

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**THE INTERACTION OF
ETHNIC AND
CONFESSIONAL
CULTURES:
ETHNOLOGICAL
RESEARCH**



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A B S T R A C T S

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DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
OF THE LITHUANIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACTS

The Organising Committee:

Dr. Rasa PAUKŠTYTĖ-ŠAKNIENĖ,

Dr. Irma ŠIDIŠKIENĖ,

Dr. Žilvytis ŠAKNYS

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THE INTERACTION OF ETHNIC AND CONFESSIONAL CULTURES: ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The idea of the conference came from the program of the Lithuanian Institute of History “Leisure, Celebrations and Rituals in the Vilnius Area. Social and Cultural Aspects” (2017-2021). During our fieldwork, we had an opportunity to communicate with people of different nationalities and religions. The research has revealed that belonging to an ethnic group and/or religion can affect not only the festive life, but also in some cases, the everyday life, and can be significant in the formation of social relations. The cultures of ethnic and religious communities, on the other hand, leave a strong mark on the national culture and become its own. We dedicate this conference to the forthcoming 700th anniversary of Vilnius. In his letters in 1323, Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania invited specialists from various areas to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, declaring religious and national tolerance in the state. We dedicate this conference to friendship and common understanding between people of different ethnic and religious groups. In addition to the interaction of ethnic and denominational groups, we will also examine other issues that are very important for Lithuania, such as migration and, of course, the expression of culture in extreme conditions.

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Dr. Žilvytis ŠAKNYS

AKVILĖ MOTUZAITĖ (Turku, Finland). Mixed Marriage as a Breach of the ‘Iron’ Soviet Border

The paper focuses on the mixed marriage cases between Lithuanians and non-Soviet citizens during the Soviet period of Lithuania in the years 1953–1990. The Soviet citizens had little chance to meet and build relationship with the foreigners outside the USSR. The geopolitical borders of the Soviet Union limited Soviet citizens’ movement outside the ‘Iron Curtain’ and foreigners’ visits were also controlled and legally limited. However, a number of mixed marriages between Lithuanians and citizens of non-Soviet countries did happen before the independence of Lithuania from the Soviets in the year 1990. Although it was not prohibited legitimately to marry a citizen from countries outside the Soviet Union, these cases were very rare.

The Soviet geopolitical borders as well as the control and regulations significantly affected people’s social and marital life. A number of mixed marriages however managed to breach the Soviet border and develop more or less intensive transnational lives.

DARIUS DAUKŠAS (Vilnius, Lithuania). Constructing Identity in the Borderland: The Case of Lithuania’s Poles

Presentation is based on findings from fieldwork conducted in Šalčininkai (South/East Lithuania) with people who identify themselves as Poles. We will analyze the construction of identity emphasizing the relationship between ethnicity and language. The Polish minority of Lithuania (the Vilnius region) is often defined as a border minority. This group acquired minority status due to the changing borders of the nation(s). We argue that the border is still a significant factor in identity construction in this region.

EKATERINA ANASTASOVA (Sofia, Bulgaria). Celebrating Christmas and New Year with Mixed Immigrant Families in the United States

The celebration of Christmas and New Year in mixed marriages in the United States combines many traditions (including Christian-Muslim cohabitation) – Christian, national, American.

The paper examines the celebration of Christmas and New Year in a Bulgarian-Latvian family coexistence (its representatives are of mixed origin as well) in New York, USA. The specific national traditions of the countries of origin of migrants are considered. Their transformation related to the influence of the American celebration of Christmas and New Year (in essence uniting many different national traditions) is analyzed. The multiethnic nature of the celebration and related practices are considered.

The text was prepared on the basis of the author's field research (2018–2019) as well as published and archival data.

EKATERINA IAGAFOVA, VALERIJA BONDAREVA (Samara, Russia). Sacred Objects in the Chuvash Villages of the Samara Trans-Volga Region

The religious practices of ethnic communities are associated with specific locations. Significant sacred objects in Chuvash villages were places of village prayers as well as family and clan rituals. With the acceptance of Orthodoxy, these included churches and chapels. The Samara Chuvash, represented in the majority by Orthodox communities, in the minority by pagans and Muslims, have objects of different confessional origin, functionality, and relevance in modern ritual practices. The report presents various sacred objects in the territory of the Chuvash villages of the Samara Trans-Volga region in the context of religious practices, shows the attitude of local people to sacred objects, and their significance in the formation of the religiosity of the Chuvash population in the region.

