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Editorial

We are very pleased to begin this issue with the article 'The Cosmopolitan Museum' by the British anthropologist Adam Kuper, whose roots are in Lithuania. This well-known anthropologist asks: What makes a World Culture Museum different from a Museum of Other People? It is a topic that has become particularly relevant in the last decade. Discussions have arisen following the flow of immigration to Europe from Africa and the Middle East after the collapse of colonialism. In Europe, the Other has in certain cases become one of us. Kuper presents a lively discussion of the increasing role of museums in the world, analysing the rights of a Museum of Other People and the latest actualities regarding anthropologists' collections. He asks how visitor rates and the visibility of Museums of Other People are faring in the 21st century, which are not always more successful than World Culture Museums. According to Kuper, we would do well to imagine a Cosmopolitan Museum that goes beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and national identity, one that compares, searches for human interconnections, observes exchanges outside political borders, challenges accepted borders, and yet is grounded in critical and independent science. Kuper goes into a deeper analysis of the historical political perspective of the Museum of Other People in his new monograph *The Museum of Other People: From Colonial Acquisitions to Cosmopolitan Exhibitions* (Profile Books, 2023).

The anthropologist Dovilė Grickevičiūtė, who is approaching the end of her doctoral studies at Vytautas Magnus University, continues on the theme of the influence of global organisations on society. She analyses how the development theories promoted in Cambodia by the World Bank and other international organisations impacted on people's interpretations of history and everyday life. According to Grickevičiūtė, the elimination of the education system, and educated people in general, during the Cambodian genocide (1975–1979) upset the future development of the country. She examines how the memory of second and third-generation survivors of the Democratic Kampuchean regime formed ideas of international economic expansion, whose driving force was education and human resources. The results of new ethnographic research are interpreted. She reveals how school students viewed Cambodian history, both in its darker period and its time of flourishing, as a source we can learn from.

From an analysis of the importance of social actors, the articles in this issue veer towards community discourses. Giedrė Buivytė-Jokūbauskienė, a folklore researcher at the Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Folklore, intrigues us with her study on gossip in the Lithuanian rural community in the second half

of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Gossiping is understood as a means of introducing order and consensus on shared values. Buivytė-Jokūbauskienė found that gossip is not just a universal human phenomenon, but also a unique component of traditional Lithuanian rural culture. She analyses attitudes of the rural community towards gossip, how the personal experience of singers affected their view of gossip, and what kinds of emotional position are conveyed in the folkloric communication of folk songs. There is an examination of historiography, accounts from singers' life stories, and love songs. This interesting contemporary analysis of gossip reveals that although rumour and hearsay were condemned, people did indeed fear them and would have to 'deal with' comments in order to uphold an individual's reputation in the rural community in Lithuania. This fear of gossip meant that people would hide their failures or marital and family instability from their neighbours, as it could become a stimulus to break off loving relations.

Darius Daukšas, an anthropologist, ethnologist and sociologist with the Lithuanian Institute of History, is involved in a detailed analysis of the construction of the Polish ethnic and national identity in Lithuania in periodicals from 1988 to 1991 by looking at the Lithuanian and Polish press. He finds that research into ethnicity and nationalism at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc help explain the rising ethnic/national unrest. His article reveals how Poles in Lithuania sought to entrench their identity in the resurgent independent Lithuania. The focus of his research is not just on the ethnic uniqueness of Poles, but also on the political interests to establish a national-territorial region for the Poles in Vilnius. He analyses how the construction of the Lithuanian Poles' *own* nation unfolded, and attempts to answer the questions who *we* are and what the idea was behind gaining control of *our own* territory. Daukšas discusses concepts of ethnic group, Polish-Lithuanian origins, surnames, territory, and nation. According to him, the Vilnius region's aspirational project for autonomy shows that the Polish-Lithuanian community not only sought to protect its ethnic identity, but also sought to form an independent political unit that could secure the community's political rights.

