

### **SCIENCE PROGRAM NO. 3**

1. The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore (hereinafter—“the Institute”) implements the Research and Experimental Development Program for 2022-2026, “**Researching Lithuanian Folklore Tradition and Its Transformations**” (hereinafter—“the Program”).

#### **2. Program’s Goals:**

- (1) To carry out ongoing work on the development of fundamental and applied sources of classical Lithuanian folklore;
- (2) To carry out new contemporary research on the genres of traditional folklore and to analyze the development of folklore as a living tradition; and
- (3) To ensure the ongoing dissemination of the results of research on Lithuanian folklore.

#### **3. Program’s Objectives:**

- (1) Fundamental publications of Lithuanian songs, oral storytelling and minor genres of folklore will enable these sources to be included into active scientific circulation and made accessible to the public.
- (2) Theoretical research on Lithuanian classical folklore and its current transformations, as well as on the various forms of contemporary Lithuanian folklore culture, will enable to assess the history of the unique Lithuanian spiritual culture, the changing role of folklore in contemporary society and the trends of its development.
- (3) International and national conferences, seminars and the preparation of an English publication will allow for the adequate presentation of Lithuanian folklore studies in the international and national academic field, as well as for the interest of the public in the results of folklore research.

#### **4. Methodological Approach:**

The Program builds on the work and results of the previous long-term programs carried out by the Institute (two programs in 2011-2016: “Sources of Songs and Their Research” and “Researching Baltic Mythology and Lithuanian Sacred Folklore,” and one in 2017-2021, “Researching Lithuanian Folklore, Mythology and Contemporary Folklore Processes”). The research will be based on an integrated methodology and a solid scientific background in folklore studies and other branches of humanities. The Program consists of three main and

closely interlinked phases, corresponding to the main objectives of the Program.

## **I. Preparation and Publication of Sources**

The Program aims to ensure the ongoing preparation of a continuous body of fundamental folklore sources, which is the foundation of the scientific research on folklore carried out by the Institute and one of the core objectives of the organization. For over four decades, the multi-volume collection of Lithuanian songs, *Lietuvių liaudies dainynas* [The Collection of Lithuanian Folk Songs] has been the benchmark of fundamental sources of Lithuanian folklore (in terms of its scope and the level of selection and presentation of material). It is a publication representing the entire tradition of Lithuanian singing that has been recorded to date (the authors of the first five volumes of the collection, published between 1980 and 1989, have received the Lithuanian Science Award). The volumes, which are organized according to song genres, also present the various structural and textological patterns of the songs, as well as their historical development and the spread of variants and their contexts. All the volumes of the collection have the same general structure, which requires preparatory work of a methodological nature. It is necessary to carry out several levels of research (typological, textological, melodic, etc.), the result of which is a comprehensive diachronic picture of the historically developed singing tradition, presented not only in the form of specific texts and their melodies, revealing the song system of an individual genre, but also by extending its representation with the required scientific apparatus (introductions, commentaries at several levels, audio recordings, indexes, and extensive summaries translated into at least two foreign languages). Typically, two researchers (of texts and melodies) work on each volume, assisted by editors and consultants. The publication of the entire corpus of song sources will provide new opportunities for further multidirectional studies of Lithuanian songs as a rich and distinctive European heritage. The Program provides for continuation of the preparation of the *Collection of Lithuanian Folk Songs*: the preparation of two volumes, one on love songs and another one on literary songs.

Another fundamental collection, *Lietuvių patarlės ir priežodžiai* [Lithuanian Proverbs and Sayings], has a similar well-established practice, based on long-term research and systematization of the material, and the group of authors headed by Prof. Kazys Grigas, the creator of the proverb classification system, who was also awarded the Lithuanian Science Award (2001) after the publication of the first volume in 2000. After the death of the professor, the work on the collection was resumed in the long-term program for 2017-2021 (two volumes, No. 3 and No. 4, have been published). A fifth volume is planned for this year.

The future publication also makes use of the Catalogue of Proverbs and Sayings, compiled by Dr. Lilija Kudirkienė, a paremiologist and long-time author of the catalogue, and brought up to date by the current team of authors.