The research was carried out with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research within the framework of the project No. 20-09-00127 'Religious Practices of the Chuvash: Traditions and their Transformation (Late 20th – first decades of the 21st century.)'

EVELINA ATMINYTĖ (Vilnius, Lithuania). Vilnius in Soviet New Year's Greeting Cards

This poster aims to present the development of the depiction of Vilnius city on New Year's greeting cards published in Soviet Lithuania (dated from the late 1950s to 1989) and in Lithuania shortly after the restoration of its independence (1990–1995).

The vast production of greeting cards in the Soviet Union served not only to commemorate the public holiday in the regime, but also to impose a certain holiday discourse. The analysis shows that the depiction of Vilnius in greeting cards was never ideologically neutral. In addition, the tension between the Soviet New Year and Christmas discourse (forbidden in the Soviet public sphere) is apparent in the portrayal of Vilnius. The tension appears through the traces of religious discourse in Soviet cards and its growth in the greeting cards of independent Lithuania (after 1990).

IRINA SEDAKOVA (Moscow, Russia). One Festive Month in the Bulgarian Ritual Year: Multicultural Genesis of March Celebrations

March is one of the most eventful months in the Bulgarian ritual year. It retains holidays of Thracian, ancient Greek, Slavic, and Balkan pre-Christian origin, and many Christian Orthodox feasts. It starts with the well-preserved Bulgarian (and Balkan) popular holiday *Baba Marta* with many regional beliefs and rituals. The modern festive mosaic includes Bulgarian Liberation Day and the former socialist International Women Day.

Each of the Christian Orthodox feasts (40 Martyrs of Sebaste; Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; festive days of Easter cycle) contain many pre-Christian elements and mark the beginning of spring and the awakening of nature with protective, growth, and fortune-telling rituals.

The paper is based on author's field data as well as archival and printed materials.

IRMA ŠIDIŠKIENĖ (Vilnius, Lithuania). Ethnic Aspects in the Celebrations of Vilnius Area Co-workers

In this presentation, based on a study of the leisure time of co-workers in the Vilnius area, I will talk about the cases of celebrating various holidays and occasions with co-workers of the ethnic groups living in Lithuania. The integration of ethnic groups who are long-term residents or newcomers is a complex process. One of the stages of integration is to enter the labour market and overcome challenges in the workplace

by reconciling ethnic, religious and cultural differences. Based on fieldwork carried out in 2017–2018 in the Vilnius area, I will describe the field of the study and discuss the ethnic distinctiveness of the celebration of personal and official festivals. We believe that studying the experiences of ethnic groups, their representatives, or simply the social relations and cultural expressions of co-workers in the workplace can reveal the consequences of the integration of ethnic groups, as well as their positive experiences.

YURY VNUKOVICH (Minsk, Belarus). In Search for Ethnic Markers, or What are the Differences between the Lithuanians, Poles, and Belarusians of the Vilnius Region?

In my proposed paper, I will discuss how the Lithuanians, Poles, and Belarusians of the Vilnius region articulate their and other's ethnic identity on the basis of linguistic, territorial and, religious markers of distinctiveness. It will be presented based on fieldwork materials collected in 2007–2011.

Language is the most significant marker of ethnic identities in the Belarusian-Lithuanian borderland, where we do not find other contrasting cultural traits between Lithuanians, Poles, and Belarusians. However, in the case of the native speakers of the Belarusian language we are faced with ethnic anomaly or liminal category, defined as *tuteishyia* ('people from here'). The Belarusian language is called *prostaya mova* by local residents and it is not a direct indicator of ethnicity for them. In this situation the region of origin, religion, or both serves as diacritical emblem, signalling boundaries between different ethnic groups.