The investigations into the former historic Vilnius region continue in the thematic section entitled 'From the History of Lithuanian Ethnology'. The Lithuanian Institute of History ethnologist Žilvytis Šaknys goes into a broad analysis of his ethnographic field research conducted from 1988 to 2012, and how it relates to press publications from 1926 to 1939 in his study of Lithuanian calendar feasts in the Vilnius region. He raises the question of whether periodical press publications from the former Vilnius region offer an equal description of different cultural fields. The concept of calendar feasts is examined, as well as the particularities of celebrations and calendar feasts as an ethnographic source

in youth-oriented periodicals published in the Vilnius region. As Šaknys has found, the value of the periodical press as a source of ethnology and a field of ethnographic research differs. Accounts of such celebrations appearing in periodicals were found to encourage only modern customs in which we find little trace of the uniqueness of the Vilnius region's customs. So according to Šaknys, ethnologists should not base their work solely on periodical press publications.

The Lithuanian Institute of History ethnologist Irma Šidiškienė presents an interesting new analysis of the pulse of research into Lithuanian studies in the reviews of Antanas Mažiulis (1914–2007). In her article, Šidiškienė analyses the problem of how the assessment of scientific papers presupposes particular trajectories in the scientific discourse. Mažiulis' reviews stood out for their extensive assessment of the degree of inquiry into particular topics, criticism, and a discussion of ideological-political aspects, especially those that were more obvious in the 1950s and 1960s. She seeks to reveal how Mažiulis understood, assessed, and, using criticism, steered the discipline of *Volkskunde* (ethnology). The achievements and shortcomings of ethnological research, as identified by Mažiulis, are analysed. There is a discussion of other papers in Lithuanian studies and encyclopedias that were reviewed by Mažiulis. He associated the beginning of Lithuanian studies, when interest in prehistoric times grew, with Romanticism, and expressed a critical assessment of the Romantic attitudes of 20th-century researchers. In the Soviet period, he saw the presence of censorship and the conformity of certain authors. In his disciplinary criticism, he judged the accuracy of data, the explanations of phenomena and words, the overall image of reality, the presentation of variety, and the extent to which genesis and influences were revealed.

The Lithuanian Institute of History ethnologist Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė gives a comprehensive summary in her article of the ethnological research conducted after 1990 of family customs and trends in how family customs are upheld. According to Paukštytė-Šaknienė, after the restoration of Lithuania's independence, there was an expansion of themes, problems and methodologies in ethnological research into the family. She reveals the origins of research into the family, discussing the influence of the institutionalisation of ethnography/ethnology (from 1934 to 1993) on family studies. She describes the first research into customs, new topics in this branch of research, the research into customs in the city, and ethnic minority studies. Research into customs associated with particular calendar feasts marked in the family are also analysed. According to Paukštytė-Šaknienė, in recent times present-day research is once again dominating, with reflections on traditions from the past.

A number of interesting publications have filled the library bookshelves in recent years. The American anthropologist Neringa Klumbytė gives readers

a broad insight into the intellectual life of Marija Birutė Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė, written by the researcher in comparative gender studies and science historian Rasa Navickaitė (Routledge, 2023). According to Klumbytė, Rasa Navickaitė has presented an original analysis of Gimbutienė's scholarly and life trajectories, bringing together Lithuania and America, paganism and modern civilisation, archaeology and mythology. Gimbutienė's ideas had an impact on international science, the feminist movement, and the Lithuanian national self-awareness. The archaeologist is described as a promoter of pagan spirituality. The book reveals how Gimbutienė rewrote Europe's prehistory from an original feminist perspective, and incorporated Lithuania and Eastern Europe into the feminist discourse. According to Klumbytė, having listened to numerous opinions, the author has produced a comprehensive and charming analysis of the story of the eminent figure of Marija Birutė Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė in the context of international academic, political and cultural processes.

