ELM Scholarly Press
Sator 18
http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18

Balkan and Balticum

Current Studies in the Postsocialist Space

Edited by
Ekaterina Anastasova and Mare Kõiva

Tartu 2017

Editors and compilers: Ekaterina Anastasova, Mare Kõiva
Series “Sator” editor: Mare Kõiva
Language editors: Liisa Vesik, Lii Liin
Cover photo: Jaak Kikas, 2017 “Autumn in Tartu”

International committee
Tiiu Jaago (Tartu University); Reet Hiiemäe (Estonian Literary Museum); Mare Kalda (Estonian Literary Museum); Tarmo Kulmar (Tartu University); Nikolay Kuznetsov (Estonian Literary Museum); Aado Lintrop (Estonian Literary Museum); Emily Lyle (School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh); Mirjam Mencej (Ljubljana University); Jonathan Roper (Tartu University); Marju Kõivupuu (Tallinn University); Ülo Valk (Tartu University); Tatjana Vladõkina (Institute of Udmurtian History, Language and Literarture, Izhkar); Irina Vinokurova (Institute of Karelian History, Language and Literarture in Petroskoi); Ergo-Hart Västrik (Tartu University)

Supported by Estonian Academy of Sciences, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES, European Regional Development Fund) and is related to research projects IRG 22-5 (Estonian Research Council).

CEES Centre of excellence in Estonian Studies

Series “Sator. Artikleid usundi- ja kombeloost”, 18
http://www.folklore.ee/rl/pubte/ee/sator/sator18/
ISSN 1736-0323 (online) ISBN 978-9949-586-58-5 (printed)
ISBN 978-9949-586-61-5 (online) ISSN 1406-2011 (printed)
DOI: 10.7592/Sator.2017.18

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Investing
in your future

EUROPEAN UNION
Regional Development Fund
Investing in your future

1869

ACADEMIA SCIENTIARUM ESTONIAE

Contents

Preface 5
Mare Kõiva, Ekaterina Anastasova

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY AND SOCIAL TIES

Ethnographic Studies on the Montenegrin Festive Costume as a National Symbol 11
Sofiya Zahova

Social Ties of Bulgarians and Rudari in the Mediterranean Countries 42
Magdalena Slavkova

RECASTING RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Contemporary Development of the Akyazili Baba Tekke / St. Athanasius in Bulgaria 73
Yelis Erolova

Turkish Religious Identity in Bulgaria in the Last Twenty-Four Years (1989–2013) 94
Mila Maeva

The Feast of Cyril and Methodius in Bessarabia and Crimea, Ukraine 119
Ekaterina Anastasova

The Saints of Death in the Traditions of the Balkan People 146
Rachko Popov

CONSTRUCTING NEW SPIRITUALITY

New Trends in the Study of Religion in Estonia – Contemplations in the Grey Zone between Religion and Science 161
Tõnno Jonuks

Constructing New Spirituality in Modernity – the Case of the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria 183
Svetoslava Toncheva

Constructing Contemporary Periodical and Occasional Rituals 199
Mare Kõiva

The Making of a Sacred Place: An Example of Constructing Place Identity in the Contemporary Mentality 221
Reet Hiiemäe

CHANGING TRADITIONS

Bridge Over the Rainbow. Animal Burials and Animal Cemeteries in Post-Socialist Estonia 241
Marju Kõivupuu

Simple Hide-and-seek at its Core: Play Features and the Game of Geocaching 277
Mare Kalda

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.01

Preface

Ekaterina Anastasova and Mare Kõiva

This publication is an interdisciplinary collection of studies that focus on cultural and religious processes and their current observation results in the example of two countries with a long-standing tradition of cultural research: Estonia and Bulgaria. The collection of articles is the outcome of joint research carried out by the Department of Balkan Ethnology, the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum. Mutual fieldwork and observations started 10 years ago, and the Centre for Landscape and Culture at the School of Humanities of Tallinn University was involved in practical work. In the last three years we focused on changes in the cultural processes of both post-socialist nation states, with due consideration of the historical framework and major problems that exist in modern society: sacral places and religiousness, minorities/small communities with their identity creation, and migration patterns. Collaborative work between Estonia and Bulgaria also forms part of a larger project observing common and distinctive features of the Balkans and Baltics, mainly in the field of religion and ethnic cultures.

The results of this cooperation have been published in scientific publications (Болгарский фольклор, Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore and Mäetagused) and in the collections of articles 'Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe. History, Religion and Culture' edited by E. Anastasova and M. Kõiva, Sofia & Tartu, 2009 and 'Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe II' (forthcoming), edited by Ekaterina Anastasova and Svetoslava Toncheva. Researchers into the Baltics and Balkans have presented the results of their studies at special international conferences such as Balkan and Baltic States in EU I (2008, Sofia), Balkan and Baltic States II (2014, Sofia) and Balkan and Baltic States III (2017, Vilnius). The results of the project have also been presented at other international scientific

forums. On the initiative of the researchers, the foundations for the creation of a society that will bring scientists from both regions together have been laid.

However, the articles in this publication do not only deal with the territories of Bulgaria and Estonia: the topography under observation covers the lands from Spain to Greece, the South-Balkan area more extensively and stretches from Ukraine to modern-day Russia. The national groups under observation (Estonians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Albanians, Roma, Turks and other groups) as well as religious trends and confessions (Lutheran, Orthodox, Catholic, Moslem, Christian mystic and representatives of New Spirituality) and modern hobby groups (geocaching), or those who are connected through a particular cultural phenomenon (carriers of pet culture), exert a multi-faceted effect on transcultural phenomena today. The new image of society against the backdrop of the unifying trends of the socialist period needs to not only be studied, but also positioned against a broader backdrop. For example, a prominent place in the post-social cultural space is held by the processes of religious syncretism and identity (its restoration) and the provision of equal opportunities to national groups. At the same time, the diversity of manifestations of national identity in both countries is astonishing.

Thus the aim of the collection of articles is to observe the variability of cultural processes, using the opportunities provided by the humanities. Since we are dealing with multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies, cultural models are also of major importance alongside transcultural processes. These models are important in the context of social sciences and humanities, since they allow the dynamics of culture and more general processes, interaction between phenomena, their similarities and differences to be compared, especially since we are dealing with areas that have different historical fates.

The humanities are also characterised by the heterogeneity of theoretical approaches: they differ in terms of taxonomies and the ontological background. In this collection we have once again felt it expedient to maintain the pluralism of methods used by different researchers, which helps to bring out the knowledge and goals of the researchers more vividly, and at the same time allows us to gain a more accurate insight into subtopics. In addition to the materials collected in the course of fieldwork, the authors have also

utilised the results of earlier ethnological and folklore research. Information collected from local communities and minorities is also of great importance.

We hope that this book will be extremely interesting to read and will expand your knowledge about both cultures considerably.

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a bilateral collaboration project of the Academies of Sciences of Bulgaria and Estonia entitled Balkan and Baltic Holiness – Modern Religiosity and National Identity. We are grateful for its support and assistance. We thank all of the contributors for their invaluable patience and comments on the chapters. Our gratitude goes to Liisa Vesik and Lii Liin for their help in the editing process.

The editors are also grateful to their institutions – the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum, BAS, Estonian Literature Museum (IRG 22-5) and Center of Excellence (TK-145) in Estonian Studies – for their financial assistance and support throughout this project.

Note on transliteration

In the case of the names of authors and institutions we have usually maintained the way these names are spelled in Latin script by the persons or institutions themselves so as to make it easier for the reader to find these in bibliographies.

New York and Ljubljana, September 2017

Constructing Identity and Social Ties

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.02

Ethnographic Studies on the Montenegrin Festive Costume as a National Symbol

Sofiya Zahova

Balkan Ethnology Department, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
szahova@yahoo.com

The Montenegrin official national costume (known also as *Njegoševa nošnja* or the Costume of Njegos), and the Montenegrin hat as an integral part of it, are considered to be an important ethno-cultural marker for Montenegrins. They are the subject of special attention from the very first ethnographic records on Montenegro, and later in Yugoslav ethnology. Nowadays, the interpretation of national symbols of ethnic belonging related to the Montenegrin costume presents the two major scientific concepts of the genesis and identity of Montenegrins: one a pro-Serbian and the other a Montenegrin. This paper provides both an overview and an analysis of the ethnographic and historic scientific works on the Montenegrin costume, which view the costume as a marker of ethnic identity and national belongingness and from which two clear opposing positions can be identified. The dominating position (and chronologically the earliest) claims that the Montenegrin people are part of the Serbian national corpus, while the other states that the Montenegrins have had an autonomous and distinct historical and ethno-cultural development since medieval times. Since national costumes are usually seen as means to affirm national identity and are in the "register" of national symbols, the article examines the scientific publications on the symbolic meanings of the Montenegrin costume in light of the wider context of interpretation of Montenegrin history and culture and their elements as ethno-cultural markers for Serbian or Montenegrin identity amongst the Montenegrin people.
Key words: Montenegro, national building, festive costume(s), Yugoslav ethnography

Introduction

The development of Montenegro can be rightfully described as a dynamic one in a similarly dynamic region. From the previous century up to now it has been undergoing major historical, political, and socio-cultural changes from a sovereign country uniting the South Slavs during the 20th century to an independent state in 2006 that is "civic, democratic, and ecological".[1] Despite the changes, including the dynamics of identity of its population,[2] a steady marker of the

Montenegrin ethno-culture that could be rightfully called a symbol of Montenegro for both Montenegrins and for the "outsiders" (their neighbours and visitors) is the Montenegrin national costume – the festive costume, also known in popular terms as golden dress (*zlatno odjelo*), the costume of Njegoš (*Njegoševa nošnja*), including the Montenegrin hat (*Crnogorska kapa*). The last appears to be the second most popular article of souvenir trade in today's Montenegro after the national flag. There is nothing new in the statement that a national costume has been incorporated in the "symbolic reservoir" of the national symbols. The dress is described as national, the folk costume and national clothing as a whole are often part of the cultural politics by which national consciousness and ethnic identification is maintained or (re)produced (Anderson 2006, Hobsbawm 2006). The national awakening processes in the Balkans were led by the intellectual elite, who recorded and promoted the cultural treasures of the people. Records of national clothing and costume were an object of a purposeful collection. Different descriptions of the Montenegrin costume have been recorded during the period from the second half of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, when the denoting and defining of the so-called "folk costume" and, consequentially, its scientific interpretation served the purpose of national emancipation for independence or for proclaiming the national consciousness of the people who wore it.

A century later, with the process of state development in Montenegro, the symbolic meaning of the costume and its scientific interpretations in light of the national consciousness of the Montenegrin people have not lost their importance. On the contrary, the development of the debate over Montenegrin independence at the end of 20th and beginning of the 21st century went hand in hand with the debate whether Montenegrins have enough cultural and historical reasons to be a state (i.e., whether they have the right to be a nation) as well as with disputes on the Montenegrin ethno-cultural phenomena as symbols of national (Serbian or Montenegrin) identity. In light of this debate, popular and scientific publications have been raising the issues of Montenegrins' identity, history, and culture as part of the issue whether they should be a separate and distinct state (for details see Pavlović 2003, Pavlović 2003a). Culture and history have become issues created and recreated by various groups and interests and the two competing versions on the

Montenegrin national question underpin much of the political and scientific discourse. Ethno-national characteristics such as religion, history, family- and ethno-genesis, language, and others became issues for interpretation in the hands of two opposite positions: one stating that Montenegrin people are part of the Serbian national corpus, and this is proven by their (Serbian) language, religion, and consciousness and the opposing claim that Montenegrins form a separate nation with its distinct (from Serbian) culture, language, consciousness, and (state) history. Historical events, literature, and the official documentation of the Petrović dynasty (that ruled Montenegro from 1697 until 1918) are explored and analysed in order to demonstrate that the national consciousness of the population in the past legitimizes the same (consciousness) in the present.

The national costume, known also as *Njegoševa nošnja*, was an object of many descriptions since the very first ethnographic descriptions of Montenegro. It is a men's festive costume, believed to have been officially introduced by Petar II Petrovic Njegoš (1782–1830)[3] himself and it was the uniform for the Montenegrin army and officials until 1910. It has also been a subject of ongoing scientific debate concerning its historical appearance, genesis, influence, dissemination, usage, and symbolism. The historical importance of the costume, used by brave Montenegrin warriors in battle, as well as the symbolic meaning of the Montenegrin hat as a substitute for the men's dignity and honour, give additional reasons for keeping it and giving it high national value, apart from its aesthetics outlook and rich embroidery. It is an important marker for the people and for scientists because it is one of the very first attributes related to the material culture of the Montenegrins, but much more because it is seen as being related to the historical development and important facts and figures of Montenegrin history and culture. The Montenegrin national costume did not end up in the museums and ethnographic collections as an item with souvenir value. Even during the time of modernization and industrialization throughout 20th century many Montenegrins from the older generation kept parts of the costume in order to be buried in the traditional way or to be used on festive occasions in the family cycle.

Nowadays the tradition of wearing a partial or complete costume is seeing a rebirth and is cast into new light. During the first half

of 2006, when Montenegrins were preparing to vote on the issue of independence, Montenegrin cities hosted many meetings and demonstration for and against state independence. The so-called Yes and No block were easily distinguished by their mottos, posters, speeches, and national symbols such as anthem, coat of arms, and flags (Montenegrin and Yugoslav respectively). But the proud men who had different flags and slogans that clashed with one another had completely identical traditional festive costumes. This picture is symptomatic for the whole Montenegrin traditional culture, which is defined as ethno-national since it is about the issues of two competing consciousnesses of one people and two national identities of the same population (Pavlović 2003, Bieber 2003, Malesevic, Uzelac 2007).

In this context, the political discourse and politics of identity became correlated with the scientific publications in the field of ethnography and culture. Ethnicity, political process, and scientific discourse are closely interconnected in the region (Halpern & Hammel 1969, Pišev 2009). As Halpern and Hammel point out in their analysis on the interrelations between Yugoslav social science and other aspects of Yugoslav culture, there is a special focus on ethnology of the East and this is an intellectual justification of the independent political existence valid for Yugoslav ethnology and it comes straight from of the Karadžić tradition (Halpern & Hammel 1969: 17–18). The scientific interpretations of the genesis, meaning, and development of the Montenegrin festive costume illustrate this interconnection per se. As a sufficient part of the substance of ethnicity in Montenegro and as a component of "the national character" for the ethnographic descriptions as a whole, the issue of the meaning and genesis of the costume is disputable in contemporary ethnology research on Montenegro. Exactly because of its significance and historical development, the festive costume opened up an ongoing (although a comparatively limited) scientific discussion in ethnology. I review and analyse the scientific arguments used by the two opposing theses in chronological perspective. I'll apply the method of analysis to ethno-symbolic national discourses and its relation to the politics of identity. The article analyses sources from the political and everyday discourses that participated in my field research in Montenegro, implemented as part of a PhD thesis "Dynamics of Identity in Montenegro" in 2008–2009.

One object of study, two interpretations

The traditional costume, known as Montenegrin has the following parts: white shirt (*košulja*), wide blue trousers (*dimii*), white over-knee socks, red overcoat (*džamadan*) with or without sleeves, *gunja* jacket in light blue colour, or dark green *dolama* jacket. Over the *gunja* or *dolama* jacket a red *jelek* or red *dušanka jelek* is put, richly embodied with gold ornamentation (Mrvaljević 2006). There is also the leather belt *pojas (silav)*, around which a long piece of cloth is tied, most often red in colour (*trombolos*). The main parts of the costume, with which other garments were combined, are: the red silk baize *džamadan* jacket, wide blue trousers and white over-knee socks. *Dušanka* and *dolama* jackets have a design with hanging sleeves, while *dušanka*, *džamadan, djecerma* and *jelek* jackets are characterized by their rich golden embroidery (Mrvaljević 2006). The colours are: red (token ornaments, *džamadan* jacket, *jecerma* jackets, *jelek* jackets, *dušanka* jackets), blue (*trousers*, *jaketa* jackets), green (*dolama* jackets) and white (*gunja* overcoat, over-knee-socks, knee-socks, women's *koret* jackets, silk shirts and skirts). These three colours are predominant and characteristic of the men's festive costume. Up to the present time, the Montenegrin costume remains one of the most popular ethno-identifying markers of Montenegro.

Obligatory parts of the costume are the hat and the guns. The hat is in the shape of a small flat cylinder and its bottom red part is called *tepelak*, while its brim is black and is called *derevija*. A part of the bottom is decorated with five golden nits in the shape if semi-circle which has a centre with certain embroidery. During Njegos' time, his associates would put the initials of their tribal names (*nahija*) on top of their hats. During the reign of Prince Danilo and King Nikola, these were replaced with the king's initials (*D.I.*, *N.I.*), a cross and four fireplaces, as well as stars with five or six points, or the initials of the owner of the hat himself. The belt has guns, without which a man in Montenegro would be considered naked. Usually these include a couple of guns, a *jatagan* knife, and a long rifle (*džeferedar, arnautka*) on the back. A variety of Montenegrin costumes presenting this type can be seen online.[4]

While the traditional female costume varies widely from one region of Montenegro to another, the costume known as festive Montene-

grin is fixed since during the rule of Njegoš and afterwards it became the official uniform of the governing bodies' officials in civil institutions and the army (*Istorija Crne Gore* 1975: 158–159). It was also accepted by lay-people and was a uniform of honour signifying the identity of a warrior and supporter of the ruler. All men that had the financial means bought or ordered the Montenegrin costume which they wore when going to war, weddings and family gatherings, e.g. on all the main festive and official occasions particular to the culture. The high cost of the elements of the costume prevented its mass dissemination (Mrvaljević 2006: 82–83) but the hat was a must for men within traditional Montenegrin society.

***

Based on the field records and statements of the school and Cvijić-Erdeljanović (Erdeljanović 1907, 1911; Djonović 1935; Šobajć 1923; Nakičenović 1982), information published in particular articles devoted to the folk costumes in Yugoslavia or on the Montenegrin costume (Durković-Jakšić 1953: 105–106; Radojevic 1969; Vlahović 1953: 151; Vukmanović 1953), the first interpretation of the existence and development of the costume dominant in Yugoslav ethnography after WWII was that the costume appeared comparatively late (sometime in the 19th century) parallel to the Serbian national project of Petar I (reigned 1782–1830) and Petar II Njegos (reigned 1830–1851) and that its meaning and genesis should be searched for in influences outside Old Montenegro (Barjaktarović 1979, Barjaktarović 1987, Vlahović 1995). This influence is historically bound to Serbian ethnic tradition and the embodiment of national symbols of the Serbian national idea – the Kosovo myth and the wish for the rebirth of the great Serbian state. In dispute, a few Montenegrin ethnographers in the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s trace the development of the Montenegrin costume back to medieval times and refer it to an older dynasty ruling Montenegro (Dragićević 1962, Radulović 1976). This was when the intellectual climate in Yugoslavia stimulated the development of research at a national level on the basis of archival visual and written sources. This scientific interpretation was further developed in Montenegro in the 1990s and in the new millennia (Mrvaljević 2006) and has also become common for the new pro-Montenegrin school of history in

Montenegro (*Enciklopedija Crne Gore* 1996*, Istorijski Leksikon Crne Gore* 2006). Through the 1960s to the 1980s the discussion itself did not touch upon the issue of the national meaning of the costume, reflecting the politics of that time (to lightly discuss national issues opposing Serbian and Montenegrin people) and, thus, inheriting the ambiguity of Montenegrin identity. After 2000, when the two concepts about the political development of Montenegro were clear (one for independent state and the other for union with Serbia), the discussion went into the field of ethnic and national identification and stood behind the costume. Petar Vlahović (Vlahović 1995) presented a widely distributed publication (of the English version of the article) on the Serbian national view and Zorica Mrvaljević put the development of the national costume in light of the new official Montenegrin history (Mrvaljević 2006). The ethnology field research undertaken by me during 2009 in different parts of Montenegro on a variety of topics related to the issues of national belonging and ethnic identity showed that the discussion went far beyond scientific interest as many people use the outlook and symbolism of the Montenegrin costume in support of a Serbian or Montenegrin national consciousness.

Many of the scientific topics in the Yugoslav ethnology developed along a path that had been drawn by Vuk Karadžić (Halpern, Hammel 1969: 20) and that of the national costume is no exception. The first detailed, written ethnographic description of the traditional male costume was published in 1836 in Vienna as part of "Montenegro and Boka Kotorska" (Karadžić 1922). Afterwards many other descriptions by Western (Delari 2003; Schwarz 1876; Stivenson 2001; Svatek 2000; Mantegaca 2001) as well as regional writers (Medaković 1860, Nenadović 1929, Nenadović 1950) dealt with the official and every day costumes of Montenegrins, as well as the clothes and guns characteristics for the Montenegrin citizen. Despite the fact that the ethnographic research on Montenegro pays limited attention to the so-called material culture and is rather concentrated on research of the migration and demographic processes among the Montenegrin tribes and their traditional socio-normative culture, the Montenegrin men's costume has its particular place in Yugoslav ethnography (Vukmanović 1953, Radojević, 1969, Vlahović 1953) known also as *Crnogorska svečana nošnja, Njegoševa nošnja* or *zlatno odjelo* (Durković-Jakšić 1953, Vukmanović 1952). This

research is based on ethnographic notes of travellers and publicists from Western and Central Europe who visited Montenegro at the end of 18th and throughout the whole 19th century. It is based on data presented in ethnographic research conducted in separate regions or tribes that were characteristic for the school of Anthropogeography recording the period of traditional culture in Montenegro (Erdeljanović 1920, Erdeljanović 1978, Rovinski 1998, etc.) and also on visual sources. This phenomenon is not an exception from the different descriptions of folk costumes in general which appeared from the second half of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, and along with their scientific interpretation served the purpose of national emancipation and independence of the Balkan people (Kale 2009: 96).

The first scientific descriptions of the Montenegrin costume as part of the material culture and clothing find their place in the rich ethnography on tribes and regions (*nahijas*) in Montenegro written by members of the Cvijić-Erdeljanović school. These works proceed from the basic postulates of the Karadžić tradition and the thesis that the ethnic groups in the territory of Montenegro are Serbs of Orthodox faith. The (Serbian) ethnicity was an existing implicit dimension in all other works of the ethnographers conducting research in Montenegro. The postulate about the Serbian folk mentality of the Montenegrins as revealed in their ethno-culture and historical development was considered by default. The approach had not been altered afterwards in later works devoted to Yugoslav national costume. Thus, the Serbian and Yugoslav ethnology as a whole considered the Montenegrin costume to exist since the time of rule of Petar II Petrović Njegoš as one segment of his national project for unification of folk clothing with the aims to symbolize the state encompassing all parts of Old Montenegro and the Bay of Kotor. This unifying symbolism could be attained by incorporating elements from both the peoples' and leaders' costumes from each part of Montenegro.[5] These works did not pay special interest to arguing what the national consciousness of the Montenegrins is since they were based on the postulate that Montenegro is part of the Serbian state, nation, church, and language. Therefore, they implied the understanding typical for the social sciences that Serbian mentality is part of the ethno-culture of the Montenegrins. The second statement that dominates Serbian ethnology is that the

Montenegrin costume and its hat embody all important national symbols of the Serbian people and their restless struggle against the Turks. These works are written in a different contexts: the central issue is the development of the Montenegrin republic and nation, and in this way we find that they do argue over the meaning and historic development of the costume as proof that Montenegrins subscribed to the Serbian national myths, narratives, history, and consciousness. This argument is employed in the ethnological works of one of the most prominent ethnologists of Montenegrin origin who worked within the framework of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts on different topics of Montenegrin and Serbian ethnography throughout the second half of the 20th century: Petar Vlahović and Mirko Barjaktarović. Their works were written in a time when the postulate of Serbian ethnicity in Montenegro was shaken and a central part of the works dealt with the historical development of the costume and hat in the context of the Serbian myth of Kosovo and national consciousness of the Petrović dynasty and the Montenegrin people (Vlahović 1978, Vlahović 1990, Vlahović 1995, Barjaktarović 1979). The works employ a wider framework of interpretation of the ethnic origin of the Montenegrins and the thesis that Montenegrin folk culture is part of the Serbian national corpus. According to them, Montenegrins are territorial ethnographic definition of a national belonging, which is Serbian, and the development and design of the Montenegrin costume and its hat are both a result and a proof of this fact.

These conclusions contrasted with those of two ethnologists who based their research in cultural institution in Cetinje, the historical capital of Old Montenegro, and who share the statement that the development of the Montenegrin costume should be referred to periods before Njegoš, continuing a Montenegrin dynastic tradition from medieval times, which was influenced by the Serbian tradition as far as all medieval Balkan states and their aristocracy was influenced by Byzantium. Risto Dragićević (Dragićević 1962) first shared this view in 1962 and afterwards it was further developed and promoted by Zorica Radulović and Zorica Mrvaljević (Radulović 1976, Mrvaljević 1988). Today, in the context of its contribution to the development of the social sciences and humanities in independent Montenegro, the bi-lingual monographic work of Mrvaljavić "The National Costume of Montenegro" (2006) explicitly elevates

the pro-Montenegrin concept for the early origin of the Montenegrin costume in the time of Zeta (first a principality within the Rascia ruled by Nemanjić dynasty and after 1356 as autonomous under the rule of Balšićes), which is considered the medieval state-predecessor of Montenegro (Rastoder 2003). Its continuation through the centuries was maintained since it was a symbol of Montenegrin state, independence and struggle.

Montenegrin Costume as Serbian National Symbol

Like many traditional Montenegrin cultural phenomena (e.g., house-hold traditions, architecture, spiritual beliefs, etc.), the costume was first described in detail by Vuk Karadžić. Since then, all the elements of Montenegrin culture in ethnographical and social sciences are implicitly considered to be Serbian since "Montenegrins are Slavs of the Serbian branch of the Greek [Orthodox] law" (Karadžić 1972: 4). The Montenegrin costume is interpreted as a symbol of the Serbian national spirit in Montenegro, which can be freely developed in Montenegro. A few years later, Ljubomir Nenadović (Nenadović, 1929), a secretary and a close friend of Njegoš, also provided descriptions of the Montenegrin costume as a Serbian symbol, worn as official dress by Njegoš himself and his officials upon visits to other countries or hosting diplomats in his palace. Nenadović claims that Njegoš had introduced the costume and made a better tapestry. He also re-tells the legend about the Montenegrin hat:

> *And all around the hat a black cloth is attached. And this is a sign of mourning for the fallen kingdom. On the bottom of the hat all is made from red cloth; a small spot on the cloth is circled with golden rails. This represents (the idea) how the Turk had suppressed everything, and only that small piece had been left; this is Montenegro. That is how many people think... these hats are really from very old times... Mostly the dead metropolitan had introduced them in Montenegro.* (Nenadović 1929: 20–21)

During the period of rule of King Nikola I Petrović (1860–1918) visitors of Montenegro provided impressions of the costume and the interpretations among the Montenegrins recorded by the visitors

themselves. Berhard Schwarz (1876) also describes the costume as Serbian and compares it with the three-coloured German flag. Viko Mantegaca (2001) writes that the Montenegrin costume and hat are symbols of Serbian Montenegro – the black colour (*kant*) of the hat is mourning for the Serbian fatherland, the red colour of the background is a symbol of the blood devoted to the independence, while the small golden semi-circles and the initials in it symbolize the small but independent Montenegro with its wild mountains in which Serbians had found shelter. The written records of the visitors, in fact, accounted a popular interpretation that existed at that time in Montenegro: many people there had seen the glorious times of the Serbian state as an example with which they identified. Apart from his writings, the field research of Andrija Jovićević (Jovićević 1903) and Venijamin Boroski (as quoted in Mrvaljević 2006) also record the costume and hat as symbols of the Serbian national idea and the Kosovo myth. According to Jovićević (Jovićević 1903: 56–58) the name *dušanka* is derived from the name of King Dušan,[6] whose servants in the palace used to wear the same jacket. The folk version recorded most often by Jovićević interprets the black wrapper as a sign of grief for the once big (Serbian) Empire, the red colour as the bloody defeat at the Battle of Kosovo, and the five small stripes on the top represent the remains of the once greater Serbian realm. This version became increasingly popular amongst the common folk during the reign of Prince Danilo I Petrović-Njegoš (1697–1735).

In the school of Anthropogeography to which Jovićević belongs, the costume and dress, as well as all traditional culture segments are interpreted as Serbian, while their specifics are explained by different geographic and historical developments (tribes, social norms such as the blood feuds, etc.). For one of the most prominent characteristics of the Montenegrin spirit is the belief that Serbian heroes are their fore-fathers, the national morals and thought are inherited from times past and they became instincts of the individual and the people. The national idea for Serbian state and spirit has lived on with Montenegrins, since they all consider Miloš Obilić[7] to be their spiritual ancestor and a measure for their deeds. The Serbian ethnic origin of the Montenegrins as part of the research on tribes' formations and peoples' migrations is a central issue for the school of Serbian/Yugoslavian ethnology at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Interpretations of historical sources and ar-

chives from medieval times that are quoted as proof of the Serbian ethnic compositions of the Montenegrin's land and Serbian origins of the Montenegrins tribes are part of the Serbian and Yugoslav historiography, while for the ethnographers the Serbian ethnicity should be proved by their research on mythical and real origins of the tribes, brotherhoods, and families as well as by accounting the linguistic, religious, and other elements of the culture. This historiographical tradition believes that during the time of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkan Peninsula, Serbians had migrated towards lands of Old Montenegro difficult to access. That is why the Montenegrin tribes have a Serbian national consciousness connected to the tradition of the medieval Serbian state. Under the political circumstance of lacking (Serbian) statehood, Montenegrin tribal existence (as based on the older Slavic socio-political institutions) is viewed as a territory that had kept the tradition of the old Slavs' division in tribes over generations (Cvijić 1922, Erdeljanović 1920, Erdeljanović 1978). The characteristics of the Montenegrin culture are Serbian, while their particularities developed different than Serbia's due to different political and geographic conditions. For example, the warrior spirit has its expression in the gun cult while men in Serbia were forbidden to wear guns as Orthodox population in Ottoman Empire.

The Serbian national idea for renewal of medieval Kingdom and the Kosovo myth are memories of the "golden ages" (Smith 1996) and, as such, they have a special place in both Serbian historiography and folklore epic poetry and narratives. Typical phenomena of the ethno-culture are interpreted in such light and this is valid for the festive costume of Montenegro which is a symbol with value similar to the official flag, coat of arms, etc. The Petrović Dynasty rulers, therefore, who introduced the idea of renewal of the Serbian statehood and devotion of the Kosovo oath of renewing the state, should be directly related to all these symbols.

Keeping in mind this context of Serbian/Yugoslavian historiography, we should move on to works devoted to the Montenegrin costume and hat. While in the first half of the 20th century, the historiography paid attention to general works on ethnology of certain regions in Montenegro and their population (part of which was research on traditional culture), after WWII there is a growing interest in

Montenegrin dress, costume, and hat. Miodrag Vlahović (within a wider overview on the hats in Yugoslavia [Vlahović 1953]) names Njegoš as the ruler who introduced the hat in Montenegro as part of his statehood project related to the Serbian national ideal. Jovan Vukmanović, a leading Montenegrin ethnographer, published an article that connected the festive Montenegrin costume directly to Njegoš (Vukmanović 1952), after whom he also names the festive costume (*Njegoševa nošnja*). The period of Njegoš's rule is believed to be the time when the golden Montenegrin costume was worn generally by all Montenegrins (Vukmanović 1952: 133). Being a national unifying dress, the costume was designed in a way similar to that of the ordinary Montenegrins, but more expensive (Vukmanović 1952: 138), and it was widely applied and promoted by Njegoš since it was "at the same time a national symbol" (Vukmanović 1952: 137–138).

The work of Vukmanović in the 1950s is devoted to describing the written and pictorial sources of the Montenegrin festive costume, while the works of Mirko Barjaktarović (Barjaktarović 1979, Barjaktarović 1987) are explicitly related to placing Montenegrin history and culture within the framework of the Serbian national ideal. There are two crucial points in interpreting the genesis, meaning, and development of the official costume worn in Montenegro. The first point is that the festive Montenegrin costume and hat are not a genuine Montenegrin phenomena and do not reflect the costume worn in Old Montenegro but are hugely influenced by outside cultures and created from the top (worn first by Njegoš, rich leaders, and officials). The point is that they have a symbolic meaning containing some of the most important national symbols of the Serbs.

