

This volume of the journal Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies is dedicated to the prominent Lithuanian folklore researcher Pranutė Aukštikalnytė-Jokimaitienė – her 100th anniversary of birth was celebrated during the annual folklore conference last year. The majority of articles published here have been prepared following the presentations at this conference, thus shaping the general thematic of the volume: most of the articles focus on the Soviet-time research of Lithuanian folklore, ethnology and literature, attempting to highlight the humanitarian thought of that era, which can be discerned both in the public and private discourses.

Literary scholar Donata Mitaitė surveys in her article the entire poetic heritage left by Pranutė Aukštikalnytė-Jokimaitienė (1922–1989) written in 1938–1948 and in 1964–1966. In her poetry, ideals of loyalty to the native land can be discerned, as well as states of homelessness and wandering; the Neo-romantic influence can be felt in the early compositions, while in the subsequent ones, that of the folkloric tradition. The uniqueness of Aukštikalnytė's poetry is revealed, as well as her connections to the poetry of her contemporaries – the representatives of the “tragic generation” who made their debut before the war and whose works reflect the ideals, models and popular poetic forms of the pre-war period. Under the Soviet regime, however, Aukštikalnytė decided not to bow to the ideological demands posed to the poetry, choosing another way instead, that of the folklore researcher.

The scholarly activities of Aukštikalnytė-Jokimaitienė is the subject of the article by Bronė Stundžienė, who discusses her work taking into consideration the impact of the Soviet ideology. For various reasons, the biography of this scholar was regarded as particularly unsuitable to the Soviets. In the article, her important personal trait is outlined – namely, her firm moral principles and attempts at creating a comparative autonomy under the oppression of the Soviet ideology, both while selecting her research directions and wordings or arguments for her ideas. The value of her research works is also emphasized.

Modesta Liugaitė-Černiauskienė presents a historiographic survey of the research works from the second half of the 20th century dealing with the Lithuanian folk ballads or mentioning them. From this perspective, she demonstrates how the prevailing paradigm of the ballad research was established in the Lithuanian folkloristics. The survey includes both the works published in the Soviet Lithuania

and abroad. The studies by Jonas Balys and Jokimaitienė are particularly highlighted, emphasizing their special value.

Jurga Sivoickaitė–Sadauskienė focuses on the letters written by the deportees and political prisoners – persons repressed during the post-war years by the Soviets. The main basis of the article comprises letters written from the Mordovia prison camps by the political prisoner, pedagogue and writer Bronius Sivickas. Emphasizing the importance of literary fiction for the repressed, the author analyzes the literary nature of these letters: the peculiarities of their linguistic expression and style, as well as their connections to literature and folklore. Maintaining this correspondence is regarded as an attempt at preserving the personal identity and outliving the trauma. The possible impact of the censorship for the contents and form of these letters is also taken into account.

Further, Jurgita Ūsaiytė discusses in her article the repertoire of the Soviet-time songbooks, focusing on the personal song collections maintained in the beginning of the Soviet period. The aim of the study is elucidating changes that affected the contents of these songbooks during the first two or three decades after the beginning of the Soviet occupation in Lithuania. According to the author, during the WWII and the first postwar decade, the repertoire of the songbooks was still heavily influenced by the interwar popular folksong tradition; however, subsequently the patriotic Lithuanian thematic faded and was replaced by popular songs broadcasted by the mass media. Inclusion of ideologically marked songs into the personal song collections reflects the strong Soviet indoctrination experienced by the society.

Aušra Kairaitytė–Užupė and Egidija Ramanauskaitė introduce informal self-published newspapers fanzines published by the Lithuanian youth. These publications appeared and circulated in Lithuania from the 1960s to the 1990s. Using the digitalized collection of approximately 500 fanzines representing rock music, punk, science-fiction, and other subcultures as well as additional source materials, the authors of the article discuss the origins of these newspapers, their spread and motives behind their publication, which include the need of the young people to disseminate the issues of cultural life that were important to them but had not been presented in the official press, to express their creative potential, and to broaden their circle of like-minded people.

Vita Džekčioriūtė analyzes traditional Lithuanian lullabies with prominent intimidating and violent motives. The researcher discerns several means of making the emotional impact that are characteristic to this genre: addressing the child by emotional phrases and diminutives, argumentation, threatening with mythical beings or violence, promising a reward if the child falls asleep, stimulation of sympathy and empathy. The author strives to find out the reasons determining such relationship with the child in these compositions.

Mantas Antanas Davidavičius outlines the initial principles of the Lithuanian ecosophic thought in his article, analyzing the theme of the environmental preservation and elucidating the transformations of the Lithuanian attitude to their natural surroundings that were determined by transitions from the symbolic thinking to the Enlightenment, as well as from the Enlightenment to the Romanticism. In addition, close connections between literary fiction, philosophy, and practical measures of environmental protection (including legislation and development of the environmental institutions) are revealed. The author employs works by Nicolaus Hussovianus, Henry David Thoreau, and Prosper Mérimée as well as legends about a Lithuanian boy raised by the wild bears in the woods. These samples are regarded within the context of philosophical tendencies and political transformations.

The subject of the article by Martynas Vingrys is the obscene Lithuanian paremias. He analyzes peculiarities of their representation, recording and publication, also describing the public and scholarly attitudes towards these obscene folk compositions, mainly focusing on interwar Lithuanian publications. Using both archived materials and articles from interwar periodicals, the author presents different perspectives – those of the folklore informants, folklore collectors and researchers, emphasizing that the prevailing tendency is in favor of the scholarly objectivity.

In this volume, three book reviews are published. Viktorija Šeina-Vasiliauskienė discusses the monograph by Vladas Sirutavičius Political Power and Lithuanian Ethnicity. The Late Stalinism and the Early De-stalinization in Lithuania in 1944–1956 (2022); Ramunė Bleizgienė reviews the book by Dalia Leinartė The Unplanned Life: Family in the Soviet Lithuania (2022); and Aušra Žičkienė presents a publication of sound recordings Pieśni Poniemnia, pieśni Beskidu Sądeckiego (2022), which is a result of the project in applied ethnomusicology carried out at University of Warsaw.

Information on the 14th conference from the cycle “Readings of Norbertas Vėlius”, this time dedicated to the folklore dealing the devil, is presented by Lina Būgienė, while Aušra Žičkienė shares her impressions from the research conference on the traditional laments, which took place in Helsinki, Finland.

*Modesta Liugaitė-Černiauskienė,
Jurga Sivickaitė-Sadauskienė*