JULIA BUYSKYKH (Kyiv, Ukraine). The Heritage of Silence: Orthodox and Roman Catholic Neighbours on Polish Eastern Border (the Case of Włodawa)

Through extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Eastern Poland (Lublin Voivodeship) in 2015–2016, this study examines the relationships between memories of the wartime violence, post-WWII resettlements, religious practices, and belonging to places and shrines. The local community of the border town of Włodawa considered in this study represents the Roman Catholic majority and Orthodox minority. If Roman Catholics mostly consider themselves to be Poles, then Orthodox possess rather blurred identities in between Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Polish nationalities, underlining primarily their belonging to Orthodoxy. Drawing on qualitative data from Włodawa and the surrounding rural area, as well as secondary sources relating to the history of the region, I will present a multi-layered story of neighbourhood relationships between the two confessional groups, their silence inherited from the communist era, their contradictory memories about their shared history and the Jews, bygone neighbours, who constituted the majority in the town before the WWII. I will attempt to show that 'silence' as a form of communication that doesn't rely on words can become an anthropological tool for the study of vulnerable communities and post-traumatic experiences when it is impossible to record.

JURGITA SENULIENĖ (Vilnius, Lithuania). Lithuanian *Krupnikas*? The Narrations of Lithuanian Diaspora in US

The presentation analyses the expression of ethnic and national identity of the twentieth century of American Lithuanians through food – a problem which has so far received insufficient research attention. The focus is on the preparation and consumption of Lithuanian *Krupnikas* - a liqueur made of honey and spices. In analyzing, comparing, and summarizing the narrations and literature sources collected during the interviews, the aim is to reveal the peculiarities of the production and consumption of *Krupnikas* by the second wave of Lithuanian refugees and its significance in fostering Lithuanian identity. The following questions are analyzed: (1) what is the origin of *Krupnikas*-making traditions in America; (2) what is the significance of this drink in the daily life of Lithuanian diaspora and during the holidays; and (3) whether (and how) *Krupnikas*' production and consumption practices contribute to the maintenance of Lithuanian identity.

LAURENT S. FOURNIER (Nice, France). Ethnic and Confessional Interactions in France: Between History and Anthropology

This communication will present the debates in French anthropology on ethnic and confessional cultural interactions. These debates are complex because France, the country of human and citizen rights, follows a universalist political doctrine, which makes it difficult to promote the specific cultural characteristics

of the different ethnic communities. To fully understand what is at stake in the discussion, we will first explain the history of relations between Catholics and Protestants in France since the 16th century. Then we will report on the notion of secularism attached to the French republican regime since the beginning of the 20th century. Finally, we will discuss the difficulties posed by the need to integrate today various populations of immigrant origin, often from former French colonies. We will thus see that when it comes to ethnic and confessional interactions, it is very important not to limit ourselves to contemporary studies, but to take into account the weight of history.

LINA GERGOVA (Sofia, Bulgaria). St. George's Day – the Poly-confessional and Poly-ethnic Holiday (Peshtera Case-study)

In 1994, Peshtera declared May 6, St. George's Day, the town holiday because of its poly-confessional and poly-ethnic features. The town is inhabited by Bulgarians, Roma, Turks, Greeks, etc., and had inherited a tradition of a community korban on May 6. Today, about 25 years after, the following issue needs to be discussed: do any festive events actively address the town's diverse communities or popular culture and do the national ceremonies satisfy the various ethnic and confessional backgrounds.

MARE KÕIVA AND ANDRES KUPERJANOV (Tartu, Estonia). Unification of Baltic Sea: the Night of Ancient Bonfires

Our presentation analyzes the Night of Ancient Bonfires (last weekend in August) in Estonia and specific national traits among neighbouring countries. The custom was introduced to Estonia in 1992 on the bases of our northern neighbour, Finland. The celebration was correlated to Viking-era customs, with the more immediate purpose of lighting bonfires along the coast of the Baltic Sea in the name of an ecologically clean sea. Today, the custom is found throughout Scandinavia, but also in Australia and North America.

Who played a key role in establishing the custom, what does the celebration look like, what structure does it have? The Night of Ancient Bonfires has a simple structure and is either a private or public cultural event, involving people living in coastal regions, but now including people living inland. It is not just the lighting of bonfires on the coast of the Baltic Sea and its islands in memory of ancient culture as leisure event.

MARIYANKA BORISOVA (Sofia, Bulgaria). Facebook Group 'Multilingual Children': Language and Identity

The Bulgarian Facebook group 'Multilingual Children' was created for 'parents who live abroad and want to teach their children in Bulgarian'. For second-generation migrants, the language of the parents is no longer their native tongue, just their mother tongue. Studying it depends of the will of the parents to keep in touch with Bulgaria. The situation is even more complicated in mixed marriages, when children grow up in a bilingual, trilingual, and quadrilingual environment. The paper tracks early language learning in a family environment abroad based on Facebook posts of parents, relatives, teachers, speech therapists, and children's writers. The following research aims to answer such questions as: What are the challenges faced by the early language family learning in Bulgarian abroad? What methods do the parents employ? Where does the language lie when building the identity in a poly-ethnic environment?