The first point is supported by the following arguments. The costume is very expensive and limited to a circle of people who could afford it. The buyers of the costume could only have been of the wealthier strata of society and it was not disseminated among lay-men (Barjaktarović 1979: 122). The second point (argued extensively) is that the national tradition of medieval Serbia is kept, according to the author, not in Old Montenegro but in the bay of Kotor, where sources from the 15th through 16th centuries testify that Montenegrins were buying clothes and goods from Kotor. Throughout its history, Old Montenegro has had different styles of dress and the

new clothing was formed by the Montenegrins at the second half of 19th century by borrowing (from Boka) and by changing what they had, and possibly borrowing from the neighbouring Turks or Montenegrins traveling to Istanbul (Barjaktarović 1979: 128). The two state-building rulers disseminated the costume as a national Serbian symbol. Petar I started changes in the state and it is possible that he started to wear the costume from Boka on purpose, but during the time of Petar I Njegoš and Petar II Njegoš, some parts of the costume were finally created, and some even had symbolic meaning at the time (Barjaktarović 1979: 126). Barjaktarović concludes that once Montenegro was finally independent during the time of Petar II Njegoš, it is possible that the costume was finally created and was intended as a national costume, and probably was thence disseminated outside Montenegro (Barjaktarović 1979: 129).

As far as the Serbian national idea is concerned, Barjaktarović states that during the same period national awakening took place in the region and Serbian intellectuals tried to create a Serbian national costume. It is not coincidental that the colours of the costume present the Serbian national flag – red *džamadan*, blue *dimije*, white *dokolenice*. These symbols fitted the politics of Njegoš (Barjaktarović 1979: 130–131) aimed at renewing the Serbian Kingdom, as well as the symbols embodied by the hat, since the hat signified the dignity of the man. The same notion of interpretation is stressed when interpreting the coat of arms of Montenegro (two-headed eagle). It is the coat of arms of Serbia, which was originally taken from the Greek insignia – a cross with four oscines that later also had an eagle. In Byzantium they are presented as four letters beta (B), while in Montenegro as the Cyrillic letter S and mean "Only the accord saves the Serb" (in Serbian *Samo sloga Srbina spašava*) (Barjaktarović 1979: 133).

Quoting the conclusions of Barjaktarović, the work of Petar Vlahović (Vlahović, Petar 1995), devoted to the Serbian origins of Montenegrins, continues this thesis more explicitly and presents an emanation of the point of view of Serbian historiography on the Montenegrin question, including interpretations of the Montenegrin festive costume as a symbol of Serbian identity and the national idea in Montenegro. The first part of Vlahović's study is devoted to documents proving that Montenegrins declared themselves as

Serbs both historically and ethnically. The rule of the Petrović dynasty and particularly the time of Petar II Petrović Njegoš and King Nikola are seen as consequences of the deeds of Dositey Obradovic, a promoter of Slavic unity. They aimed at elaborating criteria for and initiating the promotion of Serbian national consciousness, since their authority arose from the authority developed in the times of the Nemanjić, Balšić, and Crnojević dynasties (Vlahović 1995). The author concludes that the Serbian ethnic consciousness of the Montenegrins is also "strengthened by some objects from the Montenegrin popular culture that originated in the minds of the people", and among them are the Montenegrin cap and the Montenegrin ceremonial costume. Vlahović repeats the widely disseminated concep that both the costume and hat were introduced by the bishop and ruler Petar II Petrović Njegoš, and the hat was a mark of the Serbian identity of the leaders to whom they were given by the ruler. Since the costume is a Serbian symbol per se, it carried an important national message. The Montenegrin ceremonial costume includes as its three parts the red waistcoat, the blue pants, and the white knee socks: all symbolising "the Serbian tricolour flag by which the Montenegrins have undoubtedly confirmed their ethnic being since the times of Dušan until the present day" (Vlahović 1995). The same is said about the coat of arms on the flag of Montenegro, said to be symbols of the continuation of the Serbian state and cultural tradition. Development of the costume as national symbol means placing the whole existence and history of Montenegro as successor of the Serbian Nemanjić and Kosovo tradition. The coat of arms of the Crnojević (the dynasty that ruled Montenegro after 1455 until 1528 while Ottoman empire was settling in the region and Zeta was incorporated into the Empire in 1499), and of medieval Serbia, whose tradition was preserved and guarded by the Montenegrins under the Turks, had a two-headed eagle over whose breast a lion on the plate was added in the 18th century as the symbol of Petrović Njegoš family. In 17th century, Montenegrins liberated themselves and started to demonstrate their national consciousness as Serbian people. It was possible to express it freely since only Old Montenegrin's highlands were free from the Ottoman rule.

Vlahović presents all the arguments of the Serbian historiography and ethnology on the national issue of the Montenegrins – that

genealogically, ethnically, historically and culturally they share the same path as Serbian people, they show Serbian consciousness and therefore, they should be considered Serbs, not Montenegrins in a national sense. In this scientific framework, independent Montenegro would have a reason to exist as far as it continues the Serbian nationhood. This scientific approach sees Montenegrins as ethnic Serbs who live in a geographic region of Montenegro, part of otherwise politically and ethnically Serbian territories. The spirit is embodied in the cultural specifics of Montenegro and one example of it is the Montenegrin costume and hat, genealogically and symbolically bound to the Serbian state and the Serbian national idea.

All the symbols applied in the embroidery of the Montenegrin hat are interpreted in this respect. If it is the cross (the so called *krtsac*, which is the battle flag of the Montenegrins), it would be related to the Orthodox faith. Strong ties with Serbian-hood are illustrated by interpretation of another symbol: a cross with four "C"-s (the Cyrillic letter for "S"). There are two popular explanations of this symbol as abbreviation. The first is the above mentioned meaning as *Samo sloga Srbina spašava* and the other, which is met only in popular interpretations, is *Sveti Sava – Srpska Slava* ('Saint Sava[8] – Serbian feast'). The first phrase is related to the idea of unification of all Serbs on the Balkans, ideally under the leadership of Serbia as a Piedmont on the Balkans. The second leads to the important role of the most prominent saint (being also a member of the Nemanjić dynasty), namely Saint Sava (1219–1233) – founder of the "unified body" of the Serbian church on the Balkans. The celebration of all rituals in the calendar cycle of holidays within the Serbian Orthodox Church is called *Svetosavlje* ('Saint-Savianship'). The existence of such symbols should also contribute to the thesis that Montenegrins are part of the Serbian nation and what makes Montenegrins different when compared to the Serbs is their independent existence in Old Montenegro for a long period of the Ottoman rule in other parts of the Peninsula. For authors such as Vujović (Vujović 1987) this contributed to development of a particular Montenegrin national consciousness, while most authors of the historian school think that the Montenegrin identity was never separate from the Serbian national identity (Čorović 1989; see also Ćirković 1981). It is natural that the Montenegrins then apply, explore and "import" concepts, ideas, and cultural artefacts

from other Serbian lands. That is why Mirko Barjaktarović in his article "On the origin and time of the appearance of the "Montenegrin" Hat" put Montenegrin in brackets, to show that the costume is not a pure Montenegrin national phenomenon but is rather a definition to mark an ethnographic category.

All the national phenomena – myths about descent, language, religion, and the costume as a syncretism of the ethno-culture – are viewed as proof that Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs. The thesis about the costume is proven on the basis of early medieval times, ethnographic records in written sources, and official documents of the Petrović dynasty.

Montenegrin Costume as a Symbol of the Montenegrin National Consciousness and Its Development

The same sources lead to conclusions presented in studies published in Montenegro at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1960s and which stand behind the thesis that Montenegrins are an independent nation, separate in terms of ethnicity and history from the Serbian nation. Although this thesis has its roots in the public space and debates in Montenegro since the time of its unification with Serbia and inclusion in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, during the 1960s the dominant opinion about the genesis and meaning of the costume is questioned scientifically. The cornerstone of Montenegrin ethnology in regard to the Montenegrin costume and hat is the detailed research and publication on Montenegrin costume and guns by Risto Dragicevic (Dragićević 1962**).** Without touching the issue of the national symbolism of the Montenegrin costume, the author sees its development in close relation to the historical development that Montenegro itself went through. Dragićević argues that it was not Njegoš who invented the costume, but that it had been developing since medieval Zeta (part of today's Montenegro that is considered to be its predecessor). Its development and symbolism is placed first in the 13th and 14th centuries and it has been influenced by the ruling insignia of the contemporary Nemanjić dynasty, which on the other hand was influenced by Byzantium (Dragićević 1962: 25). The Montenegrin population migrated from Zeta to the highlands of Montenegro around Cetinje and that is how the costume and all other cultural

relicts "migrated" too. The symbolism of the costume is a particular embodiment of that specific development of Old Montenegro as a free land. Old Montenegro was free from the Ottoman Empire; otherwise it would have been impossible to wear such clothes from the 16th to 18th. Non-Muslims, or *raja*, did not have the right to wear clothes similar in colour or model with those of Muslims. Green, red, and white were the colours of the sultan and the ruling officials in general.

In the lands of Old Montenegro where the costume was worn, these rules and regulations were not in force simply because in these territories the Ottoman governance did not exist, i.e., they were free. (Dragićević 1962: 33–34) Dragićević argues against the statement that until the Congress of Berlin (1978), where Montenegro was recognized internationally, Montenegro was part of the Ottoman Empire, claiming that Montenegrin men and women wore their richly coloured dress, since there was no Turks government (Dragićević 1962: 34–35). As far as the costume's old existence is concerned, Dragićević analyses different literature and visual sources such as historical archives from the 17th century and finds different clothes (*corret, dolama, caps*, and ornaments that were part of the Montenegrin costume) and the cornerstone of the thesis is an aquarelle picture in which parts of the luxurious Montenegrin costume are recorded in colour (Dragićević 1962: 42–43). Since it was a national symbol of independent Montenegro, the costume was distributed to other territories once they got their independence. Parallel to strengthening the influence of Cetinje over the neighbouring tribes, and beginning with the rule of Mitroplitan Danilo and particularly after Highlands (*Brda*), they were united with Old Montenegro in 1796 and the Montenegrin national costume was accepted in these regions as well (Dragićević 1962: 32–33). The democratization of power into the hand of tribes in the 15th through 17th centuries made the costume of the Crnojević dynasty into a symbol of the free Montenegrins, since there was no central rule any more. Logically, the symbols were kept by the unifying figures of the "Metropolitan" in Cetinje, where the coat of arms and other insignia were kept. Once a particular territory of a given tribe was free from Ottoman governance, the costume was distributed there as well. This study raises three issues opposing the dominating view – origin, meaning, and dissemination of the Montenegrin costume.

The publications of Zorica Mrvaljević, whose PhD thesis was devoted to the Montenegrin hat, are pretty much based on the sources revealed by Risto Dragićević. Her conclusions, however, go a few steps further in regard to viewing the development of the festive costume and Montenegrin hat as phenomena interrelated with and a result of the specific developments in the Montenegrin politics and history. This may be the only implicit thesis in the Montenegrin ethnography on dress that can be put within the pro-Montenegrin context of interpretation of Montenegrin history and culture, according to which the independent Montenegrin nation and the Montenegrin costume as symbol of Montenegrin statehood from the Middle ages continues to develop further and flourishes during the time of political success in the time of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty. Through the history of the genesis and development of the costume and its hat one can trace Montenegrin history. The main pillars in the works of Mrvaljević are two. First, critic of the fundamental Serbian and Yugoslav statement that the Montenegrin costume is finally constituted by Petar II Njegoš is an expression of and relation to other processes in the state building project – the national project for Serbian state renewal, codification of rules, stabilization of the state officials, etc. While in her earlier work "Montenegrin men's hat", she shared the view that the hat's development can be traced back and proved since the medieval time of the proto-Montenegrin state Zeta (Radulović 1976), in the monographic publication that appeared during the period of affirmation of Montenegrin identity, history, and culture (Mrvaljević 2006), she considers the costume to incorporate motives from an earlier period influenced by the Duklja[9] tradition with cultural layers and symbols of Illyrian, Greek, Roman and later-Slavic origin (Mrvaljević 2006: 20). Since the 1980s, scholars and researchers who write about the emergence of the Montenegrin nation and existence of Montenegrins as a particular ethnic group in early periods of history claim that Duklja was the first Montenegrin state and its population was different from the Slavs, a mixture of autochthonous and migrated populations (Kulisić 1980, Rotković 1992). Interpretations of written sources on the Duklja people and rulers, mentioning the ethnic composition of the state, and the issue whether Dukljans are ethnically Serbs, Croats or a particular ethnic group is one of the most crucial issue in the historiography on Montenegrin history and divides the

scientists into ones who think that Duklja is a state inhabited by Serbian people (Vukćević 1981, Vukćević 1981a, Čorović 1989) and those who think that Dukljans means a specific ethnic entity (Kulisić 1980, Nikčević 1987) equal to the neighbouring ethnic entities of Serbs, Croats, Zahumljans, etc. Thus, people of Duklja, who inhabited the territories from a time before the Slavs migration, are forefathers of Zeta people, later known as Montenegrins. The "antiquity" (Anderson 2006) of the Montenegrin nation, formed on an ethnic substrate that preceded the Serbian one, is proven by its relation to the territory and people of Duklja. The research and analysis by Mrvaljević should be interpreted in this context as well.

Mrvaljević provides sources and archive data that prove that the costume appeared not at the time of Petar I and Petar II Njegoš, but in the Middle Ages, when it was official for the Crnojević[10] dynasty and aristocrats. The dynasty that governed Zeta in 15th century as a state separate from Serbia had its own insignia and identity that are further kept and maintained in Old Montenegro via the official and popular costumes. According to Mrvaljević, it was at the time of Stefan Crnojević that it spread and was recognized and supported by the Venetian Republic. It was influenced much more by the West than by the neighbouring lands of the Ottoman Empire. After analysing the social and economic conditions in the state, the author concludes that the ruling dynasty had its own costume and symbols of self-identity and independence, fact being "that Crnojevic created their particular, luxurious, artistically refined style of dressing, similar to the costume known as Montenegrin today" (Mrvaljević 2006: 42). As a symbol of the old Montenegrin statehood, the costume was a significant symbol in the struggle for freedom, along with the other cultural and historical elements, inherited by the Crnojević state: the coat of arms and the flag, the monastery that embodied the theocracy in the state, the relations with other Western states which influenced the costume's development, and others. Crnojević moved their capital to Cetinje and gradually the state power was somehow de-centralized and this also applies to the rulers' relations with the lay-people. The author supposes that this democratization of power in terms of policies meant that every single Montenegrin became an equal participant in decision-making and in the fight, while in terms of culture a larger production and

use of the Montenegrin woollen costume took place later, in the time of struggle for survival (Mrvaljević 2006: 44).

The development of the costume was thus as follows. First, it was worn only by the Crnojević dynasty and the highest aristocrats but later, when the state got weaker, prosperous people also started to wear it, especially outstanding fighters; after the fall of the Crnojevic dynasty it "became one of the symbols of autochthony and independence of Montenegro in their struggle for survival" (Mrvaljević 2006: 189). This leads to the conclusion that the costume itself presents a symbol of the Montenegrin identity centuries before the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty, as expression of the idea for self-identity, homogenization (of the Montenegrin consciousness over other territories). It was not that the costume was influenced by Bay of Kotor or other Serbian territories, nor it was influenced by the Serbian national idea. It was vice versa – the festive costume as symbol of the Montenegrin identity was disseminated in territories outside Old Montenegro. At the time epic literature was flourishing, including myths and legends which particularly cherished the Crnojević tradition (Mrvaljević 2006: 68), while the Kosovo legend and epic were not rooted in these territories.

As far as the Montenegrin hat is concerned, in an earlier publication (Radulović 1976) the same author developed a similar thesis about the genesis of the cap and sees the function of the hat as a national symbol with great importance for public, festive, daily life, and as a symbol of honour and dignity. The freedom of Montenegro was proven by the costume and its hat, since it was permissible to wear it. A key disputable issue for that work is the interpretation of the four S-s on the hat, not as S, but as four tinders, and as rulers' symbols inherited from Byzantium. The author provides data that hats with this embroidery were introduced forcedly after the unification of Serbia and Montenegro in 1918 (Radulović 1976: 112–113). This interpretation leads to another corner stone in the historiography on Montenegrins past: namely, that Montenegro was unified not by its political will with Serbia after the end of WWI, but was forcedly annexed with the support of Serbian troops (Rastoder 2004, Rastoder 2006).

In this context, critique of the most frequent interpretation of this symbol, "which is unfortunately unscientific", as the representa-

tion of the four "S" letters (in Cyrillic), meaning "only accord saves the Serbs" (*Samo sloga Srbina spašava*) is expressed (Mrvaljević 2006:145). According to the popular interpretation, which I accounted within my field research in both Serbia and Montenegro, this symbol of Serb-hood and unification is old and inherited by the old Serbian tradition, a thesis shared in the publications with a pro-Serbian view (Vlahović & Miodrag 1953, Vlahović & Petar 1995, Barjaktarović 1979). However, according to the new school in Montenegrin historiography and ethnology, this interpretation is popular but not scientific. There are even misinterpretations since the sign has nothing in common with Serbian symbolism but is rather a universal heraldic symbol. According to the recently produced Historical lexicon of Montenegro:

> *This "interpretation" of the four C symbols is, however, merely a mythological invention of Great Serbia propaganda. In fact, this Serbian national seal does not represent four C letters but rather, as stated in the Serbian constitution, was originally designed to represent four ognjilo, kresivo (curved pieces of steel used with flint to strike a spark). Nonetheless, this myth is used today by quasi-historians and charlatans as "proof" that Montenegrins are of Serbian origin!* (*Istorijski Leksikon Crne Gore*)

The research conclusions and publications of Zorica Mrvaljević argue with the dominating approach of pro-Serbian historiography and lead to the conclusion that the Montenegrin state and state symbols/people/cultural identity have their own development, different from the Serbian. This approach and conclusions should be put in the context of the Montenegrin social sciences and humanities developments after the 1970s and 1980s when the political and social climate in Yugoslavia had stimulated the development of research on national developments in each republic after the constitutional changes with which the level of responsibly and decisions was shifted to the republican level (Bertsch 1977, Ramet 1992). In the 1970s the Central Committee of the League of Communists in Montenegro reached a decision to do a Marxist study on the Montenegrin question (Dulovic 2009: 117). This was also the period of building of national cultural and educational institutions in Montenegro, the founding of the first universities and national

media (Rastoder 2006). Two milestone scholar publications were the book of Savo Brković "On the Establishment and Development of the Montenegrin Nation" (Brković 1974) and the research of Špiro Kulišić "On the Ethno-genesis of the Montenegrins" (Kulišić 1980). What unites the publications is the conclusion that the Montenegrin people are ethnically different from the Serbian nation and they inherit a specific and older population that had lived on these territories (Zećani or Dukljani). Their development was different from that of the neighbours and this is seen in physical type, in language, in traditional culture, especially in the older social organization and in a number of specific customs, including the costume.

The terms Serb and Serbdom, as they in general ware used to mobilize the Orthodox population, as well as the existence of the name Serb in 18th and 19th century Montenegro meant "Orthodox Christian". In the pro-Montenegrin historiography the historical sources from the medieval chronicles are interpreted as proving the existence and development of the Montenegrin state-hood with the traditions and people in Duklja and Zeta. The ethnography of the costume and the quoted publications were aimed at pointing out that Montenegrin ethnicity and nationhood developed on the basis of a mixture of Slav and autochthonous pre-Slav populations (Roman, Illyrian, Vlach). Moreover, the Montenegrin nation had attained its statehood and identity long before the Serbian one. According to the historical sources interpreted by Mrvaljević, Montenegrin state development had a weak interrelation with the Serbian state/people, and a much stronger influence by the Western (Venetian) and Byzantium cultures. Mrvaljević excerpts the roots of the Montenegrin costume from the same period, by interpreting archives, proving the import and export of goods for dress and descriptions of insignia of the dynasties of Crnojević. The dress of the aristocrats in the state of Crnojević and the state dynasty symbols appear to be fundamentally of a number of elements in the traditional Montenegrin costume: *dušanka*, *jelek* jacket, *džmadan*, and they are results of experienced cultural interrelations with other neighbouring cultures and states, but to a lesser degree with the Serbian state tradition. The author questions, but does not reject completely, the thesis for the symbolic interpretation of the Montenegrin costume as symbol of the Serbianhood (Kosovo, Dušan, Nemanjić traditions) promoted by Njegoš and the three main colours of the costume that are believed to be the

colours of the Serbian flag. At that time the Montenegrin dynasty was hugely influenced by the idea of unification of all South Slavs and the example of such unification can be observed in the Nemanjić state. The pro-Montenegrin historiography promotes the statement that the Montenegrin rulers, particularly Njegoš and King Nikola thought themselves to be Serbian rulers and the population to consider itself as both Serbians and Montenegrins, since the dynasty had the ambition to unite all Serbs on the Balkans under their rule. This was the time when the development of the Kosovo myth among Montenegrins was stimulated and pro-Serbian interpretations of the embroidery started to circulate amongst people. Montenegro's particular development differed from that which occurred throughout Serbian lands and led to the formation of a particular and independent ethnic entity (the ancestor of Montenegrins) and its legitimacy can be traced and demonstrated with the occurrence and constitution of the national costume.

Conclusion

The scientific opinion that Montenegrins are a separate nation is related to all "historical myths" of a nation: its antiquity, its originality and contribution to the development of culture and civilization and this is traces by the official costume development. On the other hand, the older view that develops in the social sciences tradition since Cvijić onwards is that the Montenegrin population and its ethno-culture is Serbian by ethnicity, sharing ethno-cultural characteristics with all Serbs on the Balkans (language, religion, national myths and heroes, etc.), including the three-coloured flag and Nemanjić tradition presented in the costume's origin and meaning.

The discussion about the official costume should be placed in the context of the interpretation of the Montenegrin issue in Yugoslav historiography throughout its development. Serbian historiography views Old Montenegro as a successor of the Serbian state tradition and Montenegrins as part of the Serbian national corpus, while Montenegrin ethnologists and the new school of history in Montenegro today view Montenegrins as a separate nation with specific development in the field of history, ethno-culture, and genesis. The two main scientific interpretations of the national costume show that the Montenegrin costume has a special place as symbol of the

chain of all nation-related phenomena – the nation-state and its leaders, national symbols, historical pasts and myths of descent. The costume is one of the main symbols of Montenegro and is considered to be an ethno-cultural marker for both Montenegrins and outsiders in a similar manner as the other Montenegrin symbols (figures such as Petar II Njegoš, his literary work "Mountain Wreath", the national flag and coat of arms, etc.) are all objects of interpretation in the light of identity and ethnicity. The costume communicates and constitutes ethnic and national identities of the people who create and wear it. Furthermore, it is seen as a symptom and product of the historical and cultural development of the Montenegrins themselves and a true national embodiment. Its interpretations are a matter of cultural politics for its interpreters and readers and in today's debates on Montenegrin identity it continues to be such.

Notes

[1] Article 1 of The Constitution of Montenegro adopted on 17 October 2007, translated into English on http://www.comparativeconstitutionsproject.org/files/Montenegro_2007.pdf

[2] The last two census data show that the orthodox population had mostly identified as Montenegrins before 1992 (almost 90% of the population), while the same community is today divided between two identities: Montenegrin and Serbian, Montenegrins being 43.16% and Serbs being 31.99% of the total population. See details in Yearbook 2000: 248.

[3] One of the Montenegrin Prince-Bishops from Petrović dynasty, his rule turned the country from a theocracy into a secular state. He is considered as one of the most famous poets writing in Serbian language, the most notable works include "The Mountain Wreath", the "Light of Microcosm", "Serbian Mirror", and "False Tsar Stephen the Little".

[4] http://crnogorskanosnja.com/ (No longer accessible).

[5] Contemporary Montenegro comprises of several regions that are clearly distinguished first and foremost by their different historical and cultural development throughout history – a Northern part of Sandžak, which was part of the Ottoman Empire will the beginning of XX century, a central part which includes Old Montenegro and Seven Highlands that had lived under the tribe political and territorial system and South or Coastal Area with Bay of Kotor that became part of Montenegro only after 1945.

[6] Dušan the Mighty, King of Serbia (1331–46) and "Emperor of the Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians" (1346–55), considered as the most successful ruler of medieval Serbia.

[7] Miloš Obilić (Serbian Cyrillic: Милош Обилић) one of the warriors of Prince Lazar and assassin of the Ottoman sultan Murad I at the battle of Kosovo (1389), with which he became part of the Kosovo myth. Within half a century after the event, the name is mentioned in writing in Serbian and Greek and he also became a popular and major figure in Serbian epic poetry, in which he is elevated to the level of the most noble national hero of medieval Serbian folklore, and a a saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

[8] B. 1175/6–d. 1233, one of the most prominent Serbian saints and the first Serbian Archbishop, founder of the episcopates of the Serbian Orthodox Church, son of Stefan Nemanja, ruler and founder of the medieval Serbian state.

[9] *Duklja*, *Diokletija* or *Doclea* was a medieval state first encompassing territories of present-day Montenegro (Zeta River, Lake Scutari and the Bay of Kotor) and bordering with Travunia at Kotor. Duklja was at first a vassal of the Eastern Roman Empire until it won its independence in the mid-11th century, ruled by the House of Vojislav (*Vojislavljević*), who is considered to be the founder of the first Montenegrin dynasty. After a large fall, Doclea was incorporated into the Serbian state, where it remained until the fall of the Serbian emperor, tsar Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, when it regained independence, changing its name to Zeta.

[10] A royal family that ruled in Zeta throughout the 15th century (1427–1496), they resisted the Ottoman invasion. It moved the capital to Žabljak, and later on in Cetinje. Crnojevics are known as the introducers of the first printing press in southern Europe and in printing the first books in the region.

References

Anderson, Benedict 2006. *Imagined Communities*. London & New York: Verso.

Barjaktarović, Mirko 1979. Porjeklo i vreme nastajanje "Crnogorske" nošnje [Origin and time of appearance of the "Montenegrin" Hat']. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja,* 43. Belgrad.

Barjaktarović, Mirko 1987. Vuk Karadźić o nošnji Crnogoraca [Vuk Karadźić on the costume of Montenegrins]. *Naucni skupovi 16. Glasnik odjeljenja umjetnosti Crnogorske akademije nauka i umjetnosti*, 5. Titograd.

Bertsch, Gary K. 1977. Ethnicity and Politics in Socialist Yugoslavia. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 433. Ethnic Conflict in the World Today (Sep., 1977), pp. 88–99.

Bieber, Florian (ed.) 2003. *Montenegro in Transition*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Brković, Savo 1974. *O postanku i razvoju Crnogorske Nacije* [On the establishment and development of the Montenegrin nation]. Titograd: Graficki Zavod.

Cvijić, Jovan 1922. *Balkansko poluostrovo I južnoslovesnke zemlje*, I. Belgrade.

Ćirković, Sima (ed.). 1981. *Istorija srpskog naroda I–X: Od doseljavanja na Balkan do 1918. godine* [History of Serbian Peoples]. Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga.

Čorović, Vladimir 1989. *Istorija Srba* [History of the Serbs]. Belgrade: BIGZ.

Delari, Anri 2003. *Crna Gora* [Montenegro]. Podgorica: CiD.

Djonović, Nikola 1935. *Rad i karakter Crnogoraca* [Occupation and Character of the Montenegrins]. Beograd: izdavacko i knjizarsko preduzece Geca.

Dragićević, Risto 1962. Nekoljiko arhivskih podataka o Crnogorskoj narodnoj nošnji i Crnogorskom oruzju [Some archive data on Montenegrin national costume and Montenegrin gun]. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja na Cetinju*, pp. 23–55.

Dulović, Vladimir 2009. Montenegrin Historiography and Nation-Building 1948–1989. Sasa Nedeljković (ed.). *The Challenges of Contemporary Montenegrin Identity. Anthropological Research of the Transformation of Montenegrin Identity Formula since World War Two.* Kruševac: Baštinik, pp. 107–143.

Durković-Jakšić, Ljubomir 1953. Njegoševa nošnja [The costume of Njegoš]. *Zbornik radova Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu. 1901–1951.* Belgrade, pp.105–106.

Enciklopedija Crne Gore [Encyclopedia of Montenegro] 1996. Podgorica: Aimpress.

Erdeljanović, Jovan 1907. *Kuči – pleme u Crnoj Gori* [Kuci – tribe in Montenegro]. Srpski Etnografski Zbornik, VIII, Beograd.

Erdeljanović, Jovan 1911. Postanak plemena Pipera [Origin of the Piper Tribe]. *Srpski Etnografski Zbornik*, 17. Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije.

Erdeljanović, Jovan 1920. Neke crte u formiranju plemena kod dinarskih Srba [Some features in establishment of the tribes among Dinar Serbs]. *Glasnik Etnografskog društva u Beogradu*, V. Beograd.

Erdeljanović, Jovan 1978. *Stara Crna Gora: etnička prošlost i formiranje crnogorskih plemena: sa 7 fotografija i 5 karata u prilogu i 3 skice u tekstu* [Old Montenegro: ethnic past and formation of the Montenegrin tribes; with 7 pictures and 5 maps in the annex and 3 drawings in the text]. Beograd: Slovo ljubve.

Halpern, Joel M. & Hammel, E. A. 1969. Observations on the Intellectual History of Ethnology and Other Social Sciences in Yugoslavia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 11 (1) (Jan., 1969), pp. 17–26.

Hobsbowm, Eric 2008. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Istorijski Leksikon Crne Gore [Historical Lexicon of Montenegro] 2006. I–IV. Podgorica: Vijesti.

Istorija Crne Gore [History of Montenegro] 1975. III: I. Titograd: Redakcija za istoriju Crne Gore.

Jovićević, Andrija 1911. Rijecka nahija (u Crnoj Gori) [The nahija Riječka (in Montenegro)]. *Srpski etnografski zbornik,* 15. Beograd, pp. 385–832.

Jovićević, Andrija 1903. 'Crna Gora (Katunska, Riječka, Crmnička, Lešanska i Bjelopavlićska nahija): narodni život i običaji' [Montenegro (the nahijas Katunska, Riječka, Crmnička, Lešanska and Bjelopavlićska): folks' life and customs]. *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, VIII. Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti.

Kale, Jadran 2009. Prehistory of the Term "Folk Costume". *Etnološka iztraživanja/Ethnological Researches,* Vol. 1 (14) (December 2009), pp. 85–99.

Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović 1922. *Crna Gora i Boka Kotorska* [Montenegro and Bay of Kotor]. Srpska književna zadruga, XXIV:161. Beograd: Novi Sad, Štamparsko poduzeće "Zastava".

Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović 1972 [1837]. *Crna Gora i Crnogorci* [Montenegro and the Montenegrins]. Beograd: Nolit.

Kulisić, Špiro 1980. *O etnogenezi Crnogoraca* [On the ethno-genesis of the Montenegrins]. Titograd: Pobjeda.

Malesevic, Sinisa & Uzelac, Gordana 2007. A nation-state without the nation? The trajectories of nation-formation in Montenegro. *Nations and Nationalism*, 13 (4) (October 2007), pp. 695–716.

Mantegaca, Viko 2001. *Crna Gora* [Montenegro]. Podgorica: CiD.

Medaković, Milorad 1860. *Život i običaji Crnogoraca* [Life and customs of the Montenegrins]. Novi sad: Matica Srpska.

Mrvaljević, Zorica 1988. *Narodna nošnja Crne Gore* [National costume of Montenegro]. Zagreb: Kulturno prostvjetni sabor Hrvatske.

Mrvaljević, Zorica 2006. *Crnogorka nardona nosnja* [The National Costume of Montenegro]. Podgorcia: Muzej i galerije Podgorice.

Nakičenović, Sava 1982. *Boka: antropogeografska studija* [Boka: Anthropogeographical study]. Herceg novi: Arhiv.

Nenadović, Ljubomir 1929. *O Crnogorcima, pisma sa Cetinja 1878. godine* [About the Montenegrins, letters from Cetinje in 1878]. Beograd: Stamparija "Sv. Sava".

Nenadović, Ljubomir 1950 [1907]. *Pisma iz Italije* [Letters from Italy]. Beograd: Jugoslovenska knjiga.

Nikčević, Vojislav 1987. *O Postanku Etnonima Dukljani, Zećani, Crnogorci* [On the origins of the ethnonims Dukljani, Zećani, Crnogorci]. Cetinje.

Pavlović, Srdja 2003. Literature, Social Poetics and Identity Construction in Montenegro. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17 (1) (Fall 2003), pp.131–165.

Pavlović, Srdja 2003a. Who are Montenegrins? Statehood, Identity and Civil Society. Florian Bieber (ed.). *Montenegro in Transition. Problems of Identity and Statehood*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

Radojevic, Danilo 1969. Ukarsi na kapi crnogorskoj [Decoration on the Montenegrin Hat]. *Pobjeda*. Titograd.

Radulović, Zorica 1976. Crnogorska muška kapa [The Montenegrin man's cap]. *Glasnik Cetinjskih muzeja,* 1. Cetinje, pp. 103–118.

Rastoder, Šerbo 2003. A short review of the history of Montenegro. Bieber, Florian (ed.). *Montenegro in Transition: Problems of Identity and Statehood.* Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 107-137.