The third fundamental publication, *Lietuvių pasakojamoji tautosaka* [The Lithuanian Oral Storytelling; vol. 1-4, 1999-2009) is based on similar scientific typology and genre studies and classifications (the international classification of fairy tales by Aarne-Thompson, updated and expanded by H.J. Uther some time ago), as well as on the catalogue of motifs of Lithuanian folklore based on the AT, compiled by Jonas Balys in his *Lietuvių pasakojamosios tautosakos motyvų katalogas* [A Catalogue of Motifs of Lithuanian Oral Storytelling, 1936], Bronislava Kerbelytės' *Lietuvių pasakojamosios tautosakos katalogas* [A Catalogue of Lithuanian Oral Storytelling] and the principles of the scientific preparation of sources (selection of texts, textual and dialectological editing, scientific commentaries, indexes, etc.). *The Lithuanian Oral Storytelling* tries to reflect as widely as possible the oral storytelling recorded in different Lithuanian regions at different times, with special attention being paid to unpublished works. Previous Institute's long-term programs have produced two volumes each of Lithuanian magical tales and etymological tales, while this Program will result in a volume on Lithuanian mythological tales.

A popular publication, a collection of Dzūkija (southern ethnic region of Lithuania) tales by the great storyteller, Antosė Čaplikienė, is also planned. An academic publication, a volume of Grigas' *Raštai* [The Works], will be published to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Prof. Kazys Grigas, the most famous Lithuanian paremiologist.

## **II. Theoretical Research**

Taking into account the fact that ancient Baltic religion and mythology, traditional Lithuanian folklore and folk culture are of great interest even in modern times, and that research and reconstruction in this field is relevant to all those who seek a deeper understanding of the origins of Lithuanian national and cultural identity and the development of spiritual culture, the Program provides for the preparation of comprehensive theoretical publications that would be of interest to scholars from other academic fields, as well as to the public at large, especially to school children. Research on Baltic mythology and Lithuanian folklore has been ongoing for decades and has a solid academic tradition. Studies and publications by Prof. Norbertas Vėlius, member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Leonardas Sauka, Prof. Kerbelytė and Prof. Grigas, as well as by the researchers currently working at the Institute have strengthened and developed the field, introducing new methodological approaches not

only in the international folklore research, but also in other areas of humanities.

The planned individual monographs and studies are based on a comprehensive knowledge of diverse (historical, ethnographic, archaeological, folk, linguistic, literary, etc.) sources, as well as on an extensive and complex analysis and generalizations. The aim is not only to identify the empirically observable tendencies of continuity and transformations in folklore, but also to highlight the much broader cultural and social changes that provoked them. The analysis of the cultural aspects related to the current folklore process takes into account the contemporary state of folklore, which emerges from recent field research carried out using the latest folklore methodologies. In all cases, methodological integrity is sought, both in the systematization of the material studied and in its critical evaluation and identification of patterns. To increase the degree of researchability, not only Lithuanian, but also much broader and not only very close (especially in Eastern Europe), but also typologically significant contexts of traditional culture are applied. The main aim of the Program is to strike a balance between the study of traditional folklore heritage (e.g. individual genres, traditional concepts, etc.) and the analysis of contemporary forms of folklore expression emerging in modern and postmodern societies.

While researching folklore as a traditional heritage, it is also important to look at folklore in a new way, using modern methods, and to bring up to date the object of research in the present. One way of accomplishing it is a theoretical study, which will provide a new perspective on the controversial image of God in the Lithuanian mythological and folklore tradition. In addition, following the previous programs, which have produced *Lietuvių mįslių rinktinė* [The Collection of Lithuanian Riddles] and a theoretical monograph on Lithuanian riddles, *Lietuvių mįslės: funkcionavimas, stilius, poetika*, this Program will continue the research on the genre of riddles in a coherent way, resulting in a study focusing on the current use of traditional riddles and their transformations.

Similarly, a balance between the analysis of heritage and contemporary forms of expression will be maintained in the research of folk songs. A study on the Dzūkai songs collected by Aukusti Robert Niemi in the early 20th century is planned, as well as a monograph on the ballad genre in the Lithuanian tradition and a study on contemporary forms of folklore culture, using research on musical behavior,\*\* and the functioning of folk songs as a resource for contemporary culture. A study on the still under-researched post-war phenomenon of partisan songs is also planned. The balance between tradition and the present also forms the basis of the three thematic article series planned in the program: “Folklore and Mythology: Classical Genres, Contemporary Forms of Spirituality and Historical Contexts of

the 20th Century,” “The Storytellers of Fairy Tales in Lithuania: From the Traditional Rural Community in the Late 19th and the Early 20th Centuries to Contemporary Forms of Expression,” and the series on the tradition of incantations, which will look at the performance and functioning of incantations, as well as their relation to ethnomedicine.