The Lithuanian culture researcher and science historian Romualdas Juzefovičius offers a very interesting presentation of distinctive ideas in the monograph by the Lithuanian ethnologist Elvyra Usačiovaitė on personalities and symbols (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, 2022). According to Juzefovičius, a definition of symbolism typical of Lithuanian culture is largely associated with statements by the Lithuanian philosopher Antanas Maceina. The culture being created is described as 'the culture of expression'. The concept of the aim of the Lithuanian intelligentsia in society is associated with the historic experience of the Lithuanian national revival movement. Usačiovaitė seeks to examine the symbolism characteristic of Lithuanian cultural figures and the symbols they created between the 16th and the 21st centuries. She analyses the symbols present in works by the famous Lithuanian artists Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, and Šarūnas and Nomedas Sauka, and by the theatre director Eimuntas Nekrošius. The meaning of symbols in the scholarly works of the Lithuanian mythologist Nijolė Laurinkienė and the historian Antanas Tyla are also revealed. Juzefovičius stresses that this is an analytical monograph, while the symbols being analysed anew enhance the understanding of the Lithuanian cultural identity, and may stimulate discussions and new research.

To honour the 60th anniversary of the birth of the Lithuanian mythologist Gintaras Beresnevičius (1961–2006), the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute published the newly compiled 11th issue of 'Ancient Baltic Cultures' in 2023. This publication also serves to further work on Baltic culture, analysing the ancient Baltic religion, archaic images, their expression in Lithuanian folk tradition, and reflections in professional art. Beresnevičius was an active colleague in contributing to this book, both as a member of the editorial board, and by submitting a number of scholarly articles for publication. The Lithuanian

folklorist-mythologist Jūratė Šlekonytė outlines the contents of this important issue in a lively way, in which the first section has an assessment of Beresnevičius' work from the perspective of time, the second section analyses Baltic culture, and the third presents individuals who studied Baltic culture in the Middle Ages, researchers into 19th-century Baltic studies, and the theoretical links in this field. The collective work was written by scholars from various fields: folklorists, literature studies researchers, historians, musicologists, religious studies researchers, ethnologists, mythologists, theologians, and even a poet. Almost all of them noted a connection with Beresnevičius personally or with his research work in their publications.

The ethnologist Rimantas Balsys intriguingly raises the question of what language *Perkūnas* (the god of thunder) speaks in his review of the book by the ethnologist-mythologist Nijolė Laurinkienė about *Perkūnas* published in English (The Kalevala Society Foundation, 2023). Although their circle may be small, representatives of the Lithuanian ancient religion and members of the guild of mythology researchers are delighted by the publication of every new book. According to Balsys, *The God Perkūnas of the Ancient Lithuanians in Language, Folklore, and Historical Sources* was partly based on Laurinkienė's 1996 book *Senovės lietuvių Dievas Perkūnas kalboje, tautosakoje, istoriniuose šaltiniuose*. There is a consecutive discussion of new changes made to the book's structure. Balsys discusses the question of research into *Laumė* as having been the wife of *Perkūnas*. New international discourses on this topic receive an excellent assessment, which allow for looking at the Lithuanian *Perkūnas* in the broader Indo-European context. It is precisely this broader context and the latest insights of other countries' mythologists that have allowed Laurinkienė to pose some original hypotheses relating to the controversially viewed god *Teliavelis* mentioned in 13th-century written sources. In this way, the voice of the most important Lithuanian god *Perkūnas* is finally being heard in the international community.

The Lithuanian researcher into customs law Venantas Mačiekus conceptually discusses matters of ethnography in the new encyclopedia of measurement and clock-making by the ethnologist and physicist Libertas Klimka (National Museum of Lithuania, 2023). According to Mačiekus, this encyclopedia, authored by an erudite master of the pen, reveals the history of clock-making from 2500 BCE, when the Ancient Egyptians and the Chinese used sundials, analysing the changes made to the mechanical clock in our times, and even discusses atomic clocks. The book mentions that the first author in Lithuania to use the word *laikrodis* (for 'clock', meaning literally 'showing the time') was Simonas Daukantas, who described the names given to specific parts of the day used in Lithuanian villages. He distinguishes the traditions upheld in artisan guilds

in Vilnius. In the words of Mačiekus, many people will be astounded by the descriptions of floral and bird clocks, when time was determined according to when a particular species of plant flowered, or hearing the first song of a particular bird on a midsummer's morning. Klimka makes interesting use of Lithuanian folklore, including proverbs, adages, riddles and anecdotes, when talking about time, its passing, measurement and clocks.

We hope that the topics listed here will be of interest to readers, and that the scientific research published in this journal will be met with a wider discussion and reflection in science.

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24 October 2024

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