NADEŽDA PAZUHINA (Riga, Latvia). Confession of Faith in the Everyday Cultural Practice of Latvian Old Believers: Religiosity in Soviet Period

Despite the official atheistic Soviet rule that also dominated ideology in Soviet Latvia after the World War II, religious practices remained a part of everyday life in the milieu of the different Christian communities, including the quite large and conservative community of Old Believers.

One specific feature of the Old Believer experience on the one hand was their life in the countryside that provided an opportunity to maintain a distance from the official atheistic propaganda in the 'urban' public space, as well as to maintain closer ties to the religious parish and common religious rhythm there, which also influenced the private (family) lifestyle.

On the other hand the Old Believers community has a rich historical experience of 'underground' religious life in the face of repressions and persecutions. Simultaneously even this community accumulated wide spectrum of adaptation practices in their social and political experience, particularly during the interwar period in Latvia.

The collection of oral life stories, recorded 2006–2018, reflects not only (typical) autobiographical features of the Old Believers in the Soviet period, but also the religious survival experience and traces of religious practices in a seemingly atheistic education.

NEVENA ŠKRBIĆ ALEMPIJEVIĆ (Zagreb, Croatia). The European Capitals of Culture and the New Normal: the Case Study of Rijeka 2020

The aim of this article is to discuss ways in which the pandemic context has affected a specific type of public event – performances related to the European Capital of Culture initiative. The author applies urban anthropology approaches to show how city spaces are recreated by the programme. She pays special attention to the strategies of regenerating cities and fostering cultural diversity, key concepts in the EU policies in the field of culture. She also shows how the visions of urban futures, outlined in the ECC bid-books, are being transformed due to the impact of COVID-19. Her focus is on the mechanisms for reimagining an ECC city under the conditions of the New Normal. In order to outline those processes, the author presents the results of her ethnographic research related to Rijeka, a Croatian harbour city and a 2020 European Capital of Culture.

NINA VLASKINA (Rostov-on-Don, Russia). St. John the Baptist's Day in the Polyethnic Don Region: Local Variants and Links with Metropolitan Traditions

The paper analyses the materials from the ethnolinguistic expeditions of the Southern Federal University and the Southern Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (the 1990s – 2010s). It aims to reveal which St. John's Day (Ivan Kupala) beliefs and rituals were preserved in the Don tradition until the middle of the 20th century and how they link to that unction of action (making rain) comes to the fore in this territory. The fortune-telling using wreaths, the lof neighbouring regions. The author analyses the water symbolism of the holiday and notes that the magical fegends, and the beliefs about picking herbs (including fern) are also considered.

In general, the Don version of the St. John the Baptist Day celebration is closer to that characteristic of Russian regions, but more frequent and voluminous texts were recorded in those areas where a large percentage of the population is of Ukrainian origin.

RASA PAUKŠTYTĖ-ŠAKNIENĖ (Vilnius, Lithuania). The Social Aspects of the Celebration in the Family in the Vilnius Area

In analyzing celebrations as a form of family leisure, the social aspect is very important. A celebration is an opportunity not only to perform a ritual, but also to stay together for a longer or shorter time, when the whole family and relatives come together. This has become particularly relevant in recent years, when many relatives emigrated and live in other countries. The celebration is important for communication between family members and relatives of different ages, education, and interests. It makes an opportunity to present or receive information and discuss things together. In this way, the different generations are 'tied together', the emotional connection is strengthened and it gives an opportunity for all those gathered to communicate pleasantly, and thus to have common leisure time.

The main source of the report is ethnographic fieldwork and since it was conducted in a multiethnic and multi-confessional environment, I will try to distinguish the ethnic and confessional specifics of celebrations with the family.