Folklore as a synthesizing cultural phenomenon is currently being explored around the world through a variety of discourses, in an effort to reveal a holistic view of traditional folk culture. The Program presents a number of problematic areas looking at it from this perspective. One of them is to be covered in the monograph *Užkrečiamosios ligos lietuvių tautosakoje: samprata, prevencija, gydymas* [Infectious Diseases in Lithuanian Folklore: Concept, Prevention, Treatment], which reveals the attitude towards infectious diseases that existed in traditional culture and a number of topical worldview links with the present (conspiracy theories, collective fears, etc.).

The Program challenges the definition of folklore as praxis developed by Simon J. Bronner, one of the most prominent epistemologists of American folklore. It focuses on everyday practices and cultural processes that share socially common perceptions. This strategy enables to study folklore as freely and fully (not in residual/relic forms) existing in modern and postmodern culture. It allows us to show that folklore does not only exist in performative linguistic forms, but also in a variety of everyday practices. One of these everyday relationships is explored in the monograph *Kasdieniai laiškai. Santykių aspektas* [Everyday Letters. The Aspect of Relation]. The source of this research is the epistolary body of Janina Degutytė, which includes letters from her addressees belonging to different social groups, as well as contextual ethnographic material. The so-called ‘ordinary letters,’ which belong to ordinary people, are a rare and hard-to-find source in Lithuanian studies. The unique reciprocal material reveals the communicative practices of the 1950s-1980s. In the 21st century, epistolary is seen as a remarkable opportunity to explore the common perceptions of a particular time. The monograph is a collaborative project with the international program of the Folklore Archive Network, The Nordic-Baltic Network of Life Writing.

Research on folk piety is a sub-program of the present Program. This is a relatively new field of research in the Lithuanian humanities, which began in the 1990s. The Program will explore the links between folk piety and Lithuanian musical and oral folklore tradition, which have not been thoroughly explored. To understand how religion influences everyday culture, it is necessary to learn about local and individual experiences of faith and practices, and the subjective relationship with faith and sacred objects. These meanings are best

expressed in autobiographical and religious narratives that reveal the personal experiences of believers. The study will analyze such oral narratives, as well as written, video and audio material recorded during field research in the 21st century, and data previously collected on Catholic and other Christian festivals, customs, songs, pilgrimages, veneration of special places, etc. The Program will aim to understand how religious identity influences national or ethnic self-consciousness and is reflected in various folklore genres. The Program plans to carry out a field research,\*\* which should result in a collective monograph exploring the phenomenon of folk piety from various perspectives. A separate monograph will represent Lithuanian Orthodox musical religious culture.

The Program will also focus on the history and self-perception of folklore studies as a scientific discipline. A thematic series of articles by several authors from the historiography of Lithuanian folklore studies and a collection of articles based on 21st-century field research are planned. They will help to assess the development of folklore studies, the changes that have taken place in this discipline, the changing relationship with the object and the prospects for further research development.

### **III. Dissemination of Research**

The dissemination of research is closely linked to other activities in the Program and will provide a basis for presenting not only the final results but also the individual stages of the ongoing research. A major international conference on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Prof. Kazys Grigas is planned for 2024. Together with the volumes of *Lithuanian Proverbs and Sayings* and the *Works* of Kazys Grigas, the conference and the subsequent English-language collection of articles will become an impressive international event, paying due tribute to one of the greatest authorities not only in Lithuanian folklore but also in world folklore.

The national conferences planned in the Program are also linked to important dates and personalities. In 2022, the conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Pranė Jokimaitienė, a folklorist and a poet, will provide an opportunity to revisit the interconnections between folklore and literary fiction. In 2025, another conference will be dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Lithuanian Folklore Archive and will focus on the challenges of the collection and preservation of material, both in the past and in the present. The conference planned for 2023 in the series “Professor Norbertas Vėlius’ Readings” will be dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Vėlius’ birth. Another conference in this series will take place in 2026.

The Program will include a series of seminars to represent the main areas of Program's research: "Researching Folk Devotion" (3 seminars each year) and "Recent Research on Mythology and Folklore" (3 seminars each year). The Institute will continue organizing annual seminars on inherent natural culture.