Rastoder, Šerbo 2004. *Crna Gora u egzilu 1918–1925* [Montenegro in exile 1918–1925], I–II. Podgorica: Istorijski institut Crne Gore/Almanah.

Rastoder, Šerbo & Andrijašević, Živko 2006. *Istorija Crne Gore: Od Najstarijih Vremena do 2003* [History of Montenegro: from ancient times to 2003]. Podgorica: Centar za Iseljenike Crne Gore.

Ramet, Sabrina Petra 1992. *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia. 1962–1991.* 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Pišev, Marko 2009. Politička etnografija i srpska intelektualna elita u vreme stvaranja Ju-goslavije 1914–1919. Istorijski pregled [Political Ethnography and Serb Intellectual Elite in the Era of the Creation of Yugoslavia 1914–1919. A Historical Overview]. *Etnološko-antropoloske svezke*, 14, pp. 43-77.

Rotković, Radoslav 1992. *Odakle su dosli preci Crnogoraca* [Where did the ancestors of the Montenegrins come from]. Podgorica: Matica Crnogorska.

Rovinski, Pavel Apolonovic 1998. *Etnografija Crne Gore* [Ethnography of Montenegro], 1–2. Podgorica: CiD

Schwarz, Bernhard 1876. *Montenegro: schilderung einer Reise durch das Innere nebst Entwurf einer Geographie des Landes*. Leipzig: Verlang Eduard Baldamus.

Smith, Anthony D. 1996. Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944–)*, Vol. 72 (3), Ethnicity and International Relations (Jul., 1996), pp. 445–458.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/2625550

Šobajć, Petar 1923. *Bjelopavlići i Pješivci*. Srpski etnografski zbornik, 27. Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija.

Stivenson, Frensis S. 2001. *Istorija Crne Gore* [History of Montenegro]. Podgorica: CiD, 2001

Svatek, Frantisek Jan. 2000. *Crna Gora i Skadar* [Montenegro and Skadar]. Podgorica: CiD.

Vlahović, Miodrag 1953. O najstarijoj kapi kod Jugoslovena [On the oldest hat among the Yugoslavs]. *Zbornik radova Etnografskog muzeja u Beogadu 1901–1951*. Belgrade, p. 151.

Vlahović, Patar 1990. Kosovska legenda u svetlu usmene crnogorske tradicije [The Kosovo legend in the light of the oral Montenegrin tradition]. *Naučni skupovi*, 21, CANU, Odeljenje umetnosti. Titograd, p.211–218

Vlahović, Petar 1995 The Serbian Origins of the Montenegrins. *The Serbian Question in the Balkans*. Faculty of Geography, Univer-

sity of Belgrade, 1995, pp 157–168.
http://www.rastko.org.yu/rastko-cg/povijest/vlahovic.html

Vujović, Dimitrije-Dimo 1987. *Prilozi izučavanju crnogorskog nacionalnog pitanja* [Contributions to the research of the Montenegrin national question]. Nikšić: Univerzitetska rijec.

Vukćević, Nikola 1981. *Osvrt na neka pitanja iz istorije Crne Gore* [Review on some issues in the history of Montenegro]. Belgrade.

Vukćević, Nikola 1981a. *Etničko porijeklo Crnogoraca* [The ethnic origin of the Montenegrins]. Belgrade.

Vukmanović, Jovan 1952. Njegoševa nošnja [The costume of Njegoš]. *Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta*, 1 (1–2), Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, pp. 135–141.

Vukmanović, Jovan 1953. Nošnja i oruzije bokeljske mornarice [Costume and Guns of the Boka Flot]. *Spomenik SANU*, 5. Beograd: SANU.

Yearbook 2000 = *Statistički godišnjak Republike Crne Gore 2000.* Podgorica: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2000.

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.03

Social Ties of Bulgarians and Rudari in the Mediterranean Countries

Magdalena Slavkova

Balkan Ethnology Department, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
magdalenaslavkova@yahoo.com

The purpose of this article is to explore, from an ethnological perspective, the transformed traditions of social relations of Bulgarian and Romanian-speaking Gypsy workers (*Rudari*) in Greece and Spain, focusing on how they cope with the challenges of living and working in different socio-economic and cultural settings. Some of those Bulgarians and Rudari are temporary migrants, sooner or later they return to Bulgaria; others turn from temporary labour migrants into emigrants. They settle permanently in the host country and adjust to the "Greek and Spanish way of life". Both groups have developed similar migration strategies in Greece and Spain but their patterns of social adaptation and the way they create social ties have ethnic specifics. The social circles formed on the base of these ties can include people from Bulgaria as well as immigrants and locals and in many cases accumulate positive integration effects.
Key words: labour migration, mobility, Bulgarians, Rudari, Greece, Spain, social ties

Introduction

Through exploration of ethnographic data this paper aims to look at social ties forged by Bulgarian citizens of different ethnic origins and generated by the transnational movement. Specifically, it focuses on two groups of labour migrants – the Bulgarians and a group of Bulgarian Gypsies, the Rudari – and their particular styles of migrant living. The article also discusses the specific ways in which the relationships between the members of the Bulgarian citizens' communities within the Spanish and Greek society have been shaped differently.

All ethnographic data used in this article and analyses related to them were made in March 2014. Some of the data, such as the number of Bulgarian civil society organisations and Bulgarian Sunday schools in Spain or Greece; the names of some associations and others, have already changed.

Itineraries of Bulgarian and Rudari Labour Mobility

The post-socialist era was not the first time Bulgarian citizens had moved away from their homelands to work abroad, some of the ethnic minorities had also been mobile earlier. The examination of the migration process shows that contemporary labour migration is an economic strategy, this has already been verified. Labour mobility appears to have been an important part of life for the Bulgarians and Rudari throughout the ages; it has taken various forms during the historical periods and in different specific modes (gurbet, semi-nomadic mobility, and economic travelling during socialist times).

Gurbet, Nomadism and Travelling Abroad during Socialism

The current migratory movements resemble a traditional pattern in the Balkan area, the so-called *gurbet*, through which male workers migrate abroad for short periods of time in order to provide some extra income for their households while their families stay behind. Until 1878, when Bulgaria was liberated from the Ottoman rule, workers on gurbet migrated to other regions under the control of the Ottoman Empire (Soultanova 2005). This model of labour mobility, in a modified version, was preserved in the Balkans during the following historical periods.

The Rudari, who consist of two groups of *Lingurari* ('spoon-makers') and *Ursari* ('bear-trainers'), started arriving in what is today Bulgaria from Wallachia and Moldavia in several waves, the majority of them coming during the 19th century. The mother tongue of both groups is Romanian and they are traditionally Orthodox Christians like the majority of population in Bulgaria. Nowadays, some of their representatives, mostly women, convert to Protestantism. Religious conversion to Evangelical Christianity in the post-socialist period appears to be a widespread phenomenon among Bulgarians also (Slavkova 2007).

Both groups had practised a semi-nomadic way of life in the near past, but Lingurari and Ursari had not travelled together. Several families of relatives led by a leader, whose task it was to contact the local authorities, had travelled in the villages of Bulgaria. While traveling, the Lingurari sold their wooden articles (spoons, ladles, troughs, spindles etc.) to locals to provide for their families. The

Ursari had bears performing to the sounds of the tambourine or the rebec at various fairs and markets. The seasonal movements were strongly related to the practicing of their traditional occupations and they crossed the borders of Bulgaria extremely rarely, although, in some cases Ursari practiced nomadism over long distances. At the end of the 19th century some of them went with their bears to "make money" in Istanbul and even in Anatolia. The Rudari settled down mainly between 1940s and 1960s. During the "epoch" of Socialism (1944–89) they were workers in different cooperative farms and factories. Due to the availability of credit for housing provided by the state they had their own houses.

During the socialist era for the first time the Bulgarians and Rudari, being part of one socialist society, began to employ similar economic strategies. Transnational economic travels included work in destinations inside or outside Europe (the Central European socialist states, East Germany, USSR, Libya, Cuba, etc.). This was, however, a state project subject to the Communist Party's permission to leave and to the approval of the host destination, and only very few actually travelled abroad. Nearly all of them (Bulgarians and Rudari) worked mainly as construction workers, drivers, etc. Another small group of people with various specialties (musicians, athletes, artists, interpreters, etc.) had also the opportunity of working on contracts abroad. For example, in the 1980s a woman from Sofia lived for three years in Cuba, where she worked as an interpreter. Nowadays, she lives in Madrid and works as a housemaid.

After 1989 the families of those Bulgarians and Rudari who previously had been abroad were among the "pioneers" who initially went to Germany, the Czech Republic, Israel (as construction workers or service staff), and then to the Mediterranean countries. The main differences between the out-migration of Bulgarian citizens during Socialism and those after 1989, besides the differences in preferred destinations and different attitudes and motivations towards cross-border traveling observed among the migrating people, is that the traveling before 1989 was subject to strict state control and was not expected to have the aim to settle permanently in the destination country, as opposed to after 1989 when they emigrated to the new destinations.

Timeline and Mapping of the Migration to Greece and Spain

Greece and Spain are typical examples of the destinations of Bulgarian and Rudari migrant clusters, often founded by illegal workers, who later legalized their situation and were joined by their families. According to different media sources, the unofficial number of Bulgarian citizens altogether in both countries is about 500,000 to 550,000 people.[1] The process of formation of the communities in both countries has its own specifics although the economic motivation for emigration was the same in both cases.

The collapse of the socialist regime in Bulgaria has caused the emergence of a new migration pattern which has not been popular before, namely an east-south move from Bulgaria to Europe's Mediterranean countries. Bulgarian citizens leave their motherland as part of the mass emigration to the EU countries. Generally speaking, Bulgarians' motivation for emigration was related to the drop in their living standards after 1989. Many Bulgarians lost the prestige of the social positions they used to enjoy during socialist times. The aim of some other individuals going abroad was not only to earn more money but to see "how the Westerns live" or "to try their luck" and find better opportunities for themselves abroad. The reason why the Rudari began to travel outside the country after 1989 is that most of them remained jobless and by undertaking this "journey" they tried to adapt to the new social and economic conditions. The motivations for emigration as well as the preferred countries of destination are geographically determined and depend also on circumstances such as state control over borders, salary rate, the attitude of employers or locals towards foreigners. A very important reason to choose Greece and Spain was the possibility to find a job relatively easy and quickly, although one had to accept jobs including manual labour at first. They were also attracted by the possibility to settle with all the members of their families and, last but not least, because of the existing perception among Bulgarians that there was a similarity between Bulgarians and the Spaniards in terms of their way of social living, on the one hand, and Bulgarians and Greeks in terms of their religious belonging to the Orthodox Christianity, on the other.

Greece became a preferred destination for migration immediately after 1989 due to its geographical proximity to Bulgaria and the low

costs in getting there, while Spain attracted them more in the late 1990s, one of the reasons being the higher salary rates there. Spain is quite far away from the Bulgarian territory, the journey there by coach, as the initial means of transportation of the migrants, lasts 2–3 days. The migrants went abroad unprepared and had no idea of the style of living there. Some of the people left for Spain and Greece without a command of the language. Others attended private lessons in Spanish or Greek, or studied the language at home on their own using "teach yourself" books. There were, however, educated people who had graduated language schools or had completed university degrees in languages (Spanish, French, English, Greek, etc.), which gave them some advantage in the quick mastering of the local languages. An important reason for the Rudari to prefer Spain was the proximity of their mother tongue, Romanian, to Spanish.

The migration towards Greece and Spain could be divided into three main stages – 1989–2001; 2001–2007; and from 2007 on. The first period started with the end of the socialist regime and contributed to the emergence of mass emigration to the West in ways and forms previously unknown in Bulgarian history. Travels were limited by the states with financial restrictions and visa requirements, although, these were not insurmountable obstacles to those who really had decided to work abroad.

The composition of migrant groups was heterogeneous, which was related to the fact that these people had different social, educational and ethnic profiles. The first group, which was the biggest one, consisted of illegal workers who were temporary migrants (the so-called *gurbetchii*) and who left with an intention to "make some money" and go back to Bulgaria within a couple of years. However, most of them stayed much longer. This group included representatives of different ethnic and religious groups (Bulgarians, Turks, Bulgarian Muslims-Pomaks, and Gypsies) and all of them developed a model of labour mobility similar to the traditional gurbet. The representatives of the Rudari group were a considerable part of those *gurbetchii*. They led the emigration wave of the Gypsies towards Greece and Spain. This is not a unique case and some other Gypsy groups from Bulgaria established their own regional migration networks, for example, as was the case with the Turkish Gypsies from

North-eastern Bulgaria who migrated to Poland, where they often work as traders to sell clothes and footwear (Erolova 2010: 52–57).

There was another small group of migrants (mainly ethnic Bulgarians) both with training and professional competences (musicians, medical staff, sport trainers, teachers, philologists, writers, painters, etc.) who went abroad with enough information about the country, with knowledge and with better prospects of a future career development, sometimes even with a work contract in hand. Some of them were also illegal and started doing, like gurbetchii, unqualified jobs, but they had the greatest prospects of finding prestigious work. Many of those Bulgarians who arrived in the early 1990s in Spain and headed for Madrid and Barcelona came from the capital city of Sofia unlike those who went to other cities (e.g. people from Gabrovo and Russe in Northern Bulgaria went to Athens in Greece, etc.)

One of the most common ways to get to the destination before 2001 was by coach or through the use of the so-called "traffickers" who drove their passengers across the border in vans. In the 1990s, it seems that the Rudari who went to Greece quickly figured out a way to reach their destination, as the clandestine border crossing using small paths appeared to be a common occurrence. Another popular way of traveling prior to 2001 was by using a tourist visa to Spain or Greece that guaranteed a legal passage through the border checkpoints.

The very first destinations for Bulgarians and Rudari in Greece were Athens, Thessaloniki and Crete; Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia in Spain, where they expected work to be most available. According to the data of the Address Register of the National Statistical Institute of Spain, in May 1996 their total number was 1,231.[2] Bulgarians and Rudari from Northern Bulgaria were the most active in their trips to Spain, those from Southern Bulgaria usually went to neighbouring Greece.

In the late 1990s, we find more heterogeneity in the migration flows regarding the places settled to abroad. The Bulgarians settled in small rural towns of provinces near Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona and started to settle also in other regions (Castile and León, Andalusia, Murcia, Aragon, Canarias, etc.). Rudari headed for settlements in

the regions of Madrid, Castile-La Mancha (Cuenca, Albacete), Castile and León (Valladolid, Segovia, and Burgos), Murcia (Murcia, Cartagena), Aragón (Zaragoza), Catalonia (Barcelona, Tarragona, and Girona). In Greece, the Rudari and the adjacent Bulgarian population headed for settlements in the regions of Thessaloniki, Katerini, Kavala, Komotini, Volos, Larisa, Patras, Athens, Chania and Iraklion. The migrants headed for destinations where they already had relatives or friends who could help them adapt, find a job and a place to stay. All settled in migration quarters, because of the lower housing costs or in villages near the cities, where they expected to become integrated into the local community. These destinations were the favourite ones also because they provided enough available jobs in the sphere of agriculture, tourism and social and domestic services.

In 2001 Bulgaria was removed from the "black Schengen list", which lifted the visa regimes with Greece and Spain. After that year the number of people leaving changed considerably. In 2001 the Bulgarians in Greece numbered 35,104 people, according to the data provided by the population census (Stanchev et al. 2005). In Spain, Bulgarians already numbered 12,413 and in the coming years their number increased drastically reaching the number of 168,997 in 2013.[3] After 2001, however, there seems to be a greater number of women among migrating people and they emigrate on their own in search of work (Fakiolas and Maratou-Alipranti 2000: 101–117; Macías 2003: 247–268). Despite the fact that in many cases women were the first to leave, it was a matter of a family strategy or planning, while cases of women departing on their own (widows, divorced or single women) with the wish to start a new life in the foreign land without relatives following them were very rare (Slavkova 2012: 443–462). Review of the official statistics in Spain revealed that the women were equal participants in the migration process and that their number did not exceed that of men. The opposite case is illustrated by Greece, where the predominance of women is more typical (Rangelova 2006). This is due to the fact that Greece is a neighbouring country and it is much easier to go and work there.

The means of transportation also changed. More people started travelling by air. Among the Rudari the transition from the "no-

madic times", when certain families or groups of relatives travelled together with carts pulled by horses or donkeys from one village to another, to travelling by plane to Spain, brought about a number of dramatic changes in their life. Before 2001, it seemed that the workers were sojourners rather than settlers in that they all regarded their stay overseas as temporary. After that year, the transition from seasonal mobility of cross-border labour to emigration occurred. It happened with the birth of children of migrants, or when their children born in Bulgaria joined them and had to start school or socialize in the new surroundings.

Since 2007, Bulgaria joined the European Union and Bulgarian citizens have been able to travel freely to Greece and Spain with only their IDs. After that year people continued going to both countries, but the intensity of migration is much smaller than in the previous period. This is not the case, however, with the emigration of Bulgarians to the UK, which is a relatively new phenomenon that has become a massive movement after the admission of Bulgaria to the EU (Maeva 2010: 173–195). Meanwhile, the Spanish and Greek governments reasoned that Bulgaria's membership into the EU would translate into large numbers of migrants. Thus, this resulted in their imposition of a moratorium on the entrance of Bulgarian workers until 2009.

Currently, Bulgarian citizens have legalized their status in both countries. Bulgarians and Rudari are successfully incorporated into the social and cultural spaces they live in both in Greece and Spain, regardless of the fact that they are foreigners and only a few of them have Greek or Spanish citizenship; Jasna Čapo found the same for Croatian economic migrants to Germany (2008: 324). Since 2008–2009, with the global economic crisis, part of the Bulgarian and Rudari families started returning to Bulgaria, due to their unemployment; some of them planned to stay temporarily in Bulgaria and wait for the crisis to go away, while others decided to return permanently.

In Bulgaria the development of the out-migration to the Mediterranean coincided with the end of socialism and the collapse of the social and economic order that had been in play for forty-five years. From the early nineties to the present day, east-south moves constitute a practice that encompasses hundreds of thousands of people and

its effects cannot be reduced to its impact on demographic characteristics within both the countries of origin and of destination. Migration constituted for them both a goal and a road towards the transformation of the pre-existing way of supporting their families and towards the adoption of new modes of social relations and community building.

Social Ties of Bulgarians and Rudari

Two types of social ties are widely discussed in the theoretical literature – strong (or bonding) and weak (or bridging) ties. Strong ties prevail in families and among people who have intensive blood or emotional bonds, while weak ties are not based on family, blood or emotional bonds. They can be formal and represent links to more distant persons. Type of capital that can be acquired by the group members of networks with prevailing strong ties is bonding social capital, and the group members of networks with prevailing weak ties can obtain through their contacts bridging social capital, respectively. Mark Granovetter's paper "The Strength of Weak Ties", published in the 1970s, is an influential sociology article in which he argues that the strength of the weak ties is an important factor to individual's opportunities for occupational attainment and to its integration into communities. He states that the spread of information in social networks depends on the type of prevailing ties and only weak ties may be local bridges. The people who maintain such social links could be provided with the necessary information and influence in job searching. Weak social ties have a cohesive power, whereas strong social ties breed local cohesion but lead to overall fragmentation (1973: 1360–1380).

The analysis of social capital and a theory related to the social networks to which individuals and small groups have access emerged from the works of Pierre Bourdieu (1980: 2–3; 1986: 241–258) and James Coleman (1988: S95–S120). They emphasize the expedience of closed networks (that with prevailing strong ties). In his paper, Coleman does not mention the works of Pierre Bourdieu, although some parallels exist in their analysis of social capital, and proposes that social capital helps produce human capital (1988: S95–S120).

The second trend discussed in the theoretical literature is that related to the community being seen as unit of analysis rather than the individual connections used to achieve certain ends. It emerged from the work of Robert Putnam (1993: 35–42). According to Putnam, bonding social capital develops through in-group ties, such as those based on ethnicity, whereas bridging occurs across social segmentation. Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves provide crucial social support, and bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. However, under many circumstances both bridging and bonding social capital can have powerfully positive social effects (2000: 22–23).

In the case viewed in this paper, the Bulgarians, along with the Rudari, joined the common migration flows from motherland to Greece and Spain. The birthplace of the Bulgarian nationals abroad is important insofar as that the people of a given region in the motherland are involved in the same regional networks in Greece and Spain, and as a result of it they settled down even in the same locality. People in these regional migration networks are relatives, neighbours and friends or people connected by strong family and emotional links, and settling together provides them with solidarity and support in the process of social adaptation. However, Rudari created their regional migration networks, whose members are relatives, along with those involved in the common migration flows. They manage to sustain some kind of distinctive identity as an ethnic community within the migration flow, mostly by forming groups of people from the same regional group and place of origin when they settle abroad.

Upon arrival, ethnic and religious self-awareness of the individuals and groups are maintained but family, neighbour and friend ties, which have been already created in the homeland, became more significant in the formation of the social circles of the Bulgarian and Rudari migrants. These social circles are also influenced by the relationship patterns that the migrants initiated with the population of the areas where they settled and social resources they received from them (contacts with other local people). In other words, all Bulgarian nationals (Bulgarians and Rudari) maintained the social

resources of strong ties that they have with the people with whom they travelled together, but then create bridging ties with the local population and other immigrants.

Social Ties of Relatives

The Bulgarians and Rudari develop similar labour activities which they use to adapt to the new social-economical milieu. Rudari do not look so different from the Bulgarians in their styles of living and working. The money factor is the most important one for every migrant leaving to work in Greece and Spain regardless of their ethnic belonging. Because of this, initially only one member of the family of the Bulgarians and Rudari or a pair (spouses, two brothers, two sisters-in law, etc.) went abroad, in order to be able to find a job more quickly. After that, the most popular model is that the parents live abroad together with their working age children, while the elderly, who look after the smaller grandchildren, are left behind. The final stage in the migration from Bulgaria to the Mediterranean is that all family members leave. In some cases, the elderly also go abroad. In other cases, they stay in the homeland and the children are sent to them for the winter or summer vacation.

Regardless of the fact that the family members may have gathered to live together for a long time, they perceived their stay abroad as temporary and, because of this, saved money to improve their living standard back home. As George Gmelch found for Barbadians who left Barbados and emigrated to the UK and North America following World War II, most of them only planned to stay away long enough to save money to buy a house and perhaps a car (2004: 206–225).

Upon arriving, the job-hunting strategy of the Bulgarian citizens in Spain, which consists of going around companies asking for a job using the simple words *busco trabajo* ("I am looking for a job"), is similar to the one observed by Cristóbal Mendoza among the Africans in Catalonia (2001: 41–66) because newcomers do not have access to information about the possibly available jobs. They begin working as farmers, domestic helpers, or as unskilled workers in construction, because of their lack of language expertise, papers and support from the locals. It appears that in the sphere of agriculture, where employment is seasonal, some Rudari "revived" their

seminomadic way of life, which they had practised in the past, and, in some exceptional cases, their mobility became transnational. A good example of employment in agriculture is the Rudari family who arrived in Greece in the early 1990s and began seasonal work in the northern part of the country where the family lived in tents during the working season and had permanent winter lodgings. In autumn, they lived and worked in Chalkida (Euboea island), where they picked grapes, for winter, they moved to Sparta (Peloponnese peninsula) or to Karditsa (Thessaly), where they harvested olives or peppers; in spring they moved to Katerini, where they picked strawberries, while during summer they worked in Veria (Central Macedonia), where they picked peaches. In another case, the families of two married sisters lived in Northern Spain during the agricultural season and worked in farms. In the cold season, they moved to Greece, where men worked in the construction sector and women in a factory producing sweets.

Quite often the Bulgarian and Rudari women began working as domestic service workers. The sphere of social and domestic services is "reserved" for migrant women and is a "gateway" for them to get included in the labour market (King and Zontini 2000: 35–52). Men manage to find work as unskilled workers in a limited number of areas – construction, transport and agriculture. Another type of job for which women are seen as more suitable is kitchen assistants, cooks, shop assistants, workers in factories or in the sector of tourism. Indeed, work as cleaners in the homes of Spaniards or Greeks is accepted by the Rudari as temporary work and they quickly tried to find another job, such as work in taverns and restaurants, hotels or factories. Some of the Bulgarian women also manage to break free from the "vicious circle" of social and domestic services and find a better job using the family-and-friend networks or using their former qualifications. Men usually hold second jobs in construction, as drivers, mechanics in garages, technicians, etc. Some Rudari men found jobs in different carpentry warehouses, which is associated with their skills of making various articles out of wood.

The common pattern is that, wherever they go in Spain and Greece, people communicate first with the members of the group with whom they travelled. In the first stage of their arriving, the Bulgarians and Rudari preserve the boundaries between them, although sometimes

they may occasionally have neighbourly contacts when settling in the same neighbourhood. The interaction with Bulgarians or with Rudari is limited; the Rudari respondents' explanation is that they cannot trust the Bulgarians for fear of being cheated by them or because the Bulgarians are perceived as very envious and as people who do not support each other. The Bulgarian respondents' explanation is that "with Gypsies it is better not to deal at all".

The members of the Rudari social circles are only relatives of the respective regional group, while these of the Bulgarians could include relatives but also friends or neighbours from the birthplace. Several families form the large Rudari kin unit called *jins*. Solidarity and support exist toward the family and other relatives who are part of the jins. Rudari economic decisions and entrepreneurship take place within the circle of families and kin unit. The Rudari maintain their social life by, for example, several families going together to a restaurant in the weekends, or to a picnic, men angling together or organising weekly football or volleyball matches. Also, Rudari in Crete, more often women, visit a Greek Pentecostal Church and a Rudari Church of Jehovah's Witnesses and after the end of the religious services sometimes drink coffee together, chat, share information about job availability or discuss matters concerning the life (or of a member of the community).

It is mostly with the help of contacts of their relatives that the Rudari can rely on finding a job, unlike the Bulgarians, who rely on their friends, too. In the case of Greece, the Bulgarians can find work at the private employment agencies called *grafia*. As Nikolay Gabărski notes, Rudari in Greece have relatives all over the country, they have close social ties with them through which they receive regular information where and what type of jobs are available and how much they pay. Therefore, they are much more mobile than the Bulgarians and rarely use the services of employment agencies (2008). In Spain, Gómez-Mestres and Molina pointed out that the Bulgarian social networks in Catalonia are based on kinship ties and not on the ethnic or religious communities, among which the most important are those related to the closed circle of parents (Gómez-Mestres and Molina 2010). Although this is indeed the case, we will point out further examples of creation of ties outside the ethnic group and the kin unit, based on shared nationality or religion, and those of mixed marriages, which are examples of extension of ties

beyond the boundaries of the traditional (closed) community. The most important family gatherings, that cause cross-border travelling in order for relatives to be together, are weddings and funerals. These are held both at home and abroad, but more often the dead are buried in the motherland.

Social Ties between Compatriots

Reproduction of community life abroad, maintaining ties between relatives away from the motherland, and also the creation of new relationships outside the ethnic community demonstrate group flexibility and ability to adapt in a milieu different from their original one. A second circle of communication and sharing of everyday practices or exercising solidarity in search of a better job, for example, is created among the people from Bulgaria. Surely, relatives tend to rely first on each other when looking for a job or when in need of money; the second scenario is relying to their compatriots. After several years of living in Spain and Greece, part of the families changed their migrant strategy. Gradually a number of families bought flats in Spain on credit, however, most migrants in Greece still live in rented dwellings. In time the money they earned was used to pay off the housing credit, for education of the children, the coverage of the monthly expenses and for holidays in Bulgaria. However, the intention to return to Bulgaria remains in an uncertain future. Some informants said they intended to stay abroad until they retired.

An option for migrants that could guarantee them a more stable income was to register as self-employed and thus create an economic niche in which they could develop their own small- or medium-sized business. It gradually evolves into a small business that employs relatives – in that way the profit stays in the family circle. But compatriots can also be employed. In Spain and Greece, the Rudari were more entrepreneurial, more than they had been at home, although the men continued to be afraid of doing "big business", as one interlocutor said. Like other Bulgarians, they established family businesses and opened restaurants, bars, disco clubs, shops for Bulgarian staple foods, phone centres (in Spain), construction companies to carry out small building repairs for the surrounding Greek or Spanish population. In addition to doing business, these

are all places where social ties with other Bulgarian citizens are maintained as they can meet and exchange information about possible job vacancies. Contrary to this, even though the above-mentioned social places are quite popular with the Bulgarian citizens, some of them could not consider them good places for social contact because they were also sites of sharing local gossips. Such locations in Spain are small phone centres, where migrants can make phone calls to their home country at a cheaper rate, use the Internet, send money or parcels to their relatives back home. They are also places where Bulgarian citizens from different ethnic origins meet, talk and maintain social relations among them. There is, for example, a Bulgarian *locutorio* ('phone centre') in Northern Spain. In the square in front of it, Rudari and Bulgarians meet at weekends to chat, share problems or tell about their week.

Bulgarian citizens continue to differentiate themselves on the basis of their ethnic, regional or religious belonging. Bulgarians do this when they speak about Gypsies in general or when they are involved in an interpersonal conflict. The popular expression *tsiganska/balgarska rabota*, literally "a job Gypsy/Bulgarian style", and meaning a shoddy piece of work or a work done without sufficient effort is used to describe the above-mentioned differentiations. The existing personal conflicts, however, confirm the idea that Bulgarian citizens see themselves as members of the same community and the social resources received by them are used to achieve certain shared ends. In everyday life, new friendships and good relationships among neighbours and co-workers are created regardless of their different ethnic origins. On that basis, Bulgarian citizens are inclined to help each other no matter whether they are ethnic Bulgarians or Rudari. A visit to a doctor causes more anxiety to migrants because they cannot always explain how they feel in a foreign language. There is a tacit rule that when it comes to health the migrant cannot refuse to help the needy, whether they are Bulgarian or Gypsy (Rudari). The patient is always accompanied by a relative or someone who knows Spanish well (could be Bulgarians, as well) and will assist in the conversation with the medical staff.

Development of Collective Integration Strategies

To support the social integration of its members into the new socio-economic and cultural environment and to facilitate their transition from mobile workers to settlers, the Bulgarian community creates its own structures. It creates associations and schools, which represent them as a foreign group in Greece and Spain, and as Bulgarians before the Bulgarian authorities. These structures also serve to organise the social spaces and affect the community building. Community comes first in the minds of the representatives of these structures, they are the ones who will be able to interact successfully with people within the Bulgarian migrant community and with representatives of the local institutions. However, these representatives constantly have to defend their influence among their compatriots by taking care of them, because their position is a matter of negotiation with the community's members. In Spain there are over 55 and in Greece around 10 associations and Sunday schools.[4]

The associations and schools develop educational activities and promote cultural events. The principle of their functioning in Spain is following: first an association is established and, after that, a Sunday school is opened attached to it. The reason is that the migrant associations are able to apply for funding from various institutions in Spain and their cultural and educational initiatives are supported by the authorities in the autonomous communities. The principle of operation of associations and schools in Greece is different. Migrant organisations exist usually in the form of the Greek-Bulgarian cultural associations because the activists can use the resources of personal contacts with Greeks for their purposes. An organisation can establish its own Sunday school but a school can also be founded without the existence of an association. In most cases in both countries, these are led by women with university degrees. In Sunday schools, Bulgarian language and literature are taught, also Bulgarian history and geography; extracurricular classes are held in applied and stage art, folklore singing and dancing. They target all children from Bulgaria, regardless of their ethnic origins. The Rudari children, for instance, go to Spanish schools as well as actively attending the Bulgarian schools and sometimes they make

up almost the entire class. In Greece the situation is different and they rarely attend Bulgarian classes and go only to Greek schools.

The social relations among the members of the Bulgarian community that are created around the Sunday school and association can be described as never-ending interactions and oppositions, because in one moment they could help each other out and express solidarity, and in other moment they could be involved in personal conflicts. Although several personal conflicts could arise, both types of organisation should be understood as a social structure that opens possibilities for the previous social relations to be maintained and new social relations with fellow citizens to be developed. Thus, the migrants have access to social resources, which are based on common good with people of various social, ethnic and religious origins. James Coleman explains that social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors; it facilitates certain actions of actors within the social structure and makes possible the achievement of certain ends (1988: 98).

Sunday schools established in Spain are often subsidised by Spanish institutions by way of providing funding for projects put forward by the Bulgarian organisations, which is not, however, the case in Greece. There is a trend towards better cooperation among organisations and schools within the same Spanish autonomous community due to the geographical proximity, and the fact that they have access to the same resources and communicate with the same institutions. However, the associations and the respective schools in Madrid and Valencia have imposed themselves as umbrella organisations for the entire community, they are the most proactive and try to attract the activists from other regions, contributing thus to the unification process on a supraregional level.