RASA RAČIŪNAITĖ-PAUŽUOLIENĖ (Kaunas, Lithuania). The Cultural, Ethnic, and Confessional Interaction of the Lithuanian Diaspora in Contemporary England

The paper investigates the cultural, ethnic, and confessional interaction of the Lithuanian diaspora in contemporary England. The research focuses on the Lithuanian diaspora in England, which came to the

UK after the accession of the new EU Member States in 2004. This paper has two tasks: (1) to examine different ways of interaction between the Lithuanian diaspora in England; and (2) to describe the newly constructed identity of the Lithuanian diaspora in England. To reach this goal a survey of fifty respondents was undertaken. The main source of this paper derives from ethnographic material gathered in the UK and Lithuania in 2017 via the project *Cultural and Religious Identity of Lithuanians in England* (Reg. No. SA-1) co-funded by the Council for the Protection of Ethnic Culture. The ethnographic material was gathered using classical fieldwork methods and an analysis of the Lithuanian diaspora's cultural and religious activity in the websites of two Christian communities.

ROBERT PARKIN (Oxford, Great Britain). Lubuskie, Poland: Remembering a Forgotten Province

The focus of this paper is Lubuskie, a new province in western Poland on the border with Germany created by the 1999 reform of local government. Part of Germany until 1945, it was then transferred to Poland, the Germans moving out and Poles moving in, this population transfer making it interesting for studying local identity. Most of the incoming population came from eastern territories taken over by the Soviet Union in 1945. Many of them had a national Polish or eastern identity, which has problematized attempts to create a local Lubusian identity since the 1999 reform. Moreover, compared to Silesia or East Prussia, Lubuskie does not attract much German nostalgia, despite the German heritage, especially architectural, frequently being emphasized. The paper looks at attempts to create a new identity for the new Lubuskie through this aspect, as well as considering local festivals, media, food etc.

SERGEY RYCHKOV, NADEZHDA RYCHKOVA, GUZEL STOLYAROVA (Kazan, Russia). Inter-ethnic Interaction: Global and Regional (Experience of Tatarstan)

Tatarstan (RT), a constituent entity of Russia, is included in the multi-vector border zone. Here the intersection and interaction of peoples, cultures, and religions has been observed. The history and the results of these processes have both universal (global) and specific (regional) features. A multi-ethnic and multi-confessional community has developed in the RT with a long tradition of coexistence and interaction. Special mention should be made of the rural environment in which this community was originally formed and which continues to generate ethnicity and maintain traditions. Against the background of the dominance of industrial trends in the society's development, ethnocultural resources are an important factor in the further progressive development of rural settlements. The report aims to develop the proposed theses using field materials obtained in ethnographic expeditions.

Completed with the financial support of the RFBR, project №19-09-00058 'Ethno-cultural potential of rural settlements: regional development models' (example of the Republic of Tatarstan and the Republic of Crimea).

TATIANA MINNIYAKHMETOVA, RANUS SADIKOV (Innsbruck, Austria and Ufa, Russia). Religious-Ritual Arrangements under Extreme Conditions (the Example of the Trans-Kama Udmurts)

Life does not always flow only along the intended channel, unforeseen circumstances and situations arise and are created. Nevertheless, people try in every way to prevent the current conditions and to follow the usual life habits while adjusting to the new conditions. In the case of the Udmurts, the situation is defined as follows:

Natural and climatic disasters,
Wars,
Epidemics and mass diseases,
Hunger, famine, poverty.

Under these conditions and situations, life developed new behavioural norms and perceived the situation while taking into the account traditional conceptions and worldview. The paper will consider the religious and ritual arrangements of Udmurts (rites for the purpose of warning and getting rid of misfortunes, ordinary calendar rituals, etc.) in extreme periods of life from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day in a new wave of the pandemic.

ŽILVYTIS ŠAKNYS (Vilnius, Lithuania). Friendship in a Multicultural Environment in a Village, Town, and City. The Case of the Vilnius' Area

The aim of this report is to compare the creation of friendly relations in different settlements around Vilnius: in a village (Nemėžis, Medininkai, Marijampolis), in a town (Trakai, Nemenčinė, Kernavė), and in a city (Vilnius). The studied territories belonging to Vilnius District differ in their type, size, and ethnic and religious composition. The aim is therefore to answer the question whether the size of the territory and its ethnic and confessional composition are important factors in forming friendly relations.

The report is ethnological, so it is to a great extent based on fieldwork (in 2012 and 2016 in Vilnius and in 2017 and 2018 in the Vilnius area), using semi-structured interviews.

