Folklore”, published in 1962–1968. On the basis of the systematic folklore catalogs, 7 books of the Lithuanian folksong texts indices were published in 1970–1986, and 3 volumes of the catalog of the Lithuanian folk narratives, edited by Bronislava Kerbelytė, saw publication in 1999–2002. Since 1980, the Archives have been publishing multi-volume compendiums on the fundamental elements of folklore: 20 volumes of the “Lithuanian Folk Songs Book” were published in 1980–2007; the 1st volume of the “Lithuanian Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases” appeared in 2000, and the 2nd in 2008, while the first volumes of the forthcoming “Lithuanian Folk Narratives” are in the editing stages.

Since 1992, mainly thanks to the efforts of Academy Professor Leonardas Sauka, the Lithuanian Folklore Archives reestablished its biannual periodical, “Folklore Studies” (Vol. 36 appeared at the end of 2008). More extensive scholarly works are usually published as separate monographs.

In 2003–2005, the phonograph recordings of folksongs and instrumental music from the four distinct regions of Lithuania (Suvalkija, Aukštaitija, Samogitia and Dzūkija) were restored and published in the series “Phonograph records of 1935–1941”. In 2007, restored wax cylinders recordings were published under the title “Phonograms of the Lithuanian Ethnographic Music 1908–1942”.

PUBLICATIONS



After the Lithuanian Republic regained independence, the Archives began actively collecting previously prohibited folklore, including songs of the deportees and members of the national resistance, patriotic songs, political jokes and stories, and folklore reflecting Christian traditions. Attention is given to the folk life and creativity of all social strata, age groups, and professions. Folklore spread by means of modern communication has also sparked a lively interest; such materials (especially those incorporating multimedia elements) are accumulated in the electronic archive. In addition, the digitalized versions of the newly acquired folklore collections, photos taken in the course of fieldwork sessions or various folk life events, and sound recordings are also stored there. In 1998, the department of Folklore Archives began creating the first database of the sound recordings. Now, as many as five databases registering various kinds of archived materials can be found on the Institute's website. In 2007, thanks to the financial support from the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation, the creation of a database for manuscripts was started, with the goal of incorporating other collections into it in the future.

However, the majority of the materials preserved at the Archives are still in dire need of conservation and restoration. Over a decade ago, the Archives began duplicating the most worn-out and the most frequently used manuscripts. Since 2001, a long-term program for preservation and publishing of the archived sound recordings is being implemented at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore. With financial support granted by the Ministry of Culture of the Lithuanian Republic, the recordings from the old phonograph discs have already been digitalized. In 2006, the phonograph wax cylinders (containing the oldest sound recordings made in Lithuania) were also digitalized. In 2008, the *Phonogram Collection of Lithuanian Folk Music (1908–1949)* preserved at the Lithuanian Folklore Archives was included into the UNESCO National Register of Memory of the World as subject of documental heritage of regional significance. The Archives are also carrying out the digitization of the magnetic tape recordings, with almost half of the tapes being transferred into the digital form by the end of 2008. Since the acquisition of modern technical equipment, the Archives have begun scanning photographs and manuscripts. All of these projects, made possible by both domestic and EU funding, pursue a common goal: to employ modern technologies for the preservation these unique collections of Lithuanian folklore and to facilitate the work of researchers who study them.



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