In Greece, the collective initiatives of the migrants, related to the preservation of Bulgarian culture and language, is influenced by the Greek ideology of the nation-state oriented to the preservation and promotion of a unified Greek national identity and culture (Kaurinkoski 2010: 119–139). Bulgarian activists in Greece can rely on the help of their Greek friends and colleagues but rarely on the institutional support. The Bulgarian school in Thessaloniki, for example, has the status of a religious school and some extra classes of religion are provided for the students. Its director is of Greek origin

and the teachers are Bulgarians. For both countries, the creation of the national programme "Native language and culture abroad", with which the Bulgarian state began providing financial assistance for the schools starting from the academic year 2008/2009, helped open more Sunday schools.

The structures that primarily nurture the development of bonding social ties are the Orthodox religious societies. In Spain and Greece, there are several church communities with priests appointed by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Compatriots gather there on religious holidays such as Easter, St. George's Day or Christmas or for family celebrations, such as the case of Rudari in Northern Spain who organised a big celebration for baby christening and a Bulgarian Orthodox priest from Madrid was invited to perform the ritual. In contrast, religious societies of Evangelists, whose meetings take place more frequently (several times a week) than those in the Orthodox communities, they are more informal and create an intimate religious atmosphere, providing opportunities for keeping the previous strong relationships and for creating bridging ties. They reflect the overcoming of ethnic differences and social segmentation between people from Bulgaria because of the common faith.

Cultural activities developed by the associations focus on various events such as celebration of Bulgaria National Day, March 3rd, Cyrillic Alphabet and Bulgarian Educational and Cultural Day, May 24th or common Bulgarian holidays such as *Baba Marta* ('Grandma Marta'), March 1st, etc. The celebrations of some holidays are more ostentatious in Greece and Spain than they used to be in Bulgaria. In addition, the associations in Spain promote pan-Bulgarian events such as, for example, the first convention of the Bulgarians in Spain held under the motto "All the Bulgarians Together" organised by *AIBE Balcan* in Madrid and that brought more than 4,000 Bulgarian nationals together. Over the years, the organisations have put other programs in place – they raise money for and help build social homes for children in Bulgaria.

The Rudari in Spain are more active than those in Greece by being engaged in various associations of Bulgarians and by forming their own organisations. Behind this is a desire to establish their identity as Bulgarian citizens. The enhancement of their Bulgarian national identity does not remove existing boundaries between the ethnic

groups, or different forms of "otherness", but rather exists along with them. The activities organised by the Rudari associations can be regarded as a strategy of the group to maintain solidarity and sociability between the members. For example, in Spain the *Tsar Simeon* federal structure, comprised of several Rudari organisations, whose leaders are relatives, has its annual gatherings under the motto of official meetings of Bulgarian citizens abroad, but it allows the members of the Rudari group to socialize and to maintain their group identity. Furthermore, the president of the Rudari federation looks not only after his own community, but after all the Bulgarians. He runs educational, cultural and social work for the entire community – for instance, he held a football tournament for immigrant youth in Spain and runs a Sunday school for Bulgarian kids. The situation in Greece is different from that in Spain and the Rudari in Greece stay, to some extent, away from the inter-community organisation of the Bulgarians and do not form their own organisations.

Cross-Cultural Social Ties

The life in the new social milieu is a basis for establishing ties with locals or with other migrants. Thanks to various social ties that they create with the local population, Bulgarian citizens begin to become part of the local society regardless of the fact that they are included in it as a foreign community. Along with that they are included in various social circles of fellow citizens; each of the members might be incorporated into the social circles of Spaniards and Greeks as well. The new contacts outside the group found at the workplace provide a source of information about possible available jobs and become a source of support in the context of migration. At times, when Spanish employers trust the migrants, they could help the next wave of arriving relatives find a job. For instance, at a construction company a father, his son and his nephew work together, while the wife and the daughters-in-law work as nannies and maids in the house of the Spanish owner. Having the support of the local people is important to the Bulgarians because they will always remain foreigners.

In organising the Rudari weddings in Greece, for example, some changes occur. Engagement is usually originated in Bulgaria and

after that, a civil ceremony is concluded. The wedding celebration is organised abroad and Greek colleagues and friends are also invited as guests.

Mixed marriages are one of the results of the influence of the local environment on the group's social cohesion. The intermarriages can be seen as a strategy for adaptation and integration into the new societies. In Spain, mixed marriages are still rarely the case, both among Bulgarians and Rudari. By tradition, marriages among Rudari are concluded within the regional group and mixed marriages are not considered successful. Traditionally mixed marriages are those with a representative of another regional group, with representatives of Ursari (although there are examples of such marriages), with Bulgarians or other Gypsies. Under the terms of migration, the intermarriages with members of other regional groups who live abroad in the same or in the neighbouring villages, and with foreigners have become more frequent. In Greece, several examples of co-habitation between Greeks and Bulgarians can be found as well as of intermarriages. For example, the headmistress of one of the Bulgarian schools in Greece lived with a Greek man, which for both of them was a second marriage, and in another case a Bulgarian school teacher was married to a Greek man, whom she met while they were studying together in Bulgaria. In Greece, marriages in a form of co-habitation with Greeks are more common among the Rudari, especially if they were both already divorced. For example, the sister of my interlocutor had a second marriage with a Greek man, who owned a hotel on Crete.

An interesting point is whether there are mutual relationships between the Rudari and other Gypsies (local Spanish and Greek Gypsies or Romanian Gypsies from Romania), as well as between Rudari and Romanians from Romania. The Bulgarian Gypsies, including the Rudari, are in absolutely no contact whatsoever with the local Spanish, Greek or foreign migrant Gypsies. The living standards of *Gitanos* (or *Calé*/*Calos*) in Spain, for example, are higher than those of the Gypsies from Eastern Europe, and they occupy their specific economic niches and do not have professional or other contacts with the Gypsy migrants. In Greece, there is a local Rudari population, and the Bulgarian Rudari often had neither heard about them, or if they knew about them, they thought

they had nothing in common because in comparison with the local Rudari they felt more Bulgarians. This applies also to the Romanian Gypsies, whom the Rudari perceive as beggars and nomads, and with whom they do not want to deal. This is also the case with the Rudari, who, while living in Bulgaria, demonstrate an identity of Rumanians (old Rumanians), but during their stay in Spain and Greece present themselves as Bulgarians in front of Spaniards and Greeks, not in the meaning that they change their previous identity, but for the reason of that through comparison with the Romanians from Romania they realize that they are totally different from them. According to the interlocutors, the Romanians from Romania were worse workers and thieves and that is why nobody wanted to be identified as one of them. For example, my interlocutors from Crete were neighbours of a Romanian family. They did not maintain any contact with them and to my question, why they did not communicate with them, they told me that they "felt as Bulgarians and there was no need to communicate with Romanians". The contacts between Evangelical Christians present us creation of another type of social relations. The only Gypsy migrants or local Gypsies with whom the Rudari could have had certain are other Evangelists with whom they visited the same church. However, it seems that the Bulgarians and the Rudari are more likely to maintain contacts with local people and other immigrants than with Gypsies within the Evangelical communities, considering that these ties would be beneficial to them.

Contacts with other migrants are usually limited to co-workers. Of course, there are examples of friendly contacts with other foreigners, but it is an interesting fact that Bulgarians and the Rudari create more friendly contacts with the local people and rely more on their support, which is a form of adaptation into the host society. People from the Balkan countries and those from the former socialist countries are presumably perceived as being closer than other migrants and they could be housemates if they live in shared accommodation. Marriages between Bulgarians and these migrants are concluded rarely, but there are some examples. The Bulgarians and Rudari have almost no contact with migrants such as Latin Americans, Africans, Moroccans or Pakistanis other than in cases where they happen to live in the same neighbourhood, work in the

same construction company or go shopping regularly in the same Chinese stores, which are widespread in Greece and Spain.

Bulgarian associations and schools construct social spaces where compatriots can maintain contacts with local people. In Spain, they strive to promote Bulgarian traditions to the native citizens, and help people of Bulgarian national origin become a part of local society. In Greece, due to the lack of official support for migrant activities, organisations try to maintain the specific Bulgarian traditions within the frames of Bulgarian community and express their distinctiveness from Greeks. On the other hand, referring to the same Orthodox religious belonging with Greeks, they demonstrate their closeness to them. Participation in festivals and fairs organised by the Spaniards is an essential part of the work of the organisations. There the culture and traditions of the various migrant groups are presented and they are part of the state's policy for inclusion of the immigrants into the community life of the Spanish people. The Bulgarians regard participation in those festivals as a privilege of being invited and also as an expression of the wish to pass for a united community that is no less important for the Spanish society than the rest of the migrant communities. In the recent years, at the cultural events on various occasions, organised by Bulgarian associations in Spain, different folk dance groups perform and invitations have been sent out to members of the public and representatives of other migrant groups such as Romanians, Ecuadorians, Russians, etc. In her article, Caroline Brettell also discussed various organisational spaces constructed by Asian Indian immigrant population in the United States through their voluntary (regional, religious, ethnic, etc.) associations. The organisations within the Indian community demonstrate various ways in which immigrants can draw on different dimensions of bonding and bridging social capital to express both their distinctiveness from and their affinities with the host society (2005: 853–883).

Identity Imaginations

When it comes to Bulgarian citizens in Greece and Spain, it also appears that the new environments in which they live influence their ways of identification. The main feeling of all Bulgarian citizens abroad is the one of belonging to the Bulgarian migrant

community, regardless of differences in their ethnic or religious affiliations. These members think and act according to the position they occupy within the community. They define their neighbouring communities (the majority and migrants) in ethnic dimensions (Spanish and Greek people, Gypsies, etc.) and also by the country of origin – Spaniards, Greeks, Romanians, Ecuadorians. Under the terms of migration the process of identification as Bulgarians/ Bulgarian citizens is enhanced and one of the reasons is that they feel attached to their homeland. Unifying effect not only causes the tendency for them all to declare themselves as Bulgarian citizens, but also the fact that they are "imagined" as a "united" Bulgarian community by the surrounding Spanish and Greek population (Anderson 1991).

There are two different trends in the way of identification as Bulgarian citizens. One of the trends is that they feel proud of being Bulgarian nationals; they send their children not only to the Spanish and Greek, but also to the Bulgarian school, they speak Bulgarian at home, watch Bulgarian TV, etc. There is another tendency, which is more common among the Bulgarians than among the Rudari, where they demonstrate to the other compatriots that they are better integrated and belong more to the Spanish or Greek communities than to the community of migrants from Bulgaria. They declare to the other Bulgarians that they are "more Spanish or Greek than them". This feeling of belonging to the local society they express in various ways; sometimes Bulgarians say they avoid communicating with the other compatriots, because relations with them bring only trouble and prefer to stay in touch only with locals; that is also why they sometimes say that there is no need for their children to attend Bulgarian classes or to speak Bulgarian, because they would not return home and knowledge of mother language would not be useful. This is an expression of the migrants' wish to be integrated into the local society more quickly. Life in a foreign-language environment and the linguistic proximity of the Spanish and Romanian languages gives the Rudari from Bulgaria a reason to feel that they share common origins with the Spanish.

Conclusion

The text developed a comparative perspective in the experiences of the Bulgarians and Rudari in the migration contexts in Greece and Spain. After 1989, the emigration of Bulgarian citizens to the EU countries occurred as a widespread phenomenon. As part of it, another great migration flow formed in the 1990s, this is the east-south move to the Mediterranean countries. These were recognized by many Bulgarian citizens as possible countries of destination and later became a "second home" for them. The contemporary Rudari migration pattern is similar to the pattern of Bulgarians, and one of the main reasons for this is the fact that as Bulgarian citizens they are part of the Bulgarian society. The transnational movement has very important economic and social functions: by travelling, the communities could sustain their families and could develop their social group organisations. The emergence of migrant clusters is one of the main results of the transnational labour migration. As a result of the communities developing in both countries, Bulgarian citizens introduced various collective strategies for establishing associations and schools by which they tried to position and shape their traditional relationships within the new society, thinking that this would be a way for successful integration. Orthodox communities create conditions for religious practices, which are associated with community building, to be developed and for strong relationships between migrants to be maintained, but Evangelical societies have an important role in reinforcing the bridging ties between compatriots with different ethnic origin.

There are some similarities as well as differences between the social adaptation strategies of migrants in Greece and Spain. Both countries attracted families who believed that there they could adapt successfully and start their lives afresh. In Spain, Bulgarian citizens develop various collective integration strategies on a larger scale and have greater political influence on the Bulgarian community there. In Greece, the communal way of life of Bulgarian citizens is less organised and on a smaller scales due to the social and political contexts there related to attitudes towards foreigners and the politics towards their integration. It also appears that in the Spanish case, the Rudari are successfully included into the community life of the Bulgarians and that they develop the same

integration strategies, while in the Greek case they remained outside the communal life of the Bulgarians, maintaining their group social organisation based on the bonding ties. The reasons for this difference in patterns of the Rudari social positioning among the Bulgarian communities in Spain and Greece should be sought in the different migratory contexts and in the achieved higher or lower degree of social integration of the Rudari within Bulgarian communities.

Bulgarians and Rudari developed similar migration strategies abroad but their patterns of social adaptation have some ethnic specifics. These are mainly the role of bonding ties in social organisation of the group and the ways of employing the social circles' resources. Generally speaking, the boundaries between these groups are preserved. They are not static and are not visible for the local population, to which they look like one and the same group.

The greatest impact on the social cohesion of migrants from Bulgaria in the Greek and Spanish society have the social circles, into which they are included rather than the migration networks, to which they belonged upon arrival. Sometimes the people create a social circle with the migrants they came together with from Bulgaria, but sometimes the social circles are modified because they can include people who arrived in Spain and Greece through other migration channels and can also integrate non-Bulgarian citizens. Moreover, the Bulgarian and the Rudari migrants can become members of the social circles of the Greeks and Spaniards. These social circles maintain pre-existing bonding ties and identities, and produce various bridging social ties, providing their members with social perspectives and opportunities for the emergence of new identity imaginations. Various forms of identity development appeared because some members of the groups began to imagine themselves as part of the local communities and to pretend that they were involved not only in their traditional social circles, but also in social circles of Spaniards and Greeks. The negotiation between identification as Bulgarian citizens and Rudari impacts the way of social organisation of the Rudari and the way they imagine their position in the society. The social circles of migrants from Bulgaria are based on ties with different backgrounds and with different benefits, demonstrating migrants' cultural difference from the local society and their social incorporation within it.

Notes

[1] През последните години в Гърция пристигат все повече млади емигранти от България [Number of young emigrants from Bulgaria arriving in Greece increased in the recent years], 18 April 2010. Available at http://www.focusnews.net/?id=f14625 (Accessed 24.08.2017).

Всеки трети български емигрант заминава за Испания [Every third emigrant is planning to go to Spain], 27 November, 2010. Available at http://bginfo.es/%d0%be%d0%b1%d1%89%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b2%d0%be/674-%d0%b2%d1%81%d0%b5%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d1%82%d1%80%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%b8-%d0%b1%d1%8a%d0%bb%d0%b3%d0%b0%d1%80%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%b8%d0%b3%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d1%82-%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%b0-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bf%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%8f.html (Accessed 24.08.2017).

[2] Instituto Nacional de Estadística. Renovación del Padrón municipal de habitantes a 1 de mayo de 1996. Datos nacionales, por CC.AA. y provincias. Población por país de nacimiento, nacionalidad y sexo. Bulgaria. Available at http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t20/e245/p04/a1996/l1/&file=00com009.px (Accessed 24.08.2017).

[3] Instituto Nacional de Estadística. Estadística del Padrón continuo a 1 de enero de 2013. Datos a nivel nacional, comunidad autónoma y provincia. Población extranjera por comunidades y provincias, nacionalidad y sexo. Bulgaria. Available at http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t20/e245/p04/a2013/l0/&file=0ccaa002.px (Accessed 24.08.2017)

[4] According to data available at the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad's website (http://www.aba.government.bg/) (Accessed 24.03.2014).

References

Anderson, Benedict 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Bourdieu, Pierre 1980. Le capital social: Notes provisoires. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales,* 31, pp. 2–3.

Bourdieu, Pierre 1986. The Forms of Capital. John Richardson (ed.). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241–248.

Brettell, Caroline B. 2005. Voluntary Organizations, Social Capital, and the Social Incorporation of Asian Indian Immigrants in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (4), pp. 853–883.

Čapo Žmegač, Jasna 2008. Parochial Transnationals: Being of Croatian Descent in Germany. Elena Marushiakova (ed.). *Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 323–339.

Coleman, James S. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology,* 94, pp. 95–120.

Erolova, Yelis 2010. Labour Migrations of the Bulgarian Roma in Poland (A Case Study on Roma from Balchik). Nando Sigona (ed.). *Romani mobilities in Europe: Multidisciplinary perspectives.* Conference Proceedings. University of Oxford, pp. 52–57.
http://romanimobilities.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/conference-proceedings1.pdf (Accessed 25.08.2017).

Fakiolas, Rossetos & Maratou-Alipranti, Laura 2000. Foreign Female Immigrants in Greece. *Papers,* 60, pp. 101–117.

Gabărski, Nikolay 2008. Les expériences migratoires bulgares en Grèce depuis 1989. *Balkanologie,* 11 (1–2).
http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1142.html (Accessed 25.08.2017).

Gmelch, George 2004. West Indian Migrants and their Rediscovery of Barbados. Oxfeld, Ellen and Long, Lynellyn D. (eds.). *Coming Home? Refugees, Migrants, and Those Who Stayed Behind*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsilvania Press, pp. 206–225.

Gómez-Mestres, Sílvia & Molina, Jose Luis 2010. Les nouvelles migrations dans l'Europe: chaînes migratoires, établissement et réseaux sociaux des Bulgares en Espagne et en Catalogne. *Balkanologie,* 12 (2).
http://balkanologie.revues.org/2211 (Accessed 25.08. 2017).

Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. *The American Journal of Sociology,* 78 (6), pp. 1360–1380.

Kaurinkoski, Kira 2010. Priviliged Co-Ethnic Greek Migrants from the Former Soviet Union in the Greater Athens Area: Reflection on Individual and Collective Integration Strategies into Greek Society. Čapo Žmegač, Jasna (ed.). *Co-Ethnic Migrations Compared. Central and Eastern European Contexts*. München-Berlin: Verlag Otto Sagner, pp. 119–139.

King, Russel & Zontini, Elisabeta 2000. The Role of Gender in the South European Immigration model. *Papers,* 60, pp. 35–52.

Macías, Almudena 2003. Mujeres inmigrantes extracomunitarias en Navarra. Miguel Laparra Navarro (ed.). *Extranjeros en el purgatorio. Intergación social de los inmigrantes en el espacio local.* Gobierno de Navarra, Universidad Pública de Navarra: Edicions Bellaterra, S.L., pp. 247–268.

Maeva, Mila 2010. Organizations and Institutions of Bulgarian Imigrations in the UK. Karamihova, Margarita (ed.). *Readings in the History and Culture of the Balkans. In Support of the University Teaching.* Sofia: Paradigma, pp. 173–195.

Mendoza, Cristóbal 2001. Cultural Dimensions of African Immigrants in Iberian Labour Markets: A Comparative Approach. Russell King (ed.). *The Mediterranean Passage. Migration and New Cultural Encounters in Southern Europe*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 41–66.

Putnam, Robert 1993. The Prosperous Community. *The American Prospect,* 13, pp. 35–42.

Putnam, Robert 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Rangelova, Rossitsa 2006. Gender Dimension of the New Bulgaria's Migration: Comments on Empirical data. *Migration Online.* http://www.migrationonline.cz (Accessed 25.08.2017).

Slavkova, Magdalena 2007. *Циганите евангелисти в България.* [*Tsiganite evangelisti v Bâlgariya* = Evangelical Gypsies in Bulgaria]. Sofia: Paradigma.

Slavkova, Magdalena 2012. From Invisibility to Visibly Successful: Bulgarian Female School Activists in Spain. Ganchev, Alexander *et al.* (eds.). *Migratory Processes in Europe: Evolution of the Migratory Interactions of the EU and Central and Eastern European Countries*. Odessa: Center for Migration Studies of Odessa National Academy of Telecommunication named after A.S. Popov (Ukraine), Central European University (Hungary), Center for Migration Research (Russia), pp. 443–462.

Soultanova, Ralitza 2005. Les migrations multiples de la population bulgare. *Les Courrier des Balkans.* https://www.courrierdesbalkans.fr/les-migrations-multiples-de-la-population-bulgare

Stanchev, Krassen *et al.* (ed.). 2005. *Bulgarian Migration: Incentives and Constellations*. Sofia: Open Society Institute.

Recasting Religion and Religious Identity

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.04

Contemporary Development of the Akyazili Baba Tekke / St. Athanasius in Bulgaria

Yelis Erolova

Balkan Ethnology Department of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Science
kham@abb.bg

The paper draws attention to the contemporary development of the late medieval religious architectural complex of Akyazılı Baba tekke in the Bulgarian village of Obrochishte near the Black sea. An overview of historical data, folklore and cultural significance is presented. Over the years, the place is developed as a dual sanctuary of Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius of Antioch. It unites different beliefs and legends of the Muslim and Christian local and surrounding population. Nowadays, the tekke is an objective of the local politics aiming to develop cultural tourism. One of the issues discussed in the paper is how the functions of the Akyazılı Baba tekke as a religious center changes and transforms into a cultural attraction. An ethnological study was held in 2009, 2011 and in the beginning of 2014. Data sources from the scientific literature, local government documents and media are used in research methodology.
Key words: Sufi architecture, tourist mythology, Akyazılı baba tekke, St. Athanasius of Antioch

Introduction

There are a number of the Islamic heterodox monuments in Bulgaria that were built during the Ottoman rule (XVI–XIX c). More than fifty tekkes (*tekke* 'dervish[1] cloister', 'monastery', 'religious center') with türbe / tülbe (*türbe* 'tombs', 'mausoleums') are known across the country. They are connected to beliefs that famous religious leaders such as Otman Baba (*baba* 'father'), Kıdemli Baba, Demir Baba, Hıdır Baba and others from the Late Middle ages were buried there. Their general and specific characteristic is that the Shias and local inhabitants believe that they had abilities to do miracles during their lives and after their deaths. Today they continue to be respected not only by heterodox Muslims, called Kızılbashis / Alevis /Alians[2], but also by Sunnis and Christians. Their tombs are considered sacred places by the representatives of all religious communities, and they visit them for health, luck and healing. According to Lyubomir Mikov, the architecture of Bektashis[3] and

Kizilbashis / Alevis is influenced by Sufism[4] and it is primarily a manifestation of Shia Islam (2005: 14).

The village of Obrochishte (its old name was Teke, renamed to Obrochishte in 1940) is located between the Bulgarian Northeastern Black sea resorts Albena and Balchik. It is famous for the tekke and türbe of the bektash leader Akyazılı Baba who probably lived in the early XVI century and who was considered "pole of the poles" (*kutb al-aktab*) after the death of Otman baba (Mikov 2005: 52). Since the late XIX century, this religious center has been converted into a dual Muslim-Christian sanctuary or bi-ritual sacred place because some local Christians believe that St. Athanasius of Antioch (app. 293/297 – 2 May, 373) was buried there. It has become popular under the name 'monastery' (*manastira*) among the locals. A number of studies that provide historical, ethnographic and architectural data have been conducted. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how this religious center continues to function as a pilgrimage site for Christians and Muslims and how the local politics try to expand its role as a tourist attraction. Data from the scientific literature, ethnographic fieldwork, and local government documents and media sources is used in research methodology.

Historical Data

According to academic studies (Gramatikova 2002), it has been proven that Akyazılı (Ibrahim) Baba was a real person, a leader of dervishes and a successor of Otman Baba after his death in 1478–79. He founded a cloister during the first half of the XVI century during the reign of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman I the Magnificent (1522–1560). Many dervishes followed Akyazılı Baba and among them was the Hurufi[5] poet Yemini, one the revered Bektashi poets in Asia Minor and in the Balkans. He composed an ode "Fazieletname" in 1519 and named Akyazılı Baba as Ibrahim Sani, i.e. a "second Ibrahim" or "second Abraham" (Eyice 1967: 558; Alexiev 2005: 106; Venedikova 2005: 96). Another poet of the 16th century, Muhyeddin Abdal, also mentioned Otman Baba and his succesor Akyazılı Ibrahim in his verses (Mikov 2005: 61; Melikoff 1999: 11–18).

There is a hypothesis that the construction of the Akyazılı tekke had started during the reign of sultan Selim I (1512–1520) and

was completed during the rule of sultan Selim II (1566–1574) (Venedikova 2006: 97; Mikov 2001: 187–196; 2005: 58–60). According to description of Evliya Çelebi, the Ottoman traveler who visited the European province of the Ottoman Empire during the XVII century, the türbe was built by Mihaloğlu Arslan beg who was a follower of Akyazılı Baba (Gadzhanov 1909: 671–672).

Strashimir Dimitrov paid attention to one of the Ottoman register documents (tahrir defter, type of tax register with detailed information about population), which probably dated from the last years of reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566). It contains data that confirms the existence of the tekke when Akyazılı died and his türbe was built. It also gives data about the people who were working there: Abdi dede (the elder of the order), Mustafa Aga (türbedar, the guard of the tomb) and three servants. A Gypsy cemaat (community) was described as a part of the inhabitants of tekke and probably they had to work its lands. Nevertheless, the Gypsies were recorded as part of this cloister; they had to pay taxes as they did before.[6] From the analysis of Strashimirov it can be concluded that in the mid-16th century, the tekke was already established as a religious and socio-economic center (Dimitrov 1994: 90–91).

One of the first descriptions of the Akyazılı Baba tekke can be found in the narrative of Evliya Çelebi (Gadzhanov 1909: 671).

> *A chandelier with three hundreds candles hung from the ceiling. Each night dervishes light these candles and go to the spiritual contemplation. Under the chandelier there is a small fountain just in the middle of a marbled room. In addition, there are many very high candlesticks donated by various sultans. The furs of slaughtered sacrifices pave the inner area. On each fur dervishes are sitting and working on something. They make wooden spoons, canes for dervishes, horse combs and other things. The Tekke is rich: there is a watermill… sheep, horses, cattle and cornfields. Each night there come about two hundred guests who are well welcomed. Guests can stay up to three days…. Excluding the tekke of Imams Ali and Hussein in Baghdad, there is no another such Tekke anywhere in Turkey and in Persian lands.*

According to Diana Radionova, the religious life of believers is concentrated into the tekke and the cult of Akyazılı Baba placed him between ordinary people and the supreme god. "The Dervish-leader began to be accepted less as a mentor and teacher and more as an heir of divine essence of the founder of the order." At the same time, the residents of tekkes tried to attract more followers, to increase their income and to justify their requests in front of the local authorities to obtain lands or to get tax rebate (1994: 64).

In the late XIX century Konstantin Irechek and in the early XX century Vasil Kanchov assumed that there was a Christian monastery in the village of Текe/Obrochishte, which was converted by the dervishes into a Muslim temple (Irechek 1974: 897; Kanchov 1901: 11). The assumption did not find any scientific justification, but still remains in the historical memory of the local inhabitants. Most likely it is influenced by the cult to St. Athanasius of the re-settled Bulgarian population from the village Vaysal, Eastern Thrace during the 70s half of the XIX century. At that time the cult of the Akyazılı Baba tekke began to transform into a bi-ritual one, and thus the sanctuary became dual. The Christians "have started to use the prayer house of the village, despite the fact that it is Muslim, and have imposed the cult to that Christian saint, who has been revered in their homes for years" (Radionova 1994: 70–72). The cult of St. Athanasius was adopted later by the Orthodox Rudar Gypsies who settled in the village of Teke/Obrochishte 1919–1940 (Erolova 2010: 109–110).

In fact, the dual cult related to the tekke is not unique, other similar double Muslim-Christian sanctuaries are well-known among the Christian and Muslim population. For example: Ali Baba türbe / St. Elias (Sofia, Knyazhevo), Alatlı Baba türbe / St. John (Shumen region), Hüsein Baba türbe / St. Demetrius (Yambol region), Sarı Saltık Baba / St. Nicholas (Kaliakra) and etc. (Iliev 2006: 39; Yankova 2007: 59–84)

Today, the Akyazılı Baba tekke consists of a park space and two buildings – türbe and *imaret* (kind of shelter, where dervishes can receive temporary accommodation and perform their rituals). Both constructions have a heptagon form. The sarcophagus is located in the central part of türbe and is northeast-southwest oriented. It is



Figures 1–2. The tomb of Akyazılı Baba. Photos by Yelis Erolova, 2011.



Figure 3. The imaret. Photo by Yelis Erolova, 2011.

covered in green textile and the place of the head is marked by a turban. The türbe has a prostyle and a roof in form of hemispherical cube. The prostyle's roof has a similar form. The ceiling inside is painted with colorful decoration of stylized geometrical and floral ornaments in baroque style, probably from the late XIX and early XX century.

According to Lyubomir Mikov, reproduction of European type paintings is an example that indicates a process of penetration of European decoration into the Islamic cult architecture in the Balkans (2002: 520–523).

The imaret is located 50 meters north of the tomb. Although it has the same seven-sided form it is significantly larger. Its roof was destroyed in the Russian-Ottoman war 1768–1774. Today only the 5m walls and the heptagon stone chimney remain. (Margos 1972)

The heptagon form of the constructions is not chosen randomly. It is related to the number seven, which is the most popular number among the heterodox Muslims in Bulgaria. Lyubomir Mikov and Irene Melikoff interpret this number in connection with the *Ismailism* conception in Shia Islam, which was developed after VIII century, and its interaction with the Sufi ideology that appeared at the same time. The Ismailis or so-called "Seveners" believe that the Seventh Imam Isma'il ibn Jafar was the last one while the other Shias ("Twelvers") believe in the Twelve Imams and accept Musa al-Kadhim as the true imam. The same seven-sided construction is typical of the tekkes of Otman baba, Kıdemli baba and Demir baba (Melikoff 1999: 14–20; Mikov 2005: 321–329).

The Tekke as a Dual Sanctuary for Muslims and Christians

The tekke of Akyazılı Baba is considered an undisputed monument of the late medieval Muslim architecture by scholars, while the thesis for the tomb of St. Athanasius has not been proven (Margos 1972; Radionova1994: 70). The change of the cult from mono- into bi-ritual during the second half of the XIX century should not be interpreted as "renaming", but as development which unites two saints. At first glance, today, the veneration of Muslim and Christian saints seems to be controversial, but for local inhabitants[7]

the so-called "monastery" is mainly a holy place, related to many legends and beliefs about Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius. The tekke continues to attract the Alevi community from Northeastern Bulgaria as a place of worship and sacrifice (*kurban*) (Sikimić & Hristov 2007; Blagoev 2004), although, they prefer to visit a nearby tekke of Demir Baba. Heterodox Muslims come during their holiday *Nevruz* (March 21st), which marks the beginning of the spring and the New Year. It is connected to the belief that on this day Ali was born and also married Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Mohammed (Georgieva 1991: 74).

Today the village feast (*sabor*) is celebrated on May 2nd, known as Sveti Atanasiy, just like by the Greeks, for whom the day is associated with the magical power of vegetation (Popov 2002: 113). In 1970 Margarita Vasileva described the custom calendar in the village Obrochiste. She registered that the locals celebrated St. Athanasius on May 2nd. They used to sleep in the tekke on the night of May 1st for health. On the next day they made a kurban (1970, AEIM 683-III, p.84).

In fact, the church has established a double celebration of St. Athanasius – on January, 18th and May 2nd (when he died) – for his exceptional contribution to the preservation of the Orthodox teaching. According to the interlocutors, during the recent years, the local inhabitants have been preparing kurban twice a year in the imaret. Bulgarians gathered on January 18th and Gypsies observed the so-called "summer" St. Athanasius in July (probably the holiday of St. Athanasius the Athonite on July 5th, who is a different saint and lived during the X century.)

The kurbans made by locals in honor of St. Athanasius aim at bringing health and prosperity, it is related to the mass belief about the saint as a patron of domestic animals and diseases. According to traditional folk narratives, he was a master of diseases with demonic origins such as plague, smallpox and epilepsy. In addition, St. Athanasius is considered an inventor of the blacksmith tongs and founder of the smith's craft together with St. Anthony; this is related to the belief that he has Gypsy or Turkish origins (Popov 2002: 107–110).

Although carrying out kurban is a tradition that can be interpreted as an element of local identity and culture (Covalcsik 2007: 109–136), in Obrochishte, the old practices are not observed anymore. In modern times, the local population does not make common kurbans as they used to do in the recent past. The reasons must be sought in their financial possibilities and in the conversion mostly of the Gypsies to Protestantism, which prohibits sacrifice of animals (Slavkova 2007: 205–247).

Today, we can distinguish the legends and beliefs related to the tekke as a part of the folklore of Alevis, as a part of their religious identity, and of the local inhabitants of Obrochishte as a part of their cultural and local identity. In both cases, the myths contribute to the sanctity of the tekke space and its patrons Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius. The mythology related to the folklore profile of both saints can be interpreted according to Mircea Eliade (1961[1952]: 59) as: "The myths are true because they are sacred, because they tell him about sacred beings and events. Consequently, in reciting or listening to a myth, one resumes contact with the sacred and with reality, and in so doing one transcends the profane condition, the "historical situation"".

The inhabitants of Obrochishte and of surrounding settlements believe that both saints have a number of common characteristics, as well as abilities to do miracles – to create big constructions, to heal, to be lords of animals, to "return" and to act as living people, and to do justice. During my field studies, two Muslim and Christian legends with the same story but with different main characters were collected. Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius were friends during the Ottoman period. They were exiled in the village because of their religious ideas. St. Athanasius / Akyazılı Baba fell in love with a Turkish / Bulgarian girl, which at that time was not accepted. Then (Ottoman) Turks punished him by death. The day before he was executed, he asked Akyazılı/St. Athanasius to promise to bury him. He (Akyazılı Baba/St. Athanasius) brought stones and built a tomb in one night. Interlocutors complement their stories by saying that such stones can still be found far from the village; this additionally stresses the magical power of the saints. This contemporary legend has variations registered by most scholars. One of them said that St. Athanasius was killed in the courtyard of the tekke, near a stone

from which water started to spring. On the other hand, Muslims believe that this stone was the place where Akyazılı Baba bathed (Irechek 1974: 897). According to other story, St. Athanasius was a young shepherd who was in love with a Turkish girl. The ardent believers found out about their love and began to pursue them. St. Athanasius and the Turkish girl decided to commit suicide (Margos 1972).

Like St. Athanasius, who is considered the patron saint of domestic animals, it is also believed that Akyazılı Baba had dominion over animals and they obeyed his will. For example, calves stopped suckling and separated from the cows, dogs ceased barking in Obrochiste, storks stopped flying over the nearby village of Lyahovo. Popular beliefs present St. Athanasius as a shepherd, who herded the cattle for days. Once he asked for a monastery to be built for him. He carried the stones for construction by himself at night, but the villagers stole them during the day to build their own houses. Their cattle began to die. Soon after, St. Athanasius was found murdered in the woods. Then locals decided to fulfill his desire to build a monastery, and inside of it – a tomb. According to the data collected by scholars, Akyazılı Baba can appear to the righteous and innocent people when they are asleep or awake. It is believed that if St. Athanasius' slippers and the lower edges of his cloak are wet, he has been walking and grazing the cattle at night. Sometimes the voices of both saints can be heard (Radionova 1994: 65; Alexiev 2005: 114).

Tekke in Obrochishte is associated with its healing power that comes from Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius. It is visited by Christians and Muslims (Sunni and Alevis). To be healed, the visitors lie on the sarcophagus and spend the night there. They leave gifts (towels, scarves, socks and other items) on it, light candles and pray; they still continue to do so as an essential expression of reverence of the saint. The belief in the healing abilities of the saints is part of their cult. Evgeniya Ivanova (2001: 75) recorded a similar dual cult of Sarı Baba and St. Nickolas among the locals in the village of Momchilovtsi, Smolyan region, they were and are famous for their healing abilities and they were considered to be from "one faith, because they are healing". The practice of gift-giving can be analyzed in a broader sense by the Marsell Mauss' interpretation of gifts (1990 [1922]). As part of the cult or belief in the magical



Figure 4. The sarcophagus hole. Photo by Yelis Erolova, 2011.

power of the saints, gifts are not given for "free". They are connected to the hope that the giver will receive health, granting of a wish, or something else in exchange. Thus, the connection between an individual and the saint is established in a spiritual and magic way.

A very common practice in the tekke of Obrochishte, as well as in some other tekkes, is that the visitors tie a cloth or piece of a cloth, a thread on the trees nearby the tomb believing that this action will bring them health. Trees in that area are considered an integral part of the sacred place. They connect the visible world of life and the invisible one of death. To tie personal belongings is a ritual practice that can be interpreted as imitative magic – the illness is transmitted from the living body through the tree to the *other* world. Margarita Karamihova's study of Otman baba presents a folk belief that the trees around sacred places are inhabited by the souls of the dead and if such tree is cut down, it would result in "punishment" (2002: 57). Together with wood, stone has the same function as a

mediator between both worlds. 2013 I visited the village of Selcuk in Turkey, famous for the house believed to have been lived in by the Virgin Mary (*Meryem Ana*) until her death. There was a large stone wall under the house where visitors tie their handkerchiefs and threads and utter their wish.

Nowadays, believers in the tekke of Akyazılı Baba believe that they can check if they have sins or not by checking if they are able to put their hand into the hole at the corner of the sarcophagus. If they succeed – they have no sins, but if they fail, they do.

In the past, chains were hung from the ceiling over the sarcophagus, one of which was longer. If the visitor was able to touch it, he had no sins. A representative of the local Gypsy community explains this action with the magical power of the chains to become longer or shorter depending on the person who tries to touch them. Today, we can see only the hooks in the ceiling where the chains used to be attached. According to interlocutors, there was a time during the socialist period when the remains of the complex were neglected. A shepherd who was herding his flock in the park then took the chains for his working needs.

In addition, local inhabitants believe that the saints have the power "to punish" those who do not believe in their magical abilities. For example, a woman who did not believe in the healing power of St. Athanasius pretended to have a sick hand. She put her hand into the hole of the grave and could not get it out. Several villagers helped her to get her hand out and they succeeded, but in a few days the woman died. (Alexiev 2005: 115) According to another legend, Akyazılı Baba protects the holiness of the land of tekke. Many years ago, some villager decided to establish a farm in this area, but when he went to plow the ground and to destroy the buildings, many of his animals died and he became lame. Terrified, he fled (Radionova 1994: 65).

The faith in the ability of Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius "to punish" is a characteristic that is typical of cults of other saints. According to the narrative about Otman baba: "The people of Tarnovo respected the Baba, but they complained about one dervish. Otman baba cursed him to die of leprosy and this happened" (Karamihova 2002: 49).

The folk beliefs in the saints acting as living people increase their power which leads to a strengthening of faith in them. Although today most of the legends related to the tekke have been forgotten, still the notions of Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius are associated with their abilities to do miracles, and the socio-economic function of that place diversifies according to contemporary conditions.

The Tekke as a Cultural Tourist Attraction

The policy towards the architecture monuments of the Muslim culture in Bulgaria is inconsistent and probably related to the policy towards the Muslim population in the country. Measures for their preservation as cultural objects were applied in certain periods. For example, the infrastructure of the Akyazılı Baba tekke was improved during the late 50s of the XX century, which is evidenced by the arch at the main entrance with an inscription that it was built in 1957. Two years earlier archeological excavations had been conducted. It was declared a local cultural monument by the authorities, as most such complexes within the country received such statute in the beginning of 70s (Margos 1972). In modern times, Obrochishte is a part of the administrative territorial structure of Balchik Municipality, Dobrich District and the dervish cloister continues to be defined as a monument of local cultural importance.

The Akyazılı Baba tekke is still related to a number of legends and beliefs by the villagers of Obrochishte and surrounding settlements, but it is not visited by them as it used to be in the recent past. Indeed, it still functions as a place for pilgrimage mainly for the Alevi Muslims. Tourists staying at nearby resorts of Albena and Balchik are the other people who are attracted by the architecture and mythology of that place. According to one of the most important legal documents – Municipal Development Plan (2005–2013) – local heritage is a priority area for the local government, represented by the Municipality Balchik.

> *Culture and values are stratification of the Hellenistic, Roman, Turkish, Revival and contemporary presence. High cultural and historical value and knowledge of unique monuments of the ancient and medieval Bulgarian era transform the architectural and archaeological reserves of Balchik municipality*

> *into research fields, a base for tourist products, "cultural backbone" for present generations, and a "bridge" for transferring values to the future.*[8]

A new vision of tekke "Akyazılı – St. Athanasius" as a cultural object has started to come into being and to be advertised with the purpose of developing tourism and investments. A curator, appointed by the Municipality, works and guides visitors to the complex. Cards, brochures, t-shirts and souvenirs can be bought from the small hall of the tomb.

International festivals of religious songs "St. Athanasius" are held yearly at the middle or the end of May, from 2005 to 2013 at the imaret under the initiative of the Mayor of the village and Municipality of Balchik. National and foreign musical groups from Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Ukraine, Moldova and other countries attended them. Some of the festival issues were included in the cultural development plan of the municipality of Balchik, which provided financial assistance for their realization. Despite the international nature of the event, "St. Athanasius" festival did not attract the villagers, not only because they have other musical preferences, but also because they prefer observing their earlier community holiday on May 2nd. When I visited the festival in 2011, only 5–6 local inhabitants, mainly workers of the village Mayoralty, had an interest in visiting the event.

The local authorities have changed their conception of the "St. Athanasius" festival. According to a Balchik Municipality councilor, a decision to change the musical genres of the festival and more bands to be invited ("festival to be more accessible"), as well as changing the date to May 2nd (corresponding to the community holiday), was made in 2013. On the internet, the tekke and cultural events organized there appear in various tourist and cultural websites,[9] even on websites selling real estate in the area.[10]

One of the most important measures to popularize the tekke as a cultural and tourist attraction is the municipal project "Improvement of tourist attractions and related infrastructure in the Municipality of Balchik" that was approved for funding in the early 2014 under the Operational Program "Regional Development" (OPRD)

2007–2013 grant scheme BG161PO001/3.1-03/2010 "Support for the development of natural, cultural and historical attractions", implemented by the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development. The project's main objectives are preservation, restoration, exhibition of real cultural values and popularization of the rich cultural-historical heritage of the region with national and local significance. One of the project objectives with "local importance" is "Akyazılı Baba tekke – St. Athanasius". The target groups that will be covered are the Bulgarian and foreign visitors, the citizens of Balchik and the region, officials from the municipal administration and cultural institutions in and out of the Municipality of Balchik. Planned activities include an improvement of tourist infrastructure and construction of the roof for the imaret. Audio-guides in five languages (Bulgarian, English, Russian, Romanian and German) will be provided for the tours of the Bulgarian and foreign visitors. The duration of the project is 24 months.[11] This project is in the beginning of its implementation, its development and effects cannot be discussed yet.

I must say that during my field studies in 2009, 2011 and 2014, the local population in Obrochiste and the local government representatives in Balchik were very polite and talkative concerning the stories around the tekke. Despite numerous research projects connected to it, interlocutors warned me not to believe everything that is written, feeling competent to answer all the questions that interested me. Moreover, among the locals, most likely local dilettante historians, increasingly spread the perception that Vladislav III Varnenchik (1424–1444), king of Poland (1434–1444) and Hungary (1440–1444), high knyaz of Lithuania (1434–1440) was buried in the tekke. He is considered a significant figure in Bulgarian history as he died in a crusade against the Ottoman troops near Varna in 1444. According to representatives of the local government, archeological excavations must be conducted to prove this hypothesis and if it is true, the complex will become more popular. Regional and national media also reflect this assumption and thus popularize it.[12]

In recent years, such interesting hypotheses that attract the public attention, regardless of whether they are justified or not, have become increasingly popular in various parts of the country, aiming at developing local tourism. For example, such popular

interpretations are that there are vampires buried in the area of the Black Sea resort of Sozopol, or claims that the wife of Count Dracula originated from the Danube Bulgarian town of Svishtov, or that Spartacus was born in the village of Sklave, near the southern Bulgarian spa resort of Sandanski.

According to Noel Salazar:

> *Tourism imaginaries are easily re-embedded in new contexts by a process that constantly alters both the imaginaries and the contexts, building on local referents to establish their meaning and value…..Imaginaries often become the symbolic objects of a significant contest over economic supremacy, territorial ownership, and identity.* (Salazar 2012: 880)

The legends relating to the tekke of Akyazılı Baba become part of contemporary tourist mythology as an integral part of the development of tourism in recent years in Bulgaria. Tourist attractions try to expand their content out of their regional and national frames and to be directed at a wider variety of consumers (tourists, guests, researchers and so on). In our case, we can notice how local institutions and inhabitants maintain the traditional folklore profiles of the both saints and create a new belief that this is the tomb of the great Vladislav Varnenchik, aiming to give a broader European significance to the history of the complex. The geographical location of the tekke in the tourist area, visited by many Polish, Czech and Russian tourists, further encourages the imagining of new tourists myths, which either do or do not become part of the local identities.

Concluding Remarks

The dual cult towards Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius developed during the 20th century continues to exist. It is largely determined by the needs of the local population in Obrochishte, as well as of the Alevis to believe and to hope, and to have their holy place. Believers find an answer to things human knowledge is powerless to explain through their faith in the miraculous abilities of both saints, who can heal, to help, to observe the sanctity of tekke area and to punish. The cultural marking of the space finds a toponymic expression in buildings, trees, stones and leads to accepting of the tekke as a sacred place protected by both saints. At the same time, the contemporary

socio-economic conditions create new opportunities for rethinking the significance of this architectural complex and its folklore of the local culture and identity, but also as a tourist attraction. From its establishment until today, the tekke has changed its functions. From a place of spiritual contemplation, which accommodated the travelling dervishes, it has become part of the ritual life of the local and heterodox Muslims in Northeastern Bulgaria, and today it has become part of the cultural tourism vision of the region. Contemporary policy measures related to the complex are undoubtedly a step towards its preservation and popularization. Whether it will be just placed among the regional attractions advertised to tourists and separated from the locals and Alevi community, or whether it will be developed as a attraction with its believers, whether the "holiness" of the saints of Akyazılı Baba and St. Athanasius will be changed or not – these are questions that will remain in the future.

Notes

[1] *Dervish* is someone who has religious views influenced by Sufism and follows ascetic way of life. Dervishes are members of Sufi Muslim religious orders/brotherhoods (*tariqat* in Turkish)

[2] Origin of the so-called heterodox Muslims Kızılbashis / Alevis /Alians in Bulgaria and definition of their religion and culture are disputed (De Jong 1993: 206–209; Georgieva 1991; Norris 1993: 98; Gramatikova 2001: 254–318; Mikov 2005: 17–33). Although they distinguish from the local Muslim Sunnis (majority of who are Turks) by cultural and religious specifics, they look as one community with them in the course of social and political activity. According to the official Population census in Bulgaria in 2001, the total number of the Muslims is 966 978 (the Sunnis are 913,957 and the Shias are 53,021. Source: NCCEDI, http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=92&id=247 (Accessed 10.08.2017).

[3] The Bektashis are an Islamic Sufi order, founded by Hadzhi Bektash Veli in the XIII c. The emergence and spread of Bektashism in the Bulgarian lands see in: Norris 1993: 82–137; Melikoff 1999: 11–25; Mikov 2005: 14–17.

[4] Mystical concept in Islam.

[5] Hurufism is a mystical Sufi doctrine, founded by Fażlu l-Lāh Astar-Ābādī, also called Fażlullāh Tabrīzī Astarābādī, or Nāimī in the second half of the XIV c.

[6] For the tendency of the Gypsies settlement in the Ottoman Empire and their "double" statute among Christians and Muslims, according to the taxes which they had to pay, see in: Marushiakova and Popov 2000: 29–30; 44–46; 74–76.

[7] According to the results of the Official Population census in 2011, 1.921 people live in the village of Obrochishte. They are Orthodox Bulgarians, Orthodox and Protestant Rudar Gypsies, and Muslim Sunni and Protestant so-called Turkish Gypsies by their ethnic and religious belonging (Source: NSI, http://www.nsi.bg/ (Accessed 10.08.2017).

[8] Source: Website of the Municipality of Balchik, http://www.balchik.bg/ (Accessed 10.08.2017).

[9] http://www.namerihotel.com/bg/obrochishte.html

http://poseti.guide-bulgaria.com/NE/dobrich/balchik/obrochishte

http://www.selo359.com/obrochishte (Accessed 12.08.2017).

[10] http://www.mirela.bg/prodavaimoti/%D1%81%D0%9E%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%89%D0%B5-zxc31q1857.html (Accessed 12.08.2017).

[11] Source: Website of the Municipality of Balchik, http://www.balchik.bg/ (Accessed 12.08.2017).

[12] Source: http://www.dnesplus.bg/News.aspx?n=628502, http://www.temanews.com/index.php?p=tema&iid=780&aid=17629 (Accessed 12.08.2017).

Sources

AIEM - Archives of Ethnographic Institute with Museum, Sofia.

References

Alexiev, Bozhidar 2005. *Folklorni profili na myusyulmanski svetsi v Bulgaria* [Folklore Profiles of Muslim Saints in Bulgaria]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo 'Prof. Marin Drinov'.

Blagoev, Goran 2004. *Kurbanyt v traditsiyata na bulgarite mysuylmani* [Kurban in the tradition of the Muslim Bulgarians]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo 'Prof. Marin Drinov'.

Covalcsik, Katalin 2007. Gurbane as a Representation of Traditional Identity and Culture in an Oltenian Rudar community. Biljana Sikimić and Petko Hristov (eds.). *Kurban in the Balkans*. Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, pp.109–136.

De Jong, Frederick 1993. Problems concerning the origins of the Qızılbāş in Bulgaria: remnants of the Safaviyya? *La shi'a a nell' Impero Ottomano*, Vol. 25. Roma: Accademia Nationale dei Lincei, pp. 203–215.

Dnes plus media http://www.dnesplus.bg/News.aspx?n=628502 (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Dimitrov, Strashimir 1995. Kum istoriyata na dobrudzhanskite dvuobredni svetilishta [To the History of the Dobrudzha Biritual Sanctuaries]. *Dobrudzha*, Vol. 11, pp. 76–97.

Eliade, Mircea 1961 [1952]. *Images and symbols.* London: Harvill Press.

Erolova, Yelis 2010. *Dobrudzha – granitsi i identichnosti* [Dobrudzha – Borders and Identities]. Sofia: Paradigma.

Eyice, Semavi 1967. Varna ile Balçik arasında Akyazılı Sultan Tekkesi [The Tekke of Akyazılı Sultan between Varna and Balchik]. *Belleten, Türk Tarih Kurumu*, 31/124. Ekim, Ankara, pp. 551–600.

Gadzhanov, Dimitar (translation) 1909. Patuvane na Evliya Çelebi iz bulgarskite zemi prez sredata na XVII vek [Trip of Evliya Çelebi to the Bulgarian land in the middle of XVIIth c.]. *Periodchesko spisanie*. *Bulgarsko Knizhovno Druzhestvo*, 70: 639–724.

Georgieva, Ivanichka 1991. *Bulgarskite aliani* [Bulgarian Alians]. Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo 'Sv. Kliment Ohridski', Istoricheski Muzey – Grad Isperih.

Gramatikova, Nevena 2001. Prevratnostite na vremeto i problemut s identichnostta na alianite v Bulgaria [Changing Fates and the Issue of Alevi Identity in Bulgaria]. Antonina Zhelyazkova i Jorgen Nielsen (eds.). *Ethnologiya na sufitskite ordeni – teoria i praktika*. Sofia: IMIR, pp. 254–318 (in Bulgarian), pp. 548–563 (in English).

Gramatikova, Nevena 2002. Otman Baba – One of the Spiritual Patrons of Islamic Heterodoxy in Bulgarian Lands. *Études balkaniques*, 3. Sofia: Académie bulgare des sciences, pp. 71–102.

Hotels in Obrochishte. http://www.namerihotel.com/bg/obrochishte.html

Iliev, Boris 2006. Legendite za Demir Baba – Zhelezniyat bashta [Legends of Demir Baba – Iron Father]. Boris Iliev and Anatoliy Kanchev (eds.). *Demir Baba – Zhelezniyat bashta*. Sofia: IK Gutenberg, pp. 12–46.

Irechek, Konstantin 1974. *Patuvaniya po Bulgaria* [Trips in Bulgaria]. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo.

Ivanova, Evgeniya 2001. Tyurbeto na Sara Baba nad s. Momchilovtsi, Smolyansko [The Sara Baba Tomb over the Village of Momchilovtsi, Smolyan Region]. *Bulgarska Ethnologia*, XXVII (3), pp. 66–77.

Kanchov, Vasil 1901. *Iz Bulgarska Dobrudzha. Patni belezhki* [In Bulgarian Dobrudzha. Trip notes]. Sofia.

Karamihova, Margarita 2002. *Prikazki za Osman Baba* [A Tale for Osman Baba]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo 'Prof. Marin Drinov'

Margos, Ara 1972. *Teketo Ak Yazılı baba: patevoditel* [The Ak Yazılı Baba tekke: Guidebook]. Tolbuhin: Okrazhen istoricheski muzei Tolbuhin.

Marushiakova, Elena & Popov, Vesselin 2000. *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire.* Sofia: Litavra.

Mauss, Marcel 1990 [1922]. *The Gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. London: Routledge.

Melikoff, Irene 1999. Razmisli po problema bektashi-alevi [Reflections on the Bektashi-Alevi Problem]. Galina Lozanova and Lyubomir Mikov (eds.). *Islyam and kultura*. Sofia: IMIR, pp. 11–24.

Mikov, Lyubomir 2001. Spetsifika na sufitskata arhitektura v Bulgaria (XVI–XX vek) [Specifics of the 16th – 20th c. Sufi Architecture in Bulgaria]. Antonina Zhelyazkova i Jorgen Nielsen (eds.). *Ethnologiya na sufitskite ordeni – teoria i praktika*. Sofia: IMIR, pp. 187–219 (in Bulgarian), pp. 502–531 (in English).

Mikov, Lyubomir. 2002. Interiorna ukrasa na bektashkite grobnitsi v Bulgaria (stenopisi, kartini, shtampi) [Interior Decoration of Bektashi Tombs in Bulgaria (Mural Painting, Pictures, Prints)]. Rositsa Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova (eds.). *Myusulmasnkata kultura po bulgarskite zemi,* 2. Sofia: IMIR, pp. 520–550 (in Bulgarian).

Mikov, Lyubomir 2005. *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Bulgaria (XVI–XX vek). Bektashi i kuzulbashi / alevii* [The Art of Heterodox Muslims in Bulgaria (XVI–XX century). Bektaşi and Kızılbaş / Alevii]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo 'Prof. Marin Drinov'.

Mirella Real Estate Agency. http://www.mirela.bg/prodavaimoti/%D1%81%D0%9E%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%89%D0%B5-zxc31q1857.html (Accessed 14.02.2014).

Norris, Harry 1993. *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab world.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Obschina Balchik [Municipality of Balchik]. http://www.balchik.bg (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Popov, Rachko 2002. *Svetsi i demoni na Balkanite* [Saints and Demons in the Balkans]. Sofia: Svyat i nauka.

Population census 2001. *NCCEDI* [National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues] http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=92&id=247 (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Radionova, Diana 1994. Teketo na Ak yazili baba pri selo Obrochishte, Balchishko [The Akyazılı Baba in Obrochishte, the region of Balchik]. *Dobrudzha*, 11 (1), pp. 61–75.

Respublika Balgaria. Nacionalen Statisticheski Institut [National Statistic Institute]. http://www.nsi.bg/ (Accessed 10.08. 2017).

Salazar, Noel 2012. Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research, UK.* Vol. 39 (2). Imprint: ELSEVIER, pp. 863–882.

Selo 359.com. http://www.selo359.com/index.php (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Sikimić, Biljana & Hristov, Petko (eds.) 2007. *Kurban in the Balkans*. Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Slavkova, Magdalena 2007. Evangelical Gypsies in Bulgaria: way of life and performance of identity. *Romani Studies*, Vol. 17 (2), pp. 205–247.

Turism in Obrochishte. *Guide Bulgaria. Com.* http://poseti.guide-bulgaria.com/NE/dobrich/balchik/obrochishte (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Vagalinska, Irina 2011–2017. Za kostite na edin kral. *Tema*. http://www.temanews.com/index.php?p=tema&iid=780&aid=17629 (Accessed 10.08.2017).

Vasileva, Margarita 1970. *Kalendarni obichai* [Kalendar Customs]. Archiv of Ethnographic Institute with Museum (AEIM), 683–III.

Venedikova, Katerina. 2006. Iz zhitiyeto na Demir Baba [A Fragment from Saint's life of Demir Baba]. Boris Iliev and Anatoliy Kanchev (eds.). *Demir Baba – Zhelezniyat bashta*. Sofia: IK Gutenberg, pp. 96–103.

Yankova, Veneta 2007. *Toposi, pamet, identichnosti* (*Kym folklore na myusyulmanite i hristiyanite v Shumensko*) [Topoi, Memory, Identities. (The Folklore of the Muslims and Christinas in Shumen region)]. Veliko Tarnovo: Faber.

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.05

Turkish Religious Identity in Bulgaria in the Last Twenty-Four Years (1989–2013)

Mila Maeva

Balkan Ethnology Department, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
mila_maeva@yahoo.co.uk

The article is focused on the religious identity of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria during the last 24 years presented in three main trends: the process of re-Islamization or revitalization of Islam, rejection of religion as an ideology (atheistic ideas), and situational attitude related to the manifestation or hidden religious beliefs and behaviour according to the given situation or interlocutor. The contemporary Turkish confessional identity could be understandable in light of the communist past and the so called "Revival process". Even though there was a strong process of "re-Islamization" after 1989, the majority of Turks in Bulgaria are secularly disposed. The fundamental reason for this is the atheistic attitude of the post-modern Bulgarian society as a whole. The overlapping of ethnic and religious identity is primary for the representatives of that minority. The primordial markers such as ethnic origin and cultural traditions are more important than global "Umma".
Key words: Islam, Turks, Bulgaria, identity

In Bulgarian science, the Turkish community has long been the centre of researcher's attention. Settled in 14th century during the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans,[1] it comprises 588,318 people or around 8.8% of the whole population.[2] The biggest part of Turkish population is made up of Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite School and the Shià community counts just 27,407 people.[3] The Turkish communities are mostly rural. They are concentrated in a few Bulgarian regions such as Kurdjali (101,116 people) in Southern Bulgaria, Razgrad (71,963 people) and Shumen (59,551) in Northeast Bulgaria, Burgas (58,636) in Eastern Bulgaria etc.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to make some clarifications. Most researchers use the name *Alevi* or *Aliani* community for the Shià Muslims in Bulgaria.[4] Other researchers describe them as "heterodox/unorthodox Muslims" (Aleksiev 2012; Georgieva 1991;

Gramatikova 2011; Karamihova 2002; Mikov 1997, 2005). According to my field studies in Northern and Southern Bulgaria, the representatives of the community identified themselves differently. For example, most people from the Bivolyane village in Kardzhali region and from the Shiroka Polyana village, Haskovo region (Southern Bulgaria) identified themselves as *Bektashi* or *Kazilbashi* while Turks in the Mogilets and Yablanovo villages (North-eastern Bulgaria) – as *Alevi* or *Aliani* (AIMIR No. 3321/19. 02.2004). Moreover, the people from those communities revealed small practical and ideological differences in the local religious rituals.

The role of religion in contemporary Turkish self-determination is significant as during the 45 years of communist regime in the country the communist government used a wide range of radical social mechanisms aspiring to alienate the community from Islamic norms and practices. The policy of the Bulgarian communist party (BCP) towards the Turkish minority in the country after it came to power in 1944 changed many times and was in compliance with the lack of a well-defined course from the preceding period after the restoration of the Bulgarian State in 1878. For that reason, it is not possible to talk about a hard-line policy towards Bulgarian Turks, as well as towards other minority groups such as the Gypsies, Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks), Jews, Armenians etc. In general, the ethnic policy of the BCP swung like a pendulum from the provision of rights to periodical waves of emigration to the attempts for accession and enforced assimilation (Eminov 1990; Poulton 1993).

Leading by ideology of scientific atheism, the communist regime in Bulgaria perceived Islam as the most serious obstacle "in the path of Turkish integration". Therefore, the BCP leaders endeavoured to overcome confessional differences in the country. 1958 they accepted the thesis against religious fanaticism and for imposition of atheistic education. Party committees and social organizations were required to conduct such propaganda among the Turkish population to "undermine the religious view". The first measures were administrative. April 7, 1960 Politburo ordered the Committee of Religious Affairs "to provide zoning of settlements with the Turkish population in 500 regions of Bulgaria and those with Moslem religion in 80 regions." Persons loyal to the state authorities were appointed for all religious people and they were subjected to special

ideological training. After raising the slogan "every imam – a member of Security Agency" the Bulgarian state started paying monthly wages ranging from 300 to 450 leva per religious official (Trifonov 1991: 10). At the beginning of 1960s, the Central Committee of BCP held a meeting concerning "condition and tasks of atheistic propaganda among the Turkish population." It assessed that the atheistic propaganda was in danger and not successful. Until the beginning of 1960s, 2/3 of the Turkish population preserved their faith, 95% of young people contracted religious marriages, 99% of children were circumcised. BCP decided to impose new administrative measures and propaganda activities to eliminate the role of religion in public life and family, to "clear the domestic traditions from religious content" and enforced "the socialist traditions and rituals" (Yalamov 2002: 328).

1959 a special directive by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare ordered circumcision to be performed by doctors while the ritual was to be abandoned by the Muslims. In the same year, a campaign against veils also started. It was forbidden for Turkish women to wear headscarves and *shalwars* in public. Limiting the Islamic norms, mixing religious and communist ideology inevitably affected the religiosity of the Bulgarian Turks. As a result of those measures, 1987 BCP found that young Turkish women were already dressed in a modern way and they wore *shalwars* mainly at home. "We also have a decisive breakthrough in the fight against the circumcision of children. In many villages and municipalities no children have been circumcised in the recent years."[5]

On the other hand, the communist regime initiated a process of imposing of new civil rites related to the naming of new-born children, weddings, funerals and traditional festivals and fairs. "The agents of State Security services observe people visiting mosques or participating in the Islamic rituals. New mosques are not being constructed and a gradual process of promoting new commemorative monuments on graves is underway."[6] All described trends can be assessed as a desire to strengthen the atheistic influence of acculturation and to construct a common "socialist culture" for all ethnic groups in the country.

The most impressive assimilation – the so called 'Revival process' (*Vyzroditelen proces*) happened between 1984 and 1989 and it was



Figure 1. Turkish family. Nedelino, Southern Bulgaria, 2002.

considered a political instrument for construction of "a new Bulgarian socialist" nation. It influenced different Turkish identification markers such as the myth of ethnic origin, language, name, religion, rituals etc. The "Revival process" started June 19, 1984. The document compiled by the Politburo of the Central Committee of BCP

stated that "differentiation of Bulgarian Turks, manifestations of Turkish nationalism, religious fanaticism and everyday conservatism continue". The communist leaders decided "to accelerate the development of the districts with a compact mass of Bulgarian Turks, to settle specialists in those regions, to develop the Turkish intelligence, to promote the system of mixed marriages, to impose communications in the Bulgarian language in public places and to suspend the constructions of new mosques" (Assenov 1991; Tsvetkova 2000). December 10, 1984 the Ministry of the Interior provided instructions to start renaming Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in all the regions where such population lived.[7]

The next stage in the conducting of the so called "Revival process" was the replacement of Turkish names with Christian ones or, respectively, Slavonic names of the Bulgarian Turks first in the Southern and afterwards in the Northern Bulgaria as well.[8] The campaign itself started around Christmas in 1984. It happened in the same manner everywhere – the villages were surrounded by the army and militia, leaving was forbidden, telephone connections were cut off, identity papers were taken away from people and they were compelled to sign declarations stating that they did not have any relatives in Turkey and that they did not want to emigrate and that they voluntarily changed their names (Stoyanov 1998: 163). Enrolment forms were handed over for the selection of a new name. In areas where people found out about the change of the names beforehand, they ran into forests and mountains and hid for several days but the cold weather forced them to go back and obey the police (AIEM No. 574-III: 33). In some parts of the country, Turkish population organized mass protests against the renaming, but in others everything happened fast and without incidents. The Turkish resistance against the change of the names resulted in conflicts with the army and the militia and some people were even killed. Others died as a consequence of mental cruelty during the renaming. Those Turks, who managed to avoid imprisonment, were dismissed and settled separately inside or outside of the country (AIEM No. 574-III: 28, 35–36). In that manner, the names of over 310,000 people were changed.[9] Sometimes even gravestones with Turkish or Arabic names were replaced.

The change of names was followed by prohibiting such things as speaking Turkish in public places, practicing Islamic customs and rituals, listening to Turkish music and wearing traditional Muslim clothing etc. as a way to incorporate Turkish population into "the socialist way of living" (Eminov 2000; Stoianov 1998).

After carrying out the so called "Revival process", attempts were made for ideological justification. February 1988 "Theses on the Revival Process" were presented. It was noted that this was "a process of revival, clarification and enhancement of the Bulgarian national consciousness" (Zagorov 1993: 60). Bulgaria declared that all the Muslims were inheritors not of the "colonizers Turks, but of Bulgarians forcibly Islamized in the course of Turkish yoke".[10] An ideological connection was made to Bulgarian national Revival started by Paisiy Hilendarski and his "Slavonic Bulgarian History" in 1762. The communist ideology spoke of a new contemporary Revival of that part of the Bulgarian people, that had been torn away from the main Bulgarian **ethnos** because of historical circumstances and who had been Islamized and had started to speak the Turkish language. The role of the **ethnos** in regard to identity determination was suggested. The idea of one nation state was maintained by viewing nation and nationality as overlapping: "the measure for ethnic belonging is the connection with the Bulgarian nation.... Bulgarian nation is formed on the ethnic cultural inheritance of one nationality – the Bulgarian one" (Zhivkov 1988). In this manner, the nation itself was identified with the dominating **ethnos** ignoring the variety of its ethnic ingredients. To attain the idea of a unified Bulgarian nation, it needed to be proven that the Turkish population belongs to the Bulgarian **ethnos**. The process of Revival is a "reinstatement, clarification and ratification of Bulgarian national consciousness in all those Bulgarians with proven Bulgarian origin whose forefathers and ancestors were converted to Islam during the yoke. In a wide sense, this is a process that reinstates the moral and political unity of the nation and contributes to the building up of the Bulgarian socialist nation" (Petrov 1988).

The common ideological formulations contributed to the appearance of a new **exonym**. The communist power introduced the term of "citizens with reinstated names". The propaganda spoke of "Islamized Bulgarians", emphasizing in this manner the forcible

imposition of Islam (Krysteva 1998). The other name – "Bulgarians with different degree of patriotic consciousness, of religious convictions"[11] – introduced the idea of different degrees of devotion to the Bulgarian state.

Undoubtedly those dramatic events reflected on the contemporary Turkish religious identity and behaviour visible in three main trends:

- Strengthening the role of religion and a return of religiosity (the process of **re-Islamization** or **revitalization of Islam**);
- Rejection of religion as an ideology (atheistic ideas);
- Situational attitude related to the manifestation of hidden religious beliefs and behaviour according to the given situation or interlocutor.

A starting point for the research is the EURO 2000 Survey about the depth of religious faith in Bulgaria. According to its data, just 28% of the Turkish population is deeply religious, 47 % is religious to some extent, and 19% is mostly unreligious. (Kanev 2002:77)[12]

Re-Islamization or revitalization of Islam

The violent assimilation and the restrictions imposed upon the Turkish minority provoked a process of return to the Islamic religion after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The resistance forces of the group were awakened and the community aspired to find out the truth about its origin, to go back to religion and to reinstate the forgotten traditions. The people started not only to feel but also publicly declared their belonging to the Turkish and Muslim community. Generally, at the end of communist regime and at the beginning of democratic changes in Bulgaria, the representatives of the Turkish community restored or more precisely "clarified" their Turkish and Islamic ethnic, religious and cultural self-consciousness.

On the other hand, the open borders and free movement and migration between Bulgaria, Turkey and Western countries started the invasion of Islam in Bulgaria. Turks were influenced by different Islamic teachings and schools, some of them coming from Saudi



Figure 2. Alevi girls in tradition clothes. Mogilets, Targovishte region, Northern East Bulgaria, 2006.

Arabia, and very often they made their own choice regarding which Islamic school they belong to.



Figure 3. Alevi`s kana gecesi (the night of the kana). Mogilets, Targovishte region, Northern East Bulgaria, 2006.

Formally the process of Islamic revitalization is visible in the reinstatement of the "Turkish-Arabic names". After long debates and inspired by the BCP nationalist protests, the Act of the Reinstatement of Muslim Names was voted on March 5, 1990. By March 1,

1991, more than 600,000 applications were processed and approved (Kynev 1998: 67–117).

In order to provide religious education and to train future Islamic spiritual leaders, the Islamic College at the Office of the Chief Mufti in Sofia is established in 1990. Later on, three secondary Islamic schools (situated in Ruse, Shumen and Momchilgrad) were founded in the country.[13] A lot of young Turks received opportunities for religious studies abroad in Turkey, Iran or in Arabic countries.

Elective classes in Islam were introduced in public schools in 2000. Students used textbooks suggested by the Chief Muftiate and approved by the Ministry of Education. The classes were conducted in the Bulgarian language once a week and they were funded by the muftiate. According to official statistics of the Chief Mufti's Office in Bulgaria, a total of 3,372 students attended classes in Islam at elementary schools in 2011. 2012/2013, classes in Islam were taught in 27 schools around the country (Merdjanova 2013A: 471).

After 1989, most of the Turks, who up to that time did not know the Islamic norms, studied them and commenced to fulfil them zealously. Free courses of Koran were organized in every bigger Turkish village. The Koran has been translated into Turkish and Bulgarian. Many people, in particular the younger population, started to read the Muslim holy book. The prohibition of the Muslim customs and rituals during the communist regime and especially during the Revival process generated the public participation in them after the fall of the communist regime. The mass rituals, such as public circumcisions, were organized enhancing the belonging to the Muslim community:

> *We have a program of mass circumcision of Muslim children. This is a new bloodless method practiced for many years – with lazar...A special doctor is appointed by the Mufti. According to the Muslim religion, Mohammed was born circumcised and all Muslims should be circumcised.*
>
> *The Muslim denomination undertakes the expenses and gives special clothes to the children. It also gives kourban, distributes food, and makes a special prayer for the health of the children. Each child receives a gift – a toy car or a knife. The Mufti finds sponsors for the circumcision.* (AIEM 642-III: 20)

Many Turks started to learn how to do the five-day prayer and fast during Bayrams. Now it is typical for Turkish villages to organise "iftar sofrasa" (ritual dinner during *Ramazan* fast) gathering all people irrespective of their religious belonging: "We organize iftar, not for the poor but for understanding between religions. We invite priests, Christians, important persons to show that people can live together" (AIEM 642-III: 35).

In view of the fact that most of Turkish people are builders, they opened or reconstructed the old mosques demolished during the communist regime. The renovation of *tűrbes* and *tekkes* buildings and construction of new religious centres is also visible in many regions with Turkish population. The main financial support comes from abroad, from the World Muslim League and a number of Islamic charity organisations and funds (mostly in the Middle East and Iran) (Marushiakova & Popov: 43) as well as from emigrants in Turkey and Western Europe. By 1997 there were 1,041 functioning mosques in the country. According to official statistics of the Chief Mufti's Office in Bulgaria, the total number of functioning mosques in the country in 2011 was around 1,200.[14] Those massive and impressive buildings have not just practical functions but, according the agents, they are a kind of demonstration and a visible presentation of their "Turkishness" especially in the mixed regions.

The process of re-Islamization is more visible in women's clothing. After 1989, many of them, especially those in small villages, wear *shalwars* and headscarves. Many Turkish girls and young women in Bulgaria put on headscarves for religious ceremonies (such as *Mewlids* or funerals) or when visiting mosques and other Muslim places such as *tűrbes*.

The emigration and life in the Western European countries with large Muslim minorities also contribute to the strengthening of religious faith and practices. Some of the emigrants who work in countries like Germany, Holland, Belgium and France indicated that they learned a lot about their own religion during their stay abroad. Some of the Turks are impressed by the behaviour of the local Muslims in the European Union: "In Belgium they are a long way ahead of us. Can you imagine how many young people go to their mosques and how many things they know?" (AIEM 642-III: 38). During their life in emigration, a part of the Turks follow Islamic



Figure 4. Alevi`s kana gecesi (the night of the kana). Mogilets, Targovishte region, Northern East Bulgaria, 2006.
Figure 5. Nikah (religious marriage). Kardjali, Southern Bulgaria, 2006.





Figure 6. Alevi`s kana gecesi (the night of the kana). Mogilets, Targovishte region, Northern East Bulgaria, 2006.

norms and practices, often almost indiscriminately, according to their own preferences and according to the specifics of the religious school which they visited.

After returning to Bulgaria, they continue to practice Islam and even demonstrate their Muslim identity through some visible markers such as beards in "Arabic style" or by carrying Shià religious symbols such as "Ali's sword". Some Turks insist on their wives being veiled as a demonstration of their confessional belonging. Others get tattoos with Islamic symbols or words: "I told the boss: "We are Muslims. Let's write: "*Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim*". Might not be in conspicuous position" (AIEM 642-III: 31).

The fieldwork materials from 1999 to 2013 show that the process of "Islamic revitalization" is typical mainly for the older generation and especially for retirees. Only the elderly people attend mosques frequently and strictly observe Islamic injunctions and taboos (the prohibition to eat pork and drink alcohol): "Father went to pray. Because if he does not go, he's an old man, people should say: "That's a shame"" (AIEM 642-III: 18).

After the fall of the communist regime, predominantly older women renewed the tradition of praying together at home. Usually on Thursdays, they gather in one house and organize a *Mawlid* prayer in memory of deceased relatives. After that, they make and distribute *katmi* ('pancakes') or sweets for the dead relatives.

It is noteworthy that those Turks who were supporters of the communist ideology in Bulgaria became zealous Muslims and started to practice Islamic rituals after the fall of the communist regime. On the other hand, re-Islamization is typical for a small number of young people who learned abroad and who are supporters of Islamic traditions. Their knowledge of Islam, however, often led to conflicts with the older people who have their own ways of practicing religion.

Secularisation process

"Secularization" means "a process of declination of the influence of religion" and it is related to atheism. According to Zuckerman, modern Bulgaria is remarkably similar to Western Europe in terms of a general decline in religious belief, despite its lack of state-church separation. For instance, in 2006, Bulgaria ranked 17th out of the 50 most atheist countries in the world, joining the overwhelmingly European top 20. The study found that 34–40% of the Bulgarian population was atheistic, agnostic, or non-religious (Zuckerman

2009: 951; Ghodsee 2009: 233). According to another study by Kanev only 13.7% of respondents wanted their children to regularly attend "church/mosque/synagogue." However, 52.4% of Bulgarian Christians and 52% of Turks living in Bulgaria said that they wanted their children to be religious "just as a cultural identity." Another nationally representative survey conducted in 1999 found that 96% of ethnic Bulgarians said that they were Christians and 98% of the Turkish minority declared themselves Muslim (Ghodsee 2009: 233). In analysing these results, the Bulgarian scholar Petar Kanev concluded that religion in Bulgaria is "rather peculiar" and argued that being "religious" and believing in God had little to do with each other. Despite all of this, even after 1989, since when the world Islam has been methodically seeking to gain back its lost positions among Muslims of Bulgaria, the percentage of the local Turkish population remaining atheist is not small (Kanev 2002: 84).

Those statistics support my fieldwork finds among representatives of the Turkish minority. Even though there are free religious courses and Islamic propaganda in Bulgaria, majority of Turks have limited knowledge of their own religion, Islamic beliefs and practices and only a small number of them follow the prescriptions of the *Koran* and *Sheria*. As an agent told: "I believe in Allah, but I haven't got time to pray."

Secularism is particularly visible in the way of life. After the first peak of religious behaviour in 1990s and even though having a mosque in each neighbourhood or village is considered necessary, the research showed that the mosques are usually attended by elderly men who are daily anointed not only as a duty to Allah, but as a kind of fun. For example, in 2013 the new mosque in Chernoochene village (near Kardjali in South Bulgaria) was visited by a few old men during the week. The biggest part of Turkish population visits and prays in the mosques on Fridays only or during the *Ramazan* or only on *Bayrams*. Another Turk added: "Here in Kurdzhali young people still come to the big mosque, but if you go to the villages you will only see elderly men. Very often you meet young Turks, who don't know anything [about Islam – Mila Maeva's note]." (AIEM 642-III: 38); "The young people are not religious" (AIEM 642-III: 18).

Secularization is visible in everyday Turkish culture. Due to the long atheistic propaganda and the strong assimilation process,

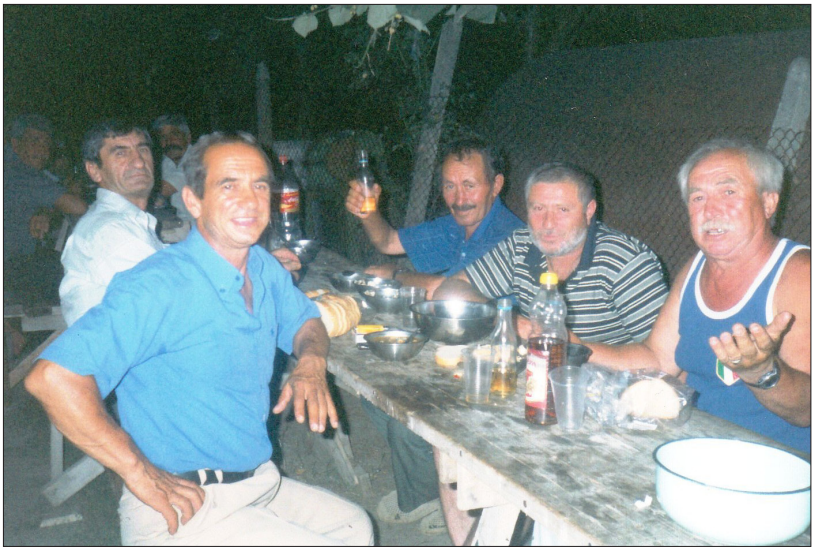


Figure 7. Alevi`s kana gecesi (the night of the kana). Mogilets, Targovishte region, Northern East Bulgaria, 2006.
Figure 8. Nikah (religious marriage). Kardjali, Southern Bulgaria, 2006.





Figure 9. Iftar sofrasi (ritual dinner during Ramazan fast). Kardali, Southern Bulgaria, 2006.

numerous Bulgarian and Christian cultural elements entered into the Turkish culture and they are still alive there. Some of the representatives of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria keep on using their two names (Muslim and Bulgarian ones) as an easier way to emigrate to Western Europe and to cope with Muslim negativism in the European countries (see Maeva 2007). Many Turks continue practicing various Bulgarian customs and rituals. For example, they celebrate the holiday of wine (St. Trifon's day) on February 14 or wear *martenitsi* (red and white thread symbolizing the start of the spring on March 1). Nowadays, the young Turks as well as young Bulgarians celebrate the St. Valentine's Day (February 14) buying red roses and red lingerie for their girlfriends or wives.

For many Turks, the "permitted" and "forbidden" foods do not exist. Even though there is a well-organized system of *halal* shops, especially in mixed regions, a lot of my agents continue to eat non-*halal* food. The restrictions of pork and alcohol are just optional practices.

The situation is the same with the dress code – many young Turkish girls and women dress in a fashionable way without headscarves.

The modern influences are also visible in the most conservative rites such as funeral rituals – for example some Turks make obituaries (with flowers) and bury their deceased with clothes and coffin, practices connected to heavy conflicts with religious people such as *imams*. The same disagreements create the refusal of local *imams* to bury people who had not changed their imposed Bulgarian names back to Islamic ones. They insist also on removing headstones with photos[15] of the deceased, an Orthodox practice, from Muslim tombs (see Broun 2007).

The reasons for this tendency of secularism or "laicization of Islam" (see Kalkandjieva, Schnitter 2007) in Bulgaria are both internal and external. Reasons for this can be the limitations of religious knowledge due to family environment, the strong influence of secular education, the long period of atheistic views and ideas imposed by the communist regime, and spiritual weakness of institutions during the totalitarian rule. The limited role of religion in the world also has a strong influence. Many Turks often explain their secularization with communist rule and the prohibition to practice Islam. It is clear that secular education, economic development and social mobility reduce the influence of religion too.

Situational Religiosity/Secularism

In many cases, Turks in Bulgaria are divided between religiosity and secularization depending on the situation they fall in. The general impression is that the deep religiosity appears in families with older people or in situations of individual or community crisis, while secular behaviour points to such outsiders as Bulgarians, Christians or even younger people.

Some of the Turks observe the Muslim orders and tradition during sacred periods. For example, one of my agents told that he rejects using pork and alcohol only during the holy month of *Ramazan*. According to other experiences shared with me, a family prepared barbecue with pork meat in the garden because the old grandmother did not allow it in the house. A third agent expressed his own view on religion: "I have a liberal attitude towards Islam; it means that

I decided what to do and not do. So I do not do *namaz* five times a day, but I keep *oruch* [the Muslim fast]. As a student, I did, but now I'm a bit lazy" (AIEM 642-III: 27).

The observation of Islamic norms and practices happens in crisis situations, such as someone's death, because the life cycle rites are one of the most conservative cultural elements. During that period, the majority of Turks return to the Islamic traditions and fulfil them zealously as a way to send their relative successfully to the life after death.

The return to the Muslim traditions is also evident in some other cases, such as safely coming home from work abroad (*gurbet*). The arrival from emigration to the birth place is celebrated by sending prayers to Allah. For example, upon their return from abroad, *Alevi* Muslims from the Omourtag region visit Ali baba's *tűrbe* located in the Balkan Range. The event usually gathers a few migrant workers and their relatives. A Thursday or a Sunday are considered most appropriate for this purpose, those two being sacred days for them. The ascension of the mountain peak is accompanied by prayers and lighting of candles in gratitude for the successful gourbet and in hope of a future easy journey. An animal is slaughtered, roasted and eaten on spot. There has been no indication as to the species of the animal. Often it is considered of no consequence. A variety of this with the Sunni is the *shukyur kourban*. This is again a thanksgiving of sorts for the help of Allah during the stay abroad. The choice of sacrificial animal follows the prescriptions for korban: "Muslims prefer a black ram" (AIEM 642-III: 26). The family of the migrant worker does not eat from the korban. It is entirely donated either as raw or boiled meat and the hide of the animal or the money they obtain through its sale is donated to the local mosque. Money donations are common among those who have returned home safely from gourbet. The sums increase if the donation is done during the month of the Ramazan or any of the Bayrams. The korban and the money donations are a proof of the significance attributed to the return to the motherland and the native place. But they are also a way to demonstrate belonging to the confessional community and to preserve the Islamic identity of the migrant workers (Maeva 2007).

As N. Ragaru mentioned, Turks in Bulgaria manage to combine a secular, consumerist lifestyle, and devotion to modern technol-

ogy with the knowledge and observance of religious prescriptions, according to a social or cultural situation (Ragaru 2001). Many of them shared the vision that ethnic and religious affiliation overlap: "Community accepts that as a Turk you are Muslim" (AIEM 642-III: 38). For that reason, the majority of the Turkish population think of themselves as Muslim and even as "good" Muslims.

Common opinion is that Islam in Bulgaria is specific, different from Islam in Europe and Arabic countries. Turkish population in the country supports the thesis about Balkan Islam as more tolerant and as a "genuine European Islam", since its followers are autochthonous and largely secularized Muslims contrasted with a "non-European Islam" encompassing not only those countries with a Muslim majority, but also the Muslim migrants who settled in Western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century (Bougarel 2005: 147).

Generally, Turkish minority in Bulgaria treats religion more as a cultural tradition and identity rather than a sacred communication and spiritual commitment (see Ghodsee 2009: 232–233).

Conclusion

The changes in the Turkish religious affiliation in the last 24 years have their roots in the communist past, the policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party and in the so called "Revival process". Other important factors are the long period of transition, emigration waves to Turkey and Western Europe and the emergence of new Islamic studies. Despite the strong process of "re-Islamization" of Turks in Bulgaria, the activities of Islamic organizations (mostly Turkish, less Arabic ones trying to attract Turks to their side), or the religious propaganda conducted by emissaries from abroad, the majority of Turks in Bulgaria are secularly disposed. The fundamental reason for this is the atheistic attitude of Bulgarian society as a whole. The overlapping of ethnic and religious identity – "Turk" means "Muslim" – has been primary among the representatives of the Turkish minority during the last 24 years. Despite the processes of borders opening, globalization and Islamic propaganda, belonging to the universal "Umma" community is far behind the primordial markers such as ethnic origin and cultural traditions.

Acknowledgement

A part of the research was conducted in the framework of the project "Dynamics of the processes of return and reintegration of Bulgarian emigrants" (DMU 03/52, 12.12.2011), financed by the Bulgarian science fund.

Notes

[1] About the origin and settlement of Turkish population on the Balkans see Zhelyazkova 2001 and Eminov 2007.

[2] http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/2/2/R7.aspx

According to the experts, representatives of the Turkish-speaking Gypsies and Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) are identified as Turks too (Marushiakova & Popov 2004: 57).

[3] http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/2/2/R10.aspx

A small part of Turks – Gagauz – are Orthodox Christians. In Bulgarian science there is a long discussion about the origin of Gagauz. Many scholars support the thesis that the Gagauz community with Bulgarian origin lost their Bulgarian language during the Ottoman rule. The second theory claims that they are the descendants of Turkic people who came from Asia Minor and settled on Bulgarian territory during the Ottoman Empire (see Eminov 2000; Karpat 1991; Mateeva 2006; Stamenova 1998).

[4] Officially that population was qualified as "Shià Muslims" by national Census in 2011.

[5] Report "Za systoianieto, niakoi problemi i zadachi za po-natatyshnoto razvitie na vyzroditelniia proces" 1987– CDA, f. 1b, op. 63, a e. 2, s. 6–9.

[6] op. cit.

[7] Archivse of Bulgarian Interior Ministry, a report of the operation from December 10, 1984.

[8] V. Ozkan qualified the Revival process as "Namecide process" (Ozkan 2012).

[9] Report by Georgi Athanassov concerning a meeting with communist leaders on January 18, 1985, Central State Achive, Sofia (CDA, ch. 1b, op. 63, a. e. 72).

[10] Report by Georgi Athanassov concerning a meeting with communist leaders on January 18, 1985 – *Prava i svobodi*, br. 4, 1991, 9.

[11] CDA, ch. 147 b, op. 2, a. e. 2989, l. 6.

[12] Other research done in 2011 showed that religious Muslims in Bulgaria are 28,5%, only 8,1% of them think that the one true religion exists, 41% never go to the mosque and 59,3% never pray. On the other hand, 90% of Muslims circumcise their children and 96% bury deceased according to Muslim traditions. (Ivanova 2011).

[13] http://www.islamicinstitute-bg.org/

About relations between Grand Mufti and political parties and leaders in Bulgaria see Eminov 1999.

[14] http://www.grandmufti.bg/bg/aboutus/2009-04-20-14-58-33.html

[15] The perception that the deceased changes form of existence after death and looks different than in the earthly life dominates in the Islamic view.

Sources

AIEM - Archives of Ethnographic Institute with Museum, Sofia.

CDA - Central State Archives, Sofia.

References

Aleksiev, Bozhidar 2012. *Sedem miusiulmanski svetci ot Balgariia.* Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Professor Marin Drinov".

Asenov, Boicho 1991. Vazroditelniiat proces proces i Darzhavna sigurnost *Prava i svobodi*, pp. 5–9.

Biuksenshiuts, Ulf 2000. *Maltsinstvenata politika v Bylgariia. Politikata na BKP kym evrei, romi, pomaci i turci (1944–1989).* Sofia: IMIR.

Bougarel, Xavier 2005. Balkan Muslim Diasporas and the Idea of a "European Islam". Dulić, Tomislav *et al.* (eds.). *Balkan Currents. Essays in Honour of Kjell Magnusson*. Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 49. Uppsala: Uppsala University, pp. 147–165.

Broun, Janice 2007. Rehabilitation and recovery: Bulgaria's muslim communities. *Religion, State and Society*, 35 (2), pp. 105–138.

Eminov, Ali 1997. *Turkish and other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.* Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Book Series no. 6. London: Routledge.

Eminov, Ali 1999. The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments. *Nationalities Papers*, 27 (1), pp. 31–55.

Eminov, Ali 2000. Turks and Tatars in Bulgaria and the Balkans. *Nationalities Papers*, 28 (1), pp. 129–164.

Georgieva, Ivanichka (ed.) 1991. *Bylgarskite aliani (sbornik etnografski materiali)*. Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo.

Ghodsee, Kristen 2009. Symphonic Secularism: Eastern Orthodoxy, Ethnic Identity and Religious Freedoms in Contemporary Bulgaria. *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 27 (2) (Fall), pp. 227–258.

Ghodsee, Kristen. 2009. *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Grand mufti 2009. *Glavno myufiistvo. Miusulmiansko ispovedenie.* http://www.grandmufti.bg/bg/aboutus/2009-04-20-14-58-33.html (Accessed 11.08.2017).

Gramatikova, Nevena 2011. *Neortodoksalniiat isliam v bylgarskite zemi.* Sofia: Gutenberg.

Ivanova, Evgeniya 2011. V Balgariya nyama politicheski islyam. *Balgarsko-Helsinki Komitet.*
http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/novini/bg/single/prof-evgeniya-ivanova-v-blgariya-nyama-politicheski-islyam/

Kalkandjieva, Daniela & Schnitter, Maria 2007. Religion and European Integration in Bulgaria. Polzer, Miroslav, Devetak, Silvo, Toplak, Ludvik, Unger, Felix & Eder, Maria (eds.). *Religion and European Integration. Religion as a Factor of Stability and Development in South Eastern Europe.* Proceedings of contributions from the Maribor Symposium 2005. Book series of European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Vol. 6. Weimar: Druck: VDG, pp. 351–376.
https://www.academia.edu/754973/RELIGION_AND_EUROPEAN_INTEGRATION_IN_BULGARIA (Accessed 11.08. 2017).

Kanev, Petar 2002. Religion in Bulgaria after 1989: historical and sociocultural aspects. *South-East Europe Review*, Vol. 2, pp. 75–96.
http://www.forost.lmu.de/fo_library/Kanev_Religion_in_Bulgaria_2002.pdf (Accessed 11.08.2017).

Karamihova, Margarita 2002. *Prikazka za Osman baba* [The Shrine of Osman Baba]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Professor Marin Drinov".

Karpat, Kemal 1991. *The Turks of Bulgaria: The History, Culture, and Political Fate of a Minority.* University of Wisconsin, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Kynev, Krasimir 1998. Zakonodatelstvo i politika kym etnicheskite i religioznite malcinstva v Bylgariia. Krasteva, Anna. (syst.) *Obshtnosti i identichnosti v Bylgariia.* Interkulturni izsedvanii 1. Sofia: Petekson, pp. 67–117.

Krysteva, Neika & Asenov, Bojcho 1993. *Poturchvane* II. Sofia: [s.n.].

Krysteva, Anna 1998. Identichnost i vlast: Komunisticheski i postkomunisticheski diskurs vyrhu malcinstvata. Krysteva, Anna (ed.) *Obshtnosti i identichnosti*. Interkulturni izsedvanii 1. Sofia: Petekson.

Maeva, Mila. 2007. New Migration Waves of Bulgarian Turks. Marushiakova, Elena (eds.). *Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration.* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, pp. 224–247.

Marushiakova, Elena & Popov, Vesselin 2004. Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.
http://academos.ro/sites/default/files/biblio-docs/219/bulgaria_article0003.pdf (Accessed 11.08.2017).

Mateeva, Vania 2006. *Gagauzite – oshte edin pogled* [The Gagauzes: Yet Another View]. Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Professor Marin Drinov".

Merdjanova, Ina 2013a. Administering Islam in Bulgaria: legal and political aspects. *Turkish Review*, 3 (5), pp. 474–483.

Merdjanova, Ina 2013b. *Rediscovering the Umma: Muslims in the Balkans between Nationalism and Transnationalism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mikov, Liubomir 2005. *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite miusiulmani v Bylgariia (XVI–XIX v.). Bektashii i kyzylbashi/alevi.* Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Professor Marin Drinov".

Özkan, Vildane (Vildane Shabanova Alieva) 2012. The Effects and Appearances of Namecide Process from Socialist to Post-socialist Bulgaria. *ВІСНИК НТУУ «КПІ». Політологія. Соціологія. Право,* 4 (16)
http://ela.kpi.ua/bitstream/123456789/3375/1/04_shab.pdf (Accessed 11.08.2017).

Population Census 2011. NCCEDI [National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues]

http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/2/2/R10.aspx
http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Census/Reports/2/2/R7.aspx
(Accessed 10.08.2017).

Poulton, Hugh 1993. *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*. London: Minority Rights Publications.

Ragaru, Nadege 2001. Islam in Post-Communist Bulgaria. An Aborted "Crash of Civilization?" *National Papers*, 29 (2), pp. 293–394.

Stamenova, Zhivka 1998. Gagauzi. Krysteva, Anna (ed.). *Obshtnosti i identichnosti v Balgaria.* II. Sofia: Petekston.

Stoianov, Valeri 1998. *Turskoto naselenie mezhdu poliusite na etnicheskata politika.* Sofia: Lik.

Trifonov, Staiko 1991. Strogo poveritelno! *Pogled*, Apr. 22, 1991, pp. 16–19.

Tsvetkova, Milena 2000. Balgarskata politika kam Vazroditelniia proces sled 1944 g. *Mezhdunarodni otnoshenia*, II.

Vishsch Isliamic Institut 2007. http://www.islamicinstitute-bg.org/
(Accessed 11.08.2017).

Yalamov, Ibrahim 2002. *Istoriia na turskata obshtnost v Bylgariia.* Sofia: IMIR.

Zagorov, Orlin 1993. *Vazroditelniiat proces. Teza, antiteza i otritsanie na otritsanieto*. Sofia: Orlin Zagorov.

Zhelyazkova, Antonina 2001. Bulgaria in Transition: the Muslim minorities. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 12 (3), pp. 283–301.

Zhivkov, Todor 1988. Etnokulturno razvitie na Vazroditelniia protses. Yankov, Georgi; Dimitrov, Strashimir; Zagorov, Orlin (eds.). *Problemi na razvitieto na bylgarskata narodnost i naciia*. Sofia: BAN, pp. 127–143.

Zuckerman, Phil 2009. Atheism, Secularity, and Well-Being: How the Findings of Social Science Counter Negative Stereotypes and Assumptions. *Sociology Compass*, 3 (6), pp. 949–971.
https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00247.x

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.06

The Feast of Cyril and Methodius in Bessarabia and Crimea, Ukraine

Ekaterina Anastasova

Balkan Ethnology Department, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
ekaterina_anastasova@yahoo.com

The feast of St. Cyril and St. Methodius (May 11–24) and the life and work of the two brothers take a central place in the Bulgarian national paradigm. Their life and work are celebrated by all Slavic nations (with different accents and on different dates in the national/church calendars). The feast is celebrated among the Bulgarian Diaspora in Ukraine (the largest Bulgarian community outside the Bulgarian boarders) and it has a place in the official state calendar of the country as well.

This paper deals with the celebrations of the feast in Bessarabia (Odessa) and Crimea (Sevastopol), in Ukraine among the Bulgarians and the Ukrainians; the *vitas* of the two brothers; interpretations of their origin, their works and their significance for the Slavic cultures of both communities (Bulgarians and Ukrainians). The analysis shows the dynamics of interpretations of the lives and the work of the two saints in different national paradigms and state priorities.

Key words: St. Clement, St. Cyril and Methodius, Ukrainian Revival, Russia, EU

The work of Cyril and Methodius and of their disciples – the creation of the alphabet[1] and of the Slavic literature language, the translation of Christian sacred books, the spread of Christianity and the introduction of a liturgy in Slavic language – formed the identity of the Slavs in the early period of their history. As stated by N. I. Tolstoy "the creation of the Slavic Alphabet and the Slavic literary language is a new impetus for intensification of the Slavic identity, for understanding the concepts of the place of the Slavs among the other nations" (Tolstoy 1988: 136). The cult of the brothers is renewed during the Renaissance during the process of creation of the modern Slavic nations, becoming central to a number of Slavic national paradigms. This is due to the fundamental nature of the script and the literary culture for the formation of national

identity, on the one hand, and on the other – to the area in which the two brothers carried out their enlightenment activities. The space, where the idea of Cyril and Methodius is spread, appears to be huge – from Thessaloniki, where they were born[2], through Chersonesos, Khazaria and Alania, Rome, Moravia, Pannonia and Bavaria to the establishment of literary schools by their students in the territory of modern Bulgaria and Macedonia.

The combination of these factors – the canonization of the two brothers by the Orthodox (Russian Orthodox Church in 1863)[3] and the Catholic Church (1880), as well as their being proclaimed co-patrons of the United Europe in 1980 by the "Slavic Pope" John Paul II – supported the relevance of the cult of the brothers.

Their veneration is associated not only with the traditional Renaissance contexts, but with a wider European and educated perspective in the new Slavic democracies in the late twentieth century.

The combination of Middle Age, National Revival pathos and postmodern reality defines the two main dimensions of the cult of the two brothers relevant in the context of this article:

1. The forms of their ritual worship (the feast of St. Cyril and Methodius): the religious and the secular, i.e. – official/national day of "education and culture" (Slavic, Bulgarian, etc.) and of school, a children's holiday;

2. The use of the cult of the two brothers in various political and geopolitical contexts.

Here we will focus on the idea of "Cyril and Methodius" in Ukraine from two main perspectives: the cult and the feast as a part of the Ukrainian national culture and the culture of the Bulgarian diaspora within the country (the largest traditional Bulgarian diaspora abroad). This article has been assembled on the basis of field research conducted in the cities of Odessa and Sevastopol in the year 2009 and the current dimensions of the cult of Cyril and Methodius in contemporary Ukraine (2014).

Historical Context: Ukraine between East, West and Multiethnicity

Ukraine is one of the most complex post-soviet counties regarding internal tensions and geopolitical orientation. The historical circumstances determine various trends and moods in the second largest country in Europe. The etymology of the historical names of the country is based on the idea of a "borderline": Ukraine[4] *у-края* ('in-the-end', 'at-the-end', 'at-the-border'), Malorussia (*Malorosiya* 'Small Russia')[5], Novorussia (*Novorosiya* 'New Russia').

S. Huntington defines Ukraine as belonging to the so-called "countries of the fault" in the frames of the geopolitical structure separating the world into civilizations, concentrated around core-states. Europe, in his opinion (and not only his), is divided into Western (Western-Christian) and Eastern (Orthodox and Islamic). Within this concept Ukraine is divided into Western: Uniate[6], Ukrainian-speaking and "nationalist"; and Eastern: Orthodox and Russian-speaking. The first aims at the West, and the second at Russia, the state-core of the Orthodox world (Huntington 1999: 220–238). After the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine is one of the most "volatile countries" regarding its geo-political orientation (Anastasova 2012: 269–278).

The debate regarding the orientation of Ukraine (towards Russia or the European Union) appears to reach its highest level in parallel with the orientation of each newly elected Ukrainian government. Ukraine was in a situation of forthcoming elections in the year 2009 when I conducted my study. 2013 the confrontation between the pro-European and pro-Russian orientations of Ukraine led to the failure to sign the Association Agreement to EU which led to the events of the Maidan, and the long and bloody civil war (2014).

The multiethnic character of the country is included in the complex geopolitical context. After the fall of the USSR and its construction as an independent nation, Ukraine chooses the ethnic concept of nation, i.e. differentiating national (in Ukrainian terminology national-cultural) minorities who receive (although minimal) state-funding for their activities (Anastasova 2005: 59–65). Besides the main ethnic (and linguistic – as far as Russian language being predominant in the cities) opposition between Russians and Ukrain-

ians (in 2001 – 77.8% Ukrainians, 17.3% Russians), the complex attitudes of the Ukrainian population are associated with the large multiethnic areas of the country such as our main focus of interest – Bessarabia and the Crimea.

In Bessarabia, a region of Odessa, 123 ethnic communities have been registered[7], at the same time the traditionally Russian-speaking Crimea (Autonomous Republic since 1991) not only experienced dramatic "Ukrainization", but also the return of the Crimean Tatars deported by Joseph Stalin after World War II and rehabilitated in the period of the "Perestroika" of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Both in Bessarabia and Crimea, the Bulgarians appear to be a significant national minority (according to the census of 2001, the number of Bulgarians in Ukraine is over 200,000 and they live mainly in the Odessa and Zaporozhye regions). The Bessarabian Bulgarians are dominant in both areas due to the fact that after the deportation from Crimea only a small part of the Crimean Bulgarians returned. The Bulgarians are involved both in the common Ukrainian political debate as well as in the process of revival of ethnic minorities in the post-Soviet space (Anastasova 2012). A number of Bulgarian ethnic organizations exist in Ukraine, the Bulgarian language is taught in schools and universities, Bulgarian books and newspapers are being published.

Both processes – the establishment of an independent Ukraine and the "re-birth" of the minorities – generate an intense "new understanding" of the past (the "own history" – national and ethnic) and a culture of the state which, following the logic of the nation-building process, is reflected mainly in the school textbooks and curricula. The desire to disengage from the Russian (Soviet) history and historiography leads to new interpretations that reflect the moods within the country. One can cite a number of examples (reformulation of "heroes" and "anti-heroes", "war of monuments", etc.). As summarized by V. V. Kerov:

> *After the collapse of the USSR* [into former Soviet republics – note by E. A.], *own national history textbooks are very quickly written...* [---]. *The first editions are not created on the basis of the achievements of the own new academic science.* [---] *Later, based on the development of the academic research*

> *and, more accurately, on the interpretation of known facts, new original textbooks are written. With varying degrees of detachment from the historical reality and the intensity of the anti-Russian sentiments, the authors of these books begin to form often mythologized ideas of historical processes of the territories which received new statehood.*
>
> *In the new educational literature of Ukraine fragments of the Russian history begin to be coloured in Ukrainian tones. Thus, Yaroslav the Wise, Vladimir Monomakh and other princes of Kiev spoke the "ancient Ukrainian language"* [---]. *In general, often even in X–XII centuries the culture of the Russia-Ukraine is talked about in synchrony with the concept of M. S. Grushevsky. The sections "Ukrainian Literature" mention such activists of the "Ukrainian literature" as Theophanes Prokopovich, Dmitry Rostovski, scientists and educators, including the author of the first Russian textbook on mathematics L. Magnitsky, the philologist I. Sreznevski, and others. Naturally, Ivan Fedorov was the first Ukrainian publisher, etc.* (Kerov 2013: 124–124)

The brothers Cyril and Methodius also fit within the context of Ukrainization and the ideologeme of Slavic unity. As in most countries, in Ukraine their heritage also has its history and geography. In the Odessa region, and especially in Crimea, it begins with the story of Clement of Rome as presented by *Legenda Italica* ('Italian legend').

St. Clement of Rome, Constantine[8] (Cyril) and Methodius in Crimea

According to the *vita* of Pope Clement I (Bishop Clement of Rome), Christian martyr, preacher and writer who died about 101 AD, he was baptized and ordained by the Apostle Peter himself. His life and worship are related to the Roman Church, Crimea and Kievan Rus.

The story of Clement of Rome described in his *vita* coincides almost word for word with the stories told by respondents in Sevastopol – who are familiar not only with the story but its Crimean topography also – as well as with the story presented by the official Ukrainian concept today.



Figure 1. Saint Clement Monastery in Inkerman town, Crimea. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.

Due to his preaching and baptising activities in Rome, Clement was exiled by the Emperor Trajan to the marble quarries of Inkerman (now the city of Inkerman which is located near the Chersonesus Tauris/Korsun, Crimea[9]) where he continued to preach, to destroy pagan sanctuaries and to perform miracles. Thus, with the help of an Angel of God who manifests himself as a lamb, the saint discovered a water source for the thirsty stonemasons. After that he began to baptize about 500 people daily. The enraged emperor sentenced Clement to a painful death – to be tied to an anchor and drowned in the sea. After the execution of Clement, thanks to the prayers of his disciples, the sea opened every year for a week and revealed the magnificent marble tomb of the saint close to which one could see the anchor with which he was drowned. The believers walked through the withdrawn sea and worshiped the saint. A number of miracles were performed near the tomb – healings, expulsion of

demons, etc. This miracle continued to happen throughout a total of seven centuries.

In 860 AD Constantine the Philosopher was sent to Khazaria, a neighbouring country of Byzantine where three religions existed equally: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, many pagan cults being present as well as; in order to convince the Khazarian Hagan to convert to Christianity. He went together with Methodius stopping for almost a year in Chersonese Tauris (near the today's city of Sevastopol) where he studied Hebrew in order to take part in theologi-



Figure 2. Mural painting of St. Clement, in St. Knyaz Vladimir Church, Hersonissos of Tavria, Sevastopol. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.



Figure 3. St. Knyaz Vladimir Church, Chersonesus of Tauria, Sevastopol. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.

cal disputes with the Khazarian priests. Arriving in Chersonesus, Constantine did some research trying to reveal the location of the saint's tomb and, accompanied by a solemn group of enthusiastic local clergy and laity, on January 30, 861 he discovered the first rib and later the intact relics of the saint[10]. After the Moravian mission the brothers moved the saint's relics to Rome (in 868 AD). His head remained in the Chersonesus. Later, after being converted to Christianity in Chersonesus, the great Kiev Prince Vladimir (c. 96–1015), the baptizer of the Russian state, carried the head of Clement to Kiev.

This event plays a major role in the worship of St. Clement and St. Cyril and Methodius in the cities of Sevastopol, located near the ruins of Chersonesus Tauris, and Inkerman. The popularity of Cyril and Methodius is overshadowed by that of St. Clement, who appears to be highly honoured by the inhabitants of the Crimea.

According to the experts, the story of St. Clement is quite different. Obviously, the cult of Clement of Rome revived by Constantine the Philosopher is superimposed on the existing local cults. The worship of the local Clement (from Chersonesus) is intertwined with the cult of Clement Ankirski[11] (from Ankara), buried in Ankira (in Galatea) where, according to the Byzantine tradition, Clement of Rome died. Relics of Clement of Ankira were taken to Chersonesus. The pagans threw them into the sea and the relics continued performing miracles. There is no conclusive historical evidence that St. Clement of Rome was martyred (but he did not die in his bed, as indicated by earlier sources) and that he was ever in the



Figure 4. Mural painting of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in St. Knyaz Vladimir Church. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.

Crimea (see for instance the history of the formation of the life of St. Clement of Rome in Spiridonov[12] 1909: 115–124).

Today the cult of the saint continues to be extremely popular among the residents of Sevastopol, the presumed site of his death is honoured, as well as the so called Kazachiya Bay in Sevastopol (supposed place of St. Clement's death).[13] The St. Clement cave monastery in Inkerman is highly visited, the dried up (during the 70s of XX century) spring in its yard is considered to be the water source discovered by the saint.

The *vita* of Clement of Rome connects the history of the Eastern and the Western Christian church in contemporary Crimea, Ukraine and Russia in an interesting way outlining the later geopolitical "rift" (in the terminology of Huntington) features of the region.

As expected, the nation-building process encompasses the sacred "nationalization" of Christian saints of Ukraine and Russia. Thus, August 22, 2011 a memorial cross in honour of St. Clement was sanctified in the courtyard of the temple of the holy Clement of Rome in Zamoskvorechie (Russia). It was financed by the Fund of the Reverend Andrei Rublev with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Simferopol and Crimea Lazar. As reported by the Center Gumilyov (Contemporary Eurasianism, Movement for the Protection of the Rights of Peoples[14]), at the opening of the cross the officer of the church, Father Leonid (Kalinin), said:

> *The establishment of a memorial cross has no political connotations. This is a purely spiritual action expressed in the triumph of the historical justice and a reminder of the common Slavic spirit of Ukraine and Russia.*

The author of the text continues:

> *Let us remember that Clement was the fourth bishop (Pope) of Rome ordained by Apostle Peter himself. St. Clement is considered the patron saint of Russia. To him people pray for the health and the welfare of their children, for family reunification, for the return of loved ones.*[15] *The relics of the martyr Clement are the first Christian sanctified objects to appear in Russia. The Holy Prince Vladimir converted Russia with the honest head of St. Clement in 988.*



Figure 5. Monument of Cyril and Methodius in Sevastopol, Crimea. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.

Without doubt "the common Slavic spirit of Ukraine and Russia" is a part of the big discussion "Russia or Europe" which continues to worry the Ukrainian society.

> *Compared to the figure of St. Clement of Rome in Crimea, the place of Cyril and Methodius is more modest. A monument of the saints was built as late as 2008 in Sevastopol, on June 14, the day of the city (until then there is no object named after the saints in the city) on the initiative of the City Hall with participation of the national and cultural center of the Bulgarians in Sevastopol – the organization "Izgrev" (Sunrise).*

At the opening of the celebrations V. Kazarin, the first vice-chairman of the city administration, says:

> *The Slavic alphabet was created 1145 years ago. Cyril and Methodius display it written in Moravia, but their idea dates back another two years, 861 AD, when, while being in Chersonesus, they were introduced to one of the oldest script systems, which has not survived to our day. Their alphabet was a combination of the spirit of the Greek alphabet with the spirit of this ancient alphabet.* [---] *Our city can be proud that it is not only the cradle of Orthodoxy of the Eastern Slavs, due to the baptism of St. Vladimir in Chersonesus, but that Sevastopol is also the cradle of the Slavic script.*[16]

However, for the Ukrainians, as well as for the Bulgarians in Sevastopol, the worship of St. Clement continues to play a leading role – they regularly pray, donate funds and support the creation of a new additions to the rock monastery in Inkerman; they plan the erection of a chapel or a memorial cross in Kazachiya Bay. As the chairman of the Bulgarian organization in Sevastopol claims:

> *Here in Crimea the most famous saint is Clement of Rome (and his story). Last year we built a monument of Cyril and Methodius on May 24, we left flowers; the people are not so familiar with these saints though. St. Clement is a local saint, which is why people know more about him here.*[17]

Actually, the honouring of the brothers Cyril and Methodius is part of another paradigm, related to the national idea of the history and their activity in Ukraine.

National Dimensions

In Ukraine, as well as in Bulgaria, the feast of the holy brothers has two dimensions: secular feast and church (religious) celebrations.

In Bulgaria, the cult of the brothers was formed and established in the process of the Bulgarian Revival and it is based on three main "fundaments" related to the Bulgarian national idea:

1. The medieval majesty of Bulgaria, the so-called "Golden Age" of the Bulgarian culture, and the fundamental role of the Bulgarian state in the formation of Pax Slavia Orthodoxa;

2. The Bulgarian contribution to the development of the European civilization;

3. The Bulgarian revival and the creation of modern Bulgarian state.

The feast is so popular that the question about its establishment as a national feast has been risen within the Bulgarian media space in the last years.

However, the situation in Ukraine is different. The roots of the worship of brothers Cyril and Methodius are associated with the Slavonophile idea and messianic role of Russia in the Slavic world, on the one hand. On the other hand, we find the ideas of the "Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius", a secret political organization which emerged in Kiev in the late 1845 to early 1846 and lasted only 14 months. The Brotherhood is considered the first Ukrainian political organization through which the Ukrainian intelligentsia attempts to fight for the rights of the Ukrainian people. The organization follows the ideas of Russian Decembrists (*dekabristy*) but calls not only for the repeal of serfdom and the liberalization of the political system, but also for a national and cultural identity of the Slavic peoples, united in a common Pan-Slavic Federation under the leadership of Kiev. Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Serbia and Bulgaria are supposed to become members of the Pan-Slavic Federation. The organization originated from the Kiev University and has about a dozen members, including the classic of the Ukrainian literature Taras Shevchenko. The Brotherhood's program's documents – "Act of God. Book of life of the Ukrainian people" and "Statute of the Slavic Society of St. Cyril and Methodius" (Statute of the Slavonic Society) – written by the founder of the organization, the future professor of history, N. I. Kostomarov (at the moment assistant professor at the Kiev University) are considered the beginning of Ukrainophilia (see further details in Zayonchkovskiy 1959, Simonova 1990: 341–366) or – Ukrainian nationalism. One of the members of the organization, Panteleimon Kulish, is the author of the first history of Ukraine (Po vest' ob ukrainskom narode, 1846) and of the first grammar of the Ukrainian language. In other words, the Brotherhood of the St.

Cyril and Methodius, despite its short existence (later its activity is depicted as Slavonophilic by the movement of the Russian imperial propaganda) marks the beginning of the Ukrainian revival.

Obviously, the Cyril and Methodius's idea, since its origination in Ukraine, is connected to the national, political and state messages, especially during the current geo-political challenges. The religious organizations are a space for political messages as well. After the democratic changes the religious space in the country is divided also: the majority of the churches in Ukraine are subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchy (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate) and the new Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate (separated from the Moscow Patriarchate in 1992), which enjoys considerably less influence.

Celebrations of both the secular and the religious feasts take place on May 24. The celebration began in 1994, following a proposal by the Ministry of Culture and the Ukrainian Committee of the Slavists, supported by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The celebration was established as a public holiday by the Decree of the President Leonid Kuchma in 2004.

We should note, in the context of the nation-building process, that in Ukraine, as well as in the whole post-socialist space, there is a process of updating the national, the official and the religious holidays to reflect the new ideological and political situation (Anastasova 2012a, 156–169). So, for example, in addition to May 24, post-socialist Ukraine celebrates the Day of the Ukrainian script and language on November 9 in honour of Nestor the Historian, considered by the new Ukrainian science to be an Ukrainian historian and follower of the brothers Cyril and Methodius. The feast is celebrated as a state holiday since 1997 in accordance with a decree by the president Leonid Kuchma in an "answer to initiatives of social organizations and considering the important role of the Ukrainian language for the consolidation of the Ukrainian society" (Decree 1241/97, 06.11.1997.).

In addition, one can include in the series of celebrations related to the Slavic culture the Day of Friendship and Unity of Slavs which takes place on June 25. It was established during the 1990s "as a response to the collapse of the USSR" and is celebrated in Russia,

Belarus and Ukraine. The cultural festival "Slavic Unity" (in the town of Bryansk, Russia) is held on that date as well. The feast was established on the basis of the International Festival of Slavic Youth (which in the USSR took place annually since 1957 – USSR Festival Movement "Malaya Rodina"). 2002 the festival presented a declaration to the governments of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine for a referendum aimed to merge the three countries. In all of them the feast is presented as a peculiar "conclusion" of the celebrations of the Day of Cyril and Methodius.

The messages of the three feasts are obvious – from the national one in the case of the Day of the Ukrainian literature and language, through the pan-Slavic, to the honest request to merge the three Eastern Slavic countries. Naturally, the holidays and the messages are being used in different political situations. For example, during the Day of Friendship and Unity of Slavs, celebrated mostly in the Eastern, Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, a deputy of the pro-Russian Party of the regions Vadim Kolesnichenko says:

> *It is highly important that Ukraine celebrates the Day of Friendship and Unity of Slavs on the threshold of the second reading of the law dealing with the foundations of the state language policy.* [---] *This holiday is very important because of the fact that it unites Slavs with different cultural backgrounds. It is a further reminder that we can and must speak different languages, including Russian and Ukrainian. And it should not cause anything but mutual respect, mutual support and mutual joy that we have such deep roots – not only historical, but also humanitarian and linguistic.* (the Party of Regions is an importer of the law, confirming the status the Russian language as a regional language)[18]

On the Day of Nestor the Chronicler, flowers are delivered to the monument in Kiev, solemn words are uttered, the "best promoters of the Ukrainian word" awarded and publishers, who publish in Ukrainian language, encouraged. Around the period of the feast, an International Competition of connoisseurs of the Ukrainian language "Petro Yatsik" is organized. The competition was for the first time organized in the year 2000 under the patronage of Nadezhda Yatsik, daughter of P. Yatsik (a Canadian businessman, ethnic Ukrainian, patron and philanthropist[19]), and the Educational

Fund "P. Yatsik" headed by her. 2006 the fund withdrew from the competition with a declaration by N. Yatsik that "the Ukrainian diaspora cannot save the Ukrainian language in Ukraine. This can only be done by the Government of Ukraine".

The celebration of the brothers Cyril and Methodius in the capital Kiev, as well as in cities that have their monuments (Kiev, Odessa and Sevastopol), follows a similar pattern. The festivities dedicated to the brothers are, among others, visited by representatives of the Bulgarian diplomatic services (see below). Among the accompanying events we can mention the school holidays in the ethnic Bulgarian-populated villages (in Bessarabia, Crimea, Azov region), conducting quizzes, contests and competitions. Students of Bulgarian ethnic origin also participate in university competitions and celebrations organized by the Bulgarian national-cultural societies. As part of the celebration "Cyril and Methodius readings" (*Kirillo-Mefodievskie chteniya*) are held in various cities in Ukraine.

Probably the deepest traditions of honouring the brothers Cyril and Methodius are observed in Odessa, where the roots of the celebration are religious and date from the late XIX to early XX century. Today the feast in the city has three basic forms:

1. Religious – a patron feast of two churches in the city;

2. Ten-day festival of the Bulgarian culture, organized by the Bulgarian diplomatic corpus, celebrated around May 24 in Odessa;

3. Feast of the Bulgarian diaspora – a school holiday in the villages with ethnic Bulgarians in the Odessa region and within the celebrations performed by the Bulgarian organizations in the area, supported by the Consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria in the city (exhibitions, concerts, academic conferences, quizzes, etc.)

The city has a monument to the holy brothers, inaugurated on May 24, 2007. As stated during its inauguration the "monument symbolizes the friendship between Ukraine and Bulgaria". It is situated in front of the Humanitarian corpus of the Odessa National University, where such Bulgarian national poets as Ivan Vazov and Hristo Botev studied and these days dozens of students with Bulgarian ethnic origin are being educated.

The Odessa Spiritual School

The temple of the St. Cyril and Methodius, educators of the Slavs, was built in Odessa as a school church of the Odessa spiritual school in 1882. Since its establishment the temple has been extremely popular among the laity:

> *Although a Cathedral of Peter and Paul was located nearby and the Temple of Ascension stood at the intersection of Staroportofrankovska and Kolontaevska street, the temple of the St. Cyril and Methodius was always full of people. During the holiday the church could not accommodate all worshipers of St. Cyril and Methodius because they are considered to be guardians of students and patrons of children.* (Anisimov 2005: 23)



Figure 6. Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church (interior), old Spiritual School, Odessa. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.



Figure 7. Church service in honor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius with Bishop Agafangel. May 24, 2009, Odessa Military School. Photo by E. Anastasova.

The temple has a complex history; it has been closed and re-opened several times. In 1933 its "religious valuables in favour of the state" are seized, the church – closed but not destroyed as being part of a building (unlike the two churches mentioned above). During World War II it was opened again during the Romanian government and finally closed in 1953 when the Soviet government turned it into a sports hall.

The temple was restored gradually, beginning from May 24, 1996 until May 24, 2003 (Anisimov 2005: 30).

Today, just as when it was founded, the temple is a "neighbourhood church" visited by representatives of a number of Orthodox denominations in the city – Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Bulgarians, etc.

"The Military School" – Politics and Belief

The temple of the saints Cyril and Methodius belonging to the "military school" has a long history. Initially the temple dedicated to the holy brothers, patrons of science, was built in Odessa cadet corps (created by the order of the Russian Emperor Nicholas II in 1899) and inaugurated in 1902. In 1917 it was turned into a School of the Military Office. From 1941 it became the Odessa infantry school and after its demise – a part of the Odessa Polytechnic University (established in 1918) as Military Institute. Both during the socialist period, when the institute is one of the most prestigious military schools in the USSR, and today the Military Academy of the Army (2011) is the centre of the **military elite and the military clergy** (clergy to churches and chapels of military service) in the region.

The Patron Feast of the Church St. Cyril and Methodius at the Odessa Academy of Land Forces

Solemn liturgy performed by one of the most respected personalities in Ukrainian clergy, the Bishop of Odessa and Izmail area, Bishop Agafangel and the following lunch for all the participants (teachers and students of the school) are the feast of the Russian speaking society in Odessa (Odessa is a traditional Russian-speaking city). Ethnic Bulgarians do not attend the feast and, as it turns out, rarely visit this temple.

Bishop Agafangel (Bishop of Odessa and Izmail Diocese since 1992) is not only a spiritual person but also very active publicly and politically. During the period 1990–1994 he is a popular member of the Ukrainian Rada and in 2006 heads the list of the Odessa region of the pro-Russian "Party of Regions" being its representative in the District government during two consecutive mandates[20]. He is one of the fiercest opponents of the schism of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (the separation of part of the clergy from the Moscow patriarchy). The cleric is a bright figure in the political life of the Odessa region whose public statements shape the public opinion. The authoritative words of the Russian journalist and chief editor of Radio "Echo of Moscow", Alexei Venediktov, are a testimony of the personality of the bishop and his influence on the Odessa public: "This is a man of firm principles and of great charisma. I

think that the victory of the "Party of Regions" in the Odessa area is undoubtedly his merit."[21]

Agafangel always comments on current events related to the opposition Russia-West (understood as EU and NATO) in Ukraine:

> *The Orthodox Church is worried by the involvement of Ukraine in the Alliance (NATO) which appears in its essence to be a* beast organization [emphasis mine – E. A.], *professing double standards.* [---]
>
> *The schools teach the children that the Alliance will turn us into a European country although we are in the centre of Europe. We have a lot to teach our children too, we have culture, religion, moral principles.* [---]
>
> *We see the actions of this unit in Kosovo, we see what is being done to Russia. NATO – it is blood, war and tears.*[22]

His are the statements, often discussed as "scandalous", that "the USSR is the homeland of us all" as well as that "Lvov[23] is our Chechnya"[24].

He includes the actions of Cyril and Methodius in a current political context during his festivity sermon in May, 2009:

> *Cyril and Methodius bequeathed the brotherhood to the Slavic people ... Today we lift our prayers to the throne of God. The saints Cyril and Methodius prayed with us. We pray to God to strengthen the unity of our fraternal Slavic people, to prevent the hostile forces from causing conflicts among the people of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. And we believe that through the prayers of these holy saints – educators of the Slavs, our peoples will safely survive the current hard times and the evil, who try to re-write our history, will withdraw. Their time is over. Soon new forces will come that will stop this vicious practice of sowing enmity among the people of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. All of us – Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians – have received Holy Baptism in one "Dnieper river font". We share one Orthodox faith, one culture, one history.*[25]

Those words proved prophetic given the victory of the Party of Regions in Ukraine in the 2009 elections.



Figure 8. Icon of new Odessa saints. Photo by E. Anastasova, 2009.

If for the bishop and the military elite the holy brothers are symbols of current political messages, for the laity (part of the religious and military elite) the feast of the saints possesses another meaning. On the one hand, they are seen as patron saints of those named after them, they celebrate their name-day (angel-day) on this date (or of those whose relatives visit the temple to remember them if they are deceased). The temple is visited by the people whose relatives died on the day of the holy brothers in order to ask them to protect their beloved ones before God. On the other hand, the majority of participants consider Cyril and Methodius first of all saints:

1. Patrons and protectors of the Slavs;

2. Creators of the most understandable and close (directly reaching) to God language – the Slavic language.

This perception of the saints is associated with mediation and advocacy in the relations between a person and a nation – God is not at the forefront both in mass (secular) Bulgarian discourse as well as among the young ethnic Bulgarians in Odessa.[26] The latter rather indicate the enlightenment functions of the brothers – their being the creators of the Slavic alphabet. Although maintaining close relations with the Bulgarian Consulate in Odessa, which manifests the Bulgarian national thesis about holy brothers, whose work "makes every Bulgarian proud for giving something so significant to the world"[27], for the young Bessarabian Bulgarians the figures of Cyril and Methodius carry various massages. Along with the traditional notions of "creators of the Slavic alphabet" and "It's good that they have created the alphabet" there are present other statements such as: "Cyril and Methodius were Slavs, they were not Bulgarians" and surprisingly: "Perhaps it would have been better not to create this alphabet – these oppositions would not have existed now: Europe-Russia, Latin-Cyrillic… And we would have been more united."[28]

Conclusions

Since the beginning, the work of Cyril and Methodius, as well as its update within the Slavophilism and the construction of various nationalisms during the formation of the modern Slavic states in the nineteenth century, has a political nature. Interestingly, in the post-modern period, during a geo-political upheaval, it resumes its political dimensions not only in the state but also in the religious aspect. The brothers are used as an argument to prove an opposite thesis: for Bulgaria, a country member of the European Union, they are part of the European cultural heritage; for Ukraine they are a symbol of national revival and an argument for brotherhood with Russia and the Slavic countries opposed to NATO, EU and USA.

2014 the long lasting protest – "Euromaidan" in Kiev (which began on 21.11.2013), a protest that arose as a result of the suspension of negotiations with the EU and the refusal of the president V. Yanukovych to sign the Association of Ukraine to the European

Union agreement at a meeting of the "Eastern Partnership" in Vilnius – the subsequent political crisis, the accession of the Crimea to the Russian Federation, and later the bloody civil war became a major world news. One of the main characters in this article – the Metropolitan Agafangel reappeared on the scene. In honour of the arrival of the relics of St. George in Odessa he says in a sermon:

> *The right hand of St. George arrived in Ukraine at a moment when the confusion and especially the Kiev Maidan, where the forces of hell gather to destroy our system, import confusion, hatred and division among our people ... but, with the help of the prayers of the saint, God will admonish the foolish, bring peace and harmony to the society ... We believe that the stronger forces will win.*[29]

In the statements of the Ukrainian hierarchs the political, social and economic crisis receives apocalyptic dimensions:

> *We know that the first revolutionary was the devil, the revolutions are performed by the forces of hell. The call of Europe today is named by the Orthodox Eurosodom. Europe imposes violation of our Christian values, implements mandatory same-sex marriages* [---], *perverted education of the children at school, and most importantly – forces us to go out of the Orthodox civilization and become a suburb of the Protestant-Catholic civilization and today aggressively secular anti-Christian organization, where an important force is the aggressive Islam. I believe that the real Europe, the Christian Europe was preserved only in Russia. And only together with Russia can Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova become the core of the Orthodox civilization, which will stop the lawlessness that reigns in the world.*[30]

Obviously, the "civilizational" terminology of S. Huntington is close to the pro-Russian Ukrainian clergy who sanctified the geopolitical confrontation using fundamental religious opposition Lord – Devil (Russia, the Orthodox world – EU).

A medieval technique is used, which, relying on the historical destiny, the ethnic tensions, and the post-Soviet nostalgia in Ukraine, outlines an ambitious postmodern project. A project in which Cyril and Methodius, the "unifiers of the Slavs", find their place again.

Notes

[1] The Glagolitic alphabet (Glagolitsa).

[2] One should mention the monasticism of Methodius in the area of today's Turkish city of Bursa, his exile in Germany (medieval Swabia), etc.

[3] According to a number of records the holy brothers were canonized by the Bulgarian church already during the Middle Ages.

[4] The word Ukraine appears first in the Ipatiev Chronicle (1187). According to another etymology Ukraine comes from the Ukrainian substantive *країна* and means 'country'.

[5] Geographical term used in XIV–XV centuries in connection with the Kingdom of Galytsia-Volyn Principality (Galitsko-Volynskoe kniyazhestvo) and since XVI century in connection with the lands of south-western Russia. From XVII to early XX century, it is used in Russia as a name for the geographic region and province Malorosiya (Malorossiyskaya guberniya). The term Ukraine was approved in the USSR.

[6] Uniates practice Orthodox church service but the church is under the rule of the Pope.

[7] According to the data of the administration of the Odessa region from September 2013 (International Research and Practice Conference "Polyphony vs. cacophony: Ethnic and Confessional Diversity of the Population of Odessa Region in the Context of Regional Democracy", September 12–14, 2013, Odessa State University, Odessa, Ukraine).

[8] Still with its secular name during the founding of the relicts of St. Clement.

[9] Excavations have proved that there were no marble quarries in this area.

[10] The description of these events appears in "Word for Carrying the Glorious Relics of Clement" which is attributed to St. Cyril, see for example Begunov 2006: 5.

[11] The name of ancient Ankara.

[12] The story of Dimitriy Spiridonov (1871–1938), a thorough researcher of the figure of the "Crimean" Clement, an university professor, authoritative Byzantine specialist, clergymen, is tragic. He was shot by the Stalinist regime in 1938, in 2000 was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church at the proposal of the Crimean diocese. He is celebrated on the day of the Festival of Russian new martyrs and confessors (the first Sunday of the period 25.01–07.02).

[13] The story of the "search" of St. Clement in Crimea according to historical, literary and archaeological data is very interesting. See for example: Markevich1909: 106–114; Sorochan 2013: 205–225, 240–278.

[14] http://www.gumilev-center.ru/sostoyalos-torzhestvennoe-osvyashhenie-pamyatnogo-kresta-v-chest-pervogo-russkogo-svyatogo-svyashhennomuchenika-klimenta/ (24.08.2011).

[15] According to the vita of St. Clement, for many years he was separated from his loved ones with whom he miraculously gets together again because of his faith.

[16] http://new-sebastopol.com/news/novosti_sevastopolya/V_Sevastopole_otkryli_pamyatnik_svyatym_ravnoapostol_nym_Kirillu_i_Mefodiyu__FOTO_ (14.06.2008).

[17] Savelii Ivanovic Buchkov, ca 50-year-old Bessarabian Bulgarian from Moldova who emigrated to Sevastopol after the collapse of the USSR, president of the Association of the Bulgarians in Sevastopol "Izgrev". Recorded 23.09.2009, Ekaterina Anastasova, Grigor Grigorov (from now on E. A., G. G.), Sevastopol.

[18] http://www.regnum.ru/news/1545035.html (25.06.2012); see more: http://www.ukrinform.ua/rus/news/vadim_kolesnichenko_dovolen_chto_den_drugbi_i_edineniya_slavyan_otmechaetsya_nakanune_prinyatiya_zakona_o_yazikah (25.06.2012); see also http://partyofregions.dp.ua/node/126 (25.06.2010) (Last accessed 22.07.2015). The law was passed on July 3, 2012. This is the first law repealed after Evromaidan.

[19] Petro Yatsik (1921–2001) is a major patron of the Encyclopedia of Ukraine, founder of the Ukrainian Institute at Harvard University (USA) and the Centre for the Study of Ukrainian history in the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta (Canada). He also financed the construction of Ukrainian schools and churches in Brazil.

[20] In 2014, after the failure of President V. Yanukovych (Party of Regions), Metropolitan Agafangel resigned from the Odessa Rada (Parliament).

[21] See http://timer.od.ua/news/odesskij-mitropolit-agafangel-sravnil-lvov-s-chechnej.html (07.06.2011) (Last accessed 22.07.2015).

[22] http://www.misto.odessa.ua/odessa-i-region/2008/09/12/13215/pravoslavnaya-obshhestvennost-odessy-protiv-vstupleniya-v-nato.html (12.09.2008; site no longer accessible).

[23] Lvov is considered the center of Western Ukraine and of the pro-western moods in the country.

[24] http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2011/06/7/6275752/ (07.08.2011). (Accessed 22.07.2015).

[25] Bishop Agafangel, 24.05.2009, Odessa, rec. by E. A., G. G.

[26] Here I use materials from interviews held before a race dedicated to St. Cyril and Methodius between linguists and historians in the Odessa State University, short interviews with eight students in history (1–3 courses). Young people aged between 18 to 23 years, ethnic Bulgarians from Odessa area – 30.05.2009, Odessa, fieldwork diary, E. A.

[27] Georgy Prodanov, consul of the General Consulate of Republic of Bulgaria in Odessa. 27.05.2009, Odessa, rec. by E. A., fieldwork diary.

[28] X. X., 18-year-old boy, first year student, 30.05.2009, rec. by E. A., fieldwork diary.

[29] http://www.religion.in.ua/news/ukrainian_news/24271-odesskij-mitropolit-agafangel-nazval-evromajdan-smutoj-kuda-sobiraetsya-sila-ada.html (12.12.2013).

[30] Archpriest Andrei Novikov, secretary of the Odessa diocese, http://xerson.net/евромайдан-это-собрание-сил-ада-счи/ (Accessed 15.07.2015).

Acknowledgements

The article is a result of the project ДОО2-315/19.12.2008, No. 1/17.12.2010 "The Feast of the St. Cyril and Methodius – from the National to the European Spiritual Space", National Science Fund, Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Bulgaria.

References

Anastasova, Ekaterina 2005. "We are Bessarabians here". Identity, Tradition and Power in Southern Bessarabia. *The Anthropology of East Europe Review: Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Eurasia,* 24 (1), pp. 59–65.

Anastasova, Ekaterina 2012a. The National Festive Systems in the Post-Socialist Space – between Past and Present. Kõiva, Mare (ed.). *The Ritual Year,* 6. *The Inner and the Outer.* The Yearbook of the SIEF Working Group on the Ritual Year. Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, pp. 159–169.

Anastasova, Ekaterina 2012b. Identity of (Trans-)National Minorities in the NationBuilding Process (the Case of Ukraine). Hristov, Petko Petrov (ed.).

Migration and Identity: Historical, Cultural and Linguistic Dimensions of Mobility on the Balkans. Sofia: Paradigma PH, pp. 269–278.

Anissimov, Vadim 2005. *Zhitie sviyatyh ravnoapostol'nyh Mefodiya i Kirilla, Uchitelej Slovenskih.* Odessa: Odesskii palomnik.

Begunov, Yuri 2006. Sv. Kliment Rimskii v slavianskoi traditsii: nekotorye itogi i perspektivy issledovaniia. *Vizantinorossika,* 4. Clementiana Nordica: Pochitanie Sv. Klimenta Rimskogo na severe khristianskogo mira. Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskoe Obshchestvo vizantino-slavianskikh issledovanii, pp. 1–61.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1999 [1996]. *Sblasakat na tsivilizatsiite i preobrazuvaneto na svetovniya* [The clash of civilization and the remaking of world order]. Sofia: Obsidian.

Kerov, Valeri 2013. "Ukraina – Russ", "finno-ugorskie kolonii" i belorusskie natsional'nye obychai: obosnovanie natsional'nogo suvereniteta v ofitsial'nykh uchebnikakh po natsional'noi istorii Ukrainy i Belarusi. *Vestnik Rossiiskogo Universiteta druzhby narodov.* Seriia Istoriia Rossii 1, pp. 124–132.

Markevich, Arseni 1909. Ostrovok v Kazachei bukhte, kak predpolagaemoe mesto konchiny sv. Klimenta, papy Rimskogo. *Izvestiia Tavricheskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii,* 43, pp. 106–114.

Simonova, Inna 1990. "Zagovorshchiki". Iz istorii odnogo nesostoiavshegosia politicheskogo protsessa. *Istoki (Al'manakh),* 22, pp. 341–366. http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2006/06/09/zagovorwiki

Sorochan, Sergei. 2013. Vizantiiskii Kherson (vtoraya polovina VI – pervaia polovina X vv. *Ocherki istorii i kul'tury* 3. Khar'kov–Moskva: Russkii Fond Sodeistviia Obrazovaniiu i Sodeistviia Obrazovaniiu i Nauke.

Spiridonov, Dmitri 1909. K voprosu o muchenii Klimenta, papy Rimskogo, v Krymu. *Izvestiia Tavricheskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii,* 43, pp. 115–124.

Zaionchkovskii, Petr 1969. *Kirillo-Mefodievskoe obshestvo (1846–1847).* Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta.

Tolstoi, Nikita 1988. Drevniaia slavianskaia pis'mennost' i stanovlenie etnicheskogo samosoznaniia u slavian. *Istoriia i struktura slavianskikh literaturnykh iazykov.* Moskva: Nauka, pp. 128–140. http://www.inslav.ru/images/stories/pdf/1988_Tolstoj.pdf

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.07

The Saints of Death in the Traditions of the Balkan People

Rachko Popov

Balkan Ethnology Department, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
rachko.popov@iefem.bas.bg

The article examines various versions of the myth of the division of the world among the saints in the South-Balkan folklore. Notwithstanding the diversity in the recorded versions of this myth, the functions of a master of death and of the nether world of souls are attributed to Archangel Michael; the Islamic peoples and communities on the Balkans assign the functions of an angel of death to Israel/Azrael. Many Christian saints have got the power to punish human beings by depriving them of their lives. Usually, in such cases the motif of a committed sin is involved, most often in relation to non-observance of a particular kind of taboo.
Key words: Balkan, folklore, master of death, saint, Balkan

In Bulgarian folk songs and tales there is a very popular theme relating the story of the division of the world among the saints. When God created the world and the first people on earth, he convoked a meeting of all the saints. St. Elijah was ordered to reign over heaven and over the summertime heavenly elements. St. Nicholas was granted supremacy over the oceans, seas and rivers. Archangel Michael was appointed to be the ruler of death and of the nether kingdom of the dead. In a folk song from the region of Tsaribrod, this cosmogonical myth is presented in a particularly expressive manner: when the three main cosmic realms: the heaven, the earth and the nether kingdom of the dead, were divided among the three "brothers" St. Elijah, St. Nicholas and Archangel Michael, "the sky thundered, the earth quaked and fish in the seas started fighting". However, in various versions of this myth in the folklore of the Bulgarians other saints are also involved in sharing the global spheres of influence: St. Athanasius assumes command over the winter while St. Paul over the summer; St. John assumes patronage over sponsorship and fraternization, while St. Peter takes charge of the paradise (Yankova 2000). Notwithstanding the diversity in

the recorded versions of this myth, the functions of a master of death and of the nether world of souls are always attributed to Archangel Michael. That is why within the entire ethnic territory of the Bulgarians he is known by the nickname *vadidushnik* or *dushevadnik* ('soul taker').

In the popular conceptions and the folklore of Bulgarians, Archangel Michael is described as the most impartial among saints since "he forgives no one, neither the poor, nor the rich; neither men, nor women." When a man's hour of death comes, the saint "flies in through the chimney of the house" and stands at his deathbed with a golden apple in hand to lure his soul out and facilitate its parting with the body. As a folk song from the region of Plovdiv has it, God presented the Archangel with the golden apple so that he could easily entice the soul of the ailing Yana, which he did not dare take for nine long years. Archangel Michael takes the souls of dying sinners by stabbing them with a knife or sword. This is why burial tradition requires that a clean towel and a bowl of water be placed at the deathbed of every person so Archangel Michael can wash and wipe his hands after having wrung the soul out of the body of the sinful deceased.

A number of folklore motifs depict Archangel Michael as a "deaf and blind old man". God deprived him of his hearing and eyesight, and put a sharp scythe (sword, knife) in his hands because once, when he was sent to take the soul of a poor widow who had infant children, he took pity on her and spared her life. According to the beliefs of the Greek-speaking Karakachans (nomad mountain shepherds) as well, Archangel Michael is deaf. God deprived him of hearing because the saint was too merciful. Thus he would not be able to hear the whining and laments of parents whenever he has to take the souls of their children (Pimpireva 1998: 96).

After taking the soul of a deceased person Archangel Michael leads it along the path to the place of judgment in heaven where it should give an account of all its earthly acts and deeds before God and St. Peter. This is why in iconography he is often depicted with a pair of scales (symbol of justice) in his hands, with the help of these he weighs out the goodness done and the sins committed by the deceased (Kretzenbacher 1958).

It is an interesting fact that Archangel Michael is honoured by Bulgarians also as a heavenly patron of butchers since they likewise take the souls of slaughtered animals with their knives. Among Greeks the archangels Michael and Gabriel are also venerated as patrons of artisan butchers (Varvunis 2001: 183).

Among the rest of South Slavic peoples of the Balkans, belonging to the Eastern Orthodoxy and to Catholicism, Archangel Michael is in addition known by the nicknames *dushovadnik, vadidushnik* or *kruvnik* ('sole taker' or 'the bloodthirsty') (Kuret 1970: 13–16; Bandić 1991: 21; Vražinovski 2000: 359), though among Serbs and Croats his functions of interceding with God for the souls of the dead are largely attributed to St. Nicholas. We need to clarify here that according to the official Orthodox calendar of Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Greeks, Romanians and Albanians, the feast day of Archangel Michael is celebrated on October 8th, while Catholic Croats, Slovenes and Albanians celebrate it on September 29th, referring to it respectively as *Mihovil* or *Mohoya* (Croats), *Mihelovo* (Slovenes), *Shen Mili* (Albanians). Various legends depict the Archangel as a deity of the underworld, leading the souls of dead men to the other world; as a young man having 12 wings with which he screens and protects the moon from the raids of the lamia; as a God's messenger appearing either as a wanderer or as a beggar to entice the soul of the dying man with a sprig of basil (if he is righteous) or pierce it with a lance (if he is sinful). He holds a pair of scales in his hands to weigh the sins of the dead. He sends righteous souls to the guardian of the gates of Paradise, St. Peter, showing them the way with his right hand. With his left hand he sends off the sinful directly to hell (Bandić 1991: 21–24; Petrović 2000, T. 5: 313).

In the entire Balkan area the feast day of Archangel Michael is regarded as a "hard, cumbersome holiday". On the Saturday right before the feast day all Orthodox Christians commemorate one of the major official annual All Souls' days named after the Archangel. Serbs often also call it "closed" (Nedeljković 1990: 99; CMP: 188) or "autumn All Souls' day". Women make special oval or cruciform ritual loaves of bread which they give away together with boiled wheat to other people as offering at the cemetery. Quite often such loaves of bread are named after the Archangel or St. Petka (Bosić 1996: 185; Pamfile 1997: 207). Among South Slavic peoples the feast

day of the Archangel is also particularly preferred for organizing family reunions and community celebrations accompanied by a blood sacrificial offering and well laden common festive tables known as *sluzhba, svetets, slava* ('service', 'saint', 'glory'). In Eastern Herzegovina, at such family feasts, the host addresses the Archangel with the words: "May God permit St. Michael the Archangel to protect us from any misfortunes and hardships of life with his wing and with his flaming sword!" (Šarenac 1986: 245–246).

According to Greek traditional folk beliefs, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel were not trusted by God with the task to lead away the souls of dead persons to the kingdom of heaven. They have got thick ledgers wherein they record the names of their victims, particularly those who do not pay homage to their feast day. The population in the region of Ainos has the custom of hiding their shoes on the eve of calendar feast days, which otherwise are left outside in front of their doors. They believe that by doing this they will avoid premature death. Tradition requires that in honour of Archangel Michael the eldest men in a family should slaughter a rooster in close proximity to the temple or chapel of the saint with burning candles arranged around the sacrificial fowl (Megas 1963: 20–21; Constantinidou-Partheniadou 1992: 350). Bulgarians from the lands of Thrace also slaughter roosters on the feast day of the Archangel (Vaseva 2002: 9).

Many of the scientists doing research work on religions perceive the image of the Christian Archangel as a kind of successor to the ancient ferryman Charon who carries the souls of the newly deceased across the river of oblivion. Greeks often call him *Charos* (Lawson 1964: 45; Rodd 1968: 114–117). In their ancient conceptions the god of the dead is an enormous man with flashing eyes riding a black horse and wielding a sharp sword in his hand. He also carries arrows which he aims directly at the heart of his victim. Sometimes he is depicted as a vinedresser, a mower or harvester equipped with the appropriate cutting implement (pruning knife, scythe, sickle). Quite often he has some animal features – he is winged, his nose is like a bird's beak, his ears are long, his teeth are like the fangs of a predator. He turns into an eagle, snake or swallow. He is the keeper of the "lamps of human life". As soon as the oil in them burns out, the person dies.[1] And when God decides

to get married (this motif of His marriage is particularly widespread in the Greek folklore),[2] mass death sets in among people. This is because for His wedding banquet, instead of lambs, He "butchered infants" (Schmidt 1871: 224–236; Kyriakidis 1968: 102). The mythological relation Charon-Archangel Michael is also present in the conceptions of Romanian speaking nomadic Aromanians or *Armâns* (nicknamed *Cincars / Tsintsars, Koutsovlachs*). Among them the saint is known by the sobriquet *Khar*. In a similar context we should also include the folk curses popular in south Bulgarian lands wherein the demonic personage of *kharo* is always present as a kind of personification of death: "May *Kharo* eat you!", "May *Kharo* take you!" (Dukova 1992). In some places in the lands of Thrace, death has its Christian mistress embodied in St. Anastasia (December 22nd). In the Rhodope region the saint is called *Nastasha* or *St. Black*. On her feast day women do no work at all for fear of having "their house blackened" (to avoid death in their household). An interesting fact to mention here is that, mainly in south Bulgarian lands, there is another Christianized androgynous personage of the same name – St. *Chernyo / Timnyo* ('Blackie'/'Darkie') or *Baba / St. Cherna* ('Granny'/'St. Black'). Calendar celebration thereof occurs twice per year – in the winter and in the summer – and always follows the wintertime and summertime feast days in honour of St. Athanasius. In the region of the Sakar Mountain the function of a saint assisting dying people is entrusted to the "brother" of St. Athanasius, St. Antonius, called "St. Andonius the Saviour" in this region. When a man starts having severe deathbed pains the tradition requires that an icon of St. Andonius be placed beside him so that it would be easier for the soul to part with the body (Popov 2002: 314). Analogous concepts are also found among the population of Macedonia. When someone falls ill and is bedridden for a long period of time, an icon of St. Andonius is placed beside him on the bedclothes: "If his time to die has come, may St. Andonius take his soul, if he is going to recover, then the saint will bring him health sooner" (Risteski 2001: 166).

It seems to me that in the south Bulgarian lands the mythology-rite relation of the triad of saints Antonius-Athanasius-Euthymius/Blackie (January 17th, 18th, 20th) with Death has been influenced by the traditional outlook of the Greeks on life. The folk etymology of the name of St. Athanasius refers to "immortal" (Greek: *Αθανάσιος*)

and to "mortal" (Greek: *θάνατος*) and this is why the saint has been proclaimed patron saint of a large number of graveyard churches in Greece. Among Greeks there is a widely used phrase: "He now belongs to St. Athanasius" when referring to a man on his deathbed. To render homage to the saint of death, families used to slaughter roosters in his honour. The fowl is dedicated to the health of the entire family. Among Bulgarians the sacrificial offering of a rooster or a black hen is typical of the feast day of St. Euthymius who often duplicates on an etymological and ritual level the character of *Timnyo* or *Chernyo*. It seems that the semantic relation between St. Athanasius and his supremacy over death exerts decisive influence on the formation of an overall impression from the symbolic meaning of the holy triad. According to D. Lukatos, in the triad we can perceive a somewhat modern flavour of the ancient concepts about the three goddesses of destiny – the Greek Moirai (the Fates), who spin the thread of life of each new-born child on the first or the third night after its birth:

> *Saint Antonius was writing,*
> *Saint Athanasius was cutting,*
> *And Saint Euthymius was censing…* (Loukatos 1985: 91–96)

Yet another explanation is also plausible with regard to the relation between St. Athanasius and St. Black on the one hand and death on the other. Again, it is based on etymology. In the Orthodox calendar of Bulgarians and Greeks the summertime feast day of St. Athanasius (May 2nd) is followed by the feast day of the martyrs St. Timothy (correlation with the words *tama, tamen* 'dark', 'darkness'*)* and St. Mavra (translation from Greek 'black'). On the feast day of St. Mavra (May 3rd) Greek women abstain from using knives and scissors and avoid sewing garments because of the belief that their hands would be stained black. Elderly women are necessarily dressed in black on that day. No domestic and business initiatives are undertaken since these are all bound to be unsuccessful. Ethnographic sources indicate that when epidemics of infectious diseases broke out during the Ottoman rule, the churches and chapels named after St. Mavra became the most frequented holy places for the Greeks because of the sick seeking healing there (Megas 1963: 121; Constantinidou-Partheniadou 1992: 186).

Another triad of saints is also related to the conceptions about death and the other world of the dead in the Orthodox tradition of the Balkan peoples. This is the calendar triad St. Barbara – St. Sava (Sabbas) – St. Nicholas (December 4th, 5th and 6th). Among the Greek-speaking nomad Karakachans on the Balkans there is a popular saying: "Saint Barbara sickens, Saint Sava covers with cerecloth and Saint Nicholas buries" (Пимпирева 1998: 96). Its Romanian version is analogous: "Barbara commits barbarity, Sava reads burial service and Nicholas entombs" (Pamfile 1997: 237). An interesting fact in this case is that Bulgarians, Romanians and Karakachans often associate the name of the second saint in this triad with the female gender referring to the saint as "Saintess Sava". Again, as a result of the folk etymology, the name is associated with the word *savan* ('cerecloth'), from there with the concept of death, as well. There is a belief among the Greeks that they must pay special homage to the saint and pray to him to salvage their souls in the realm of the dead. According to a legend of theirs, St. Sava holds a net with his hands over the river of fire flowing through hell. If he happens to be angry or displeased with someone, he can loosen his grip on the net and the sinful soul would drop into the river (Loukatos 1985: 29–30). On St. Sava's feast day a non-canonical All Souls' Day is observed by Bulgarians in the region of Plovdiv. Women necessarily give away cooked wheat berries as offering in commemoration of their departed relatives (Stamenova 1986: 245). To the Romanians in Muntenia, "Saint Sava" is a sacred woman, who once suffered from measles. As a consequence of this illness she was left blind in one eye. On her feast day each woman prepares three tapers of pure wax and consecrates them to the saint in front of her icon in the church. After the divine service they take these tapers home. Whenever someone is taken ill with measles or seems to go mad, the three tapers are lit.

As I have mentioned earlier, in the traditions of Serbs and Croats in Slavonia the functions of a delegate of the souls of the dead in the other world are entrusted to St. Nicholas, also called "the Traveller". In this sense a folk song recorded by Vuk Karadžić is particularly indicative:

Please stay Saint Nicholas,
Let's go to the forest,

Let's build ships,
And use them to carry the souls
From this world into the other. (Nodilo 1981: 531)

A number of researchers of the old Serbo-Croatian religion presume that the mythological involvement of St. Nicholas with domination over waters and shipping predetermines his function of a saint taking the souls of dying people (secondary function probably arising on the basis of this domination). Thus, he turns into a kind of substitute for Archangel Michael, the chief Eastern Orthodox master of the souls of the dead. In this sense some prominent representatives of the Serbian and Croatian ethnology descry a Christianized follower of the ancient Charon in the figure of St. Nicholas, while others relate him to Wodan, the Germanic god of the dead (Čajkanović 1973: 333–334; Nodilo 1981: 531; CMP: 399; Petrović 2000, T. 5: 314).

In the mythology and the calendar tradition of the Slovenes the image of St. Varvara (St. Barbara) is loaded with the concepts of death and the other world of the dead. The vivid description of the throes of death of the saint in the hagiography served as a basis for emergence of a great number of folklore texts (songs, sagas and legends) which reiterate the motif of her heroic death. In a similar context various folk beliefs were born, some of which depict the saint as an unfailing attendant to people on their deathbed. Others characterize her as a keen and ardent patroness of the artisans who are under a daily threat of severe injury or death due to their working environment (miners, foundry workers, blacksmiths, masons, stone quarry workers). This is why Slovenes call St. Barbara "Attendant at death". On her feast day everybody carries a piece of iron (or a petty ferrous object) hidden in their clothes to protect themselves from demons, witchcraft, diseases, and death (Möderndorfer 1948: 27; Kuret 1970, T. IV: 13–14). In Catholic tradition, to a certain extent, analogous functions are attributed to St. Gertrude (March 17th). According to the words of the prominent German investigator of the cultural heritage of the peoples from South East Europe, L. Kretzenbacher, the saintess bears a close resemblance to the Orthodox Archangel Michael because on the first night after a man's death his soul is under the control of St. Gertrude (Kretzenbacher 1958: 112–116). The concepts of Romanians about St. Barbara are analogous to those of Slovenes. They also believe that the saint helps

those dying; she alleviates their suffering and takes their souls less painfully (Pamfile 1997: 236). Anyhow, among all Orthodox peoples on the Balkans St. Barbara is venerated as the master of measles. According to Greek ethnologists, her image includes reflections of some ancient pagan beliefs and conceptions related to the reverence for the goddess Hecate, protector of children, city gates and roads, as well for the three goddesses of destiny, the Moirai (Megas 1963: 24–25; Loukatos 1985: 23–26).

While outlining the Balkan model of the saints, lords of death, I would like to add that the Islamic peoples and communities on the Balkans assign the functions of an "angel of death" to Israel/Azrael. In the conceptions of the Muslims, he is invisible to common people although he is of enormous stature, with multiple legs and multiple wings (Lozanova 1998: 21). Along with these saints "specialized" in taking human lives, in the tradition of the Balkan peoples there are many other beliefs and concepts of similar nature, too. Reference is made here to those Christian saints who have also got the power to punish human beings by depriving them of their lives. Usually, in such cases the motif of a committed sin is involved, most often in relation to non-observance of a particular kind of taboo. All saints are known to get angry when women and men work on the official calendar feast days. But apparently among the "angriest" in this respect are St. Theodore, St. Paraskeva, St. Elija, St. Peter and St. Procopius. He takes the lives of those girls and women who meet for a working-bee to spin wool and chat. According to a Romanian myth, the cruel saint cuts the abdomens of maidens open, pulls out their intestines and spreads them over the farmyard fences or hangs them on the tree branches (Marian 1994: 244–248). In Western Bulgaria, Eastern Serbia and in Macedonia, St. Paraskeva (St. Petka "Friday" as translated from Greek) often appears in the form of a snake before those housewives who do not observe the taboo on wool spinning on Fridays and punishes them, sometimes even by death (Popov 2008: 76). Bathing and swimming in the sea or rivers on the feast days in honour of St. Elija, St. Peter and St. Procopius is banned by the tradition since these rulers of summertime elements always claim a victim – someone is drowned. Further examples of a similar kind can be provided but most likely this is unnecessary. They would just supplement the general traditional point of view outlining the beginning and the end of each human life as a thread

spun by the Fates or by their Christian successors, the saints, i.e. "the thread of life."

Notes

[1] According to a legend from the region of Botevgrad, "the stars were born from the marriage of the sun and then became icon lamps of Our Lord." As every human being has got a dedicated star in the heavens, 40 days before her/his death the oil in the respective icon lamp starts to diminish until "God finally blows it out".

[2] According to the conceptions of the Greeks from the Ionian Islands, as reflected in their folk songs, Charon's wife is called *Charontissa*. Their wedding ceremony took place at sundown. The wedding table was covered with a black linen cloth and the cutlery resembled cut-off male arms and infant heads (Rodd 1968: 118).

References

Bandić, Dušan 1991 = Бандић, Душан 1991. *Народна религија срба у 100 појмова*. Beograd: Nolit.

Bosić, Mila 1996 = Босић, Мила 1996. *Годишни обичаји срба у Војводини*. Нови Сад: Музеј Војводине.

Čajkanović, Veselin 1973 = Чајкановић, Веселин 1973. *Мит и религија у срба*. Београд: Просвета.

Dukova, Ute 1992 = Дукова, Уте 1992. Някои антични мотиви в обредите и фолклора на балканските народи. *Българска етнология,* 3, pp. 43–48.

Constantinidou-Partheniadou, Sofia 1992. *A Trevelogue in Greece and a Folklore Calendar*. Athens: Athine.

Kretzenbacher, Leopold 1958. *Die Seelenwaage. Zur religiöser Idee von Jenseitsgericht auf der Schicksaalswaage in Hochreligion, Bildkunst und Volksaberklaube*. Klagenfurt: Verlag des Landesmuseums für Kämten.

Kuret, Niko 1970. *Praznično leto slovencev.* Starosvetne šege in navade od pomladi do zime, IV. Celje: Mohorjeva družba.

Kyriakidis, Stilpon K. 1968. *Two Studies in Modern Greek Folklore.* Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies.

Lawson, John Cuthbert 1964. *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*. A Study of Survivals. Cambrige: University Press.

Loukatos, Dimitrios S. 1985 = Λουκατος, Δημιτριος Σ. 1985. *Συμπληρόματικα του χειμόυα καυ τησ αυοιξησ. Στρατης Γ.* Αθηυα: Φιλιπποτης.

Lozanova, Galina 1998 = Лозанова, Галина 1998. Обичаи преди смъртта в контекста на южнославянския миторелигиозен синкретизъм. *Българска етнологтия*, 1–2, pp. 20–36.

Marian, Simion Florian 1994. *Sărbatorile la Români*, 1. ED. Bucureşti: "Grais Suflet. Cultura Natoinala".

Megas, Georgios A. 1963. *Greek Calender Customs*. Athens: s.a.

Möderndorfer, Vinko 1948. *Verovanja, uvere in obiačji Slovencev,* II. Celje: Družba Sv. Mohorja.

Nedeljković, Mile 1990 = Недељковић, Миле 1990. *Годишни обичаји у срба.* Београд: Вук Караџић.

Nodilo, Natko 1981. *Stara vjera srba i hrvata.* Split: Logos, Ljubljana.

Pamfile, Tudor 1997. *Sărbătorile la români. Studii etnografic*. ED SAECULUM IO.

Petrović, Sreten 2000 = Петровић, Сретен 2000. *Српска митологија*, I–V. Београд: ПРОСВЕТА-НИШ.

Pimpireva, Zhenia 1998 = Пимпирева, Женя 1998. *Каракачаните в България.* София: IMIR.

Popov, Rachko 2002 = Попов, Рачко 2002. *Обичаи и обреди при смърт и погребение. Сакар. Етнографско, фолклорно и езиково изследване.* София: Акад. Изд. "Проф. М. Дринов", pp. 313–323.

Popov, Rachko 2008 = Попов, Рачко 2008. *Светци и демони на Балканите*. Пловдив: "Летера".

Risteski, Ljupcho 2001 = Ристески, Љупчо 2001. *Поајм и место светаца у македонској народној религии. Култ светих на Балкану*. Крагујевац: ПРОСВЕТА-НИШ, pp. 149–174.

Rodd, Rennell 1968. *The Customs and Lore of Modern Greece.* Chicago: Argonaut.

Stamenova, Živka 1986 = Стаменова, Живка 1986. Календарни празници и обичаи. *Пловдивски край*. София: БАН, pp. 244–283.

Šarenac, Jovan 1986 = Шаренац, Јован 1986. Грађа о обичајима у Источној Херцеговини. *Гласник етнографског музеја,* 50, pp. 241–263.

Schmidt, Bernhard 1871. *Das Volksglauben der Neugriechen und das Hellenische Altertum*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.

SMR 1998 = *Српски митолошки речник.* 2nd ed. Београд,: ИНТЕРПРИНТ.

Varvunis, Manolis 2001 = Варвунис, Манолис 2001. Култ светих у грчкој традицијској култури. *Култ светих на Балкану*. Лицеум 5. Крагујевац, pp. 175–190.

Vražinovski, Tanas 2000 = Вражиновски, Танас 2000. *Речник на народната митологија на македонците*. Прилеп-Скопије: "Матица Македонска".

Vaseva, Valentina 2002 = Васева, Валентина 2002. Задушницата в системата на българските обичаи. *Българска етнология*, 1, pp. 5–40.

Yankova, Veneta 2000 = Янкова, Венета 2000. Мотивът "Делба на светци". *Етнографски проблеми на народната култура*, VI. София: "Лотос", pp. 9–33.

Constructing New Spirituality

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.08

New Trends in the Study of Religion in Estonia: Contemplations in the Grey Zone between Religion and Science

Tõnno Jonuks

Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Musem;
Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies
tonno@folklore.ee

The study of Estonian folk religion has traditionally been characterised by a relatively slight interest of academic scholars. Simultaneously, folk religion has been actively used in the creation of Estonian national identity. Such an old division has changed in the past fifteen years. Academic scholars have become more active in this field and concurrently a contemporary pagan movement has emerged as a new and influential participant in these studies. This national paganism has been presented not primarily as a religious movement but as cultural heritage. As a result, contemporary pagan views are partly accepted in scholarly works, thus creating a conceptually new understanding, in which religious arguments almost dominate over the classical academic ones. This paper criticises such an amorphous approach, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish religious, national, and academic arguments and purposes.
Key words: contemporary paganism, critical methodology, Estonia, national identity, religious studies

Past religions have been of little interest to academic researchers in Estonia. This situation has considerably changed in the last decade and a completely new, conceptually different and influential approach has evolved recently. Hereinafter I will attempt, in the form of an essay, to give a brief overview of the study of past religions in Estonia (for more detailed research into the history of Estonian religious studies see Valk & Kulmar 2015) and summarise some critical views about the contemporary tradition. Since this is not exclusively an analysis of academic research, many of the arguments below are based on popular scientific articles, TV series, newspaper articles, and personal conversations. Hence, an essay-like style, reflecting the author's personal impressions, has been chosen, and many of the arguments, whilst apparent in the research situation, are not referred to.

Religion has been discussed for research purposes since the Enlightenment of the late 18th century in Estonia (Hupel 1774; Merkel 1798). Starting from the period of Romanticism in the 19th century, Estonian folk religion became a favourite topic for the young Estonian intelligentsia (e.g. Peterson 1822; Kreutzwald & Neus 1854). Religion also became one of the cornerstones for national ideologists (e.g. Jakobson 1870; Reiman 1901; Luiga 1908) but academic researchers have traditionally stood clear of the theme. The historiography of the Estonian research on religion commonly starts at the end of the 19th century, together with the organised collection of folklore. However, the purposes of this campaign – to collect folk songs, stories, etc. – derived from the antiquarian nature of the romanticist era, which valued folklore as part of national identity (Herder 1773). The systematic study of Estonian religion did, indeed, begin in the first days of the newly established Republic of Estonia in the 1920s, when folklore collectors J. M. Eisen and J. Hurt started to publish the first summaries based on their collections (e.g. Eisen 1918, 1926). These publications, considered useless pursuant to the methodology used today, were soon followed by folklorist Oskar Loorits' research (1934, 1935), which in the 1920s–1930s defined the traditions for the studies of religion in Estonia for almost all of the following century. Here it is curious to note that religion was considered of interest in Estonia only by folklorists, to a lesser extent also by theologians, but historians and archaeologists dealt with much earthlier and more practical matters from the point of view of the young republic. Hence, archaeologists studied the beginning of the settlement in Estonia and the strongholds of the Late Iron Age as two of the most important topics for national identity (Lang 2006). Historians, however, drew on the broader frame of political and military history, and considered agrarian history and a focus on country folk to be of primary importance – again, important issues in the context of a new republic and national identity. Therefore, religion and other intangible objects of research remained the domain of folklorists. Other fields of research adopted the picture created on the basis of oral tradition without hesitation and from then onwards it became the norm that the religion in the past, even thousands of years ago, was studied based on the folklore of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Alongside academic researchers there was another category of authors of a relatively diffuse background who, in the first decades of the 20th century, aimed to strengthen Estonian national identity and used religion for this purpose. It was often an ideal construction of past beliefs, based, on the one hand, on folklore collections, but even more so on the author's fantasy. This is how many of the colourful and national romantic writings about Estonian folk and prehistoric religion (e.g. Heraklides 1908) emerged, bashfully ignored by academic scholars.

One example of the use of prehistoric religion and its connection with the ideologies of that time was offered by Juhan Luiga (1873–1927), a medical doctor and a politician, and the later initiator of the pagan movement of the Taara religion, in an article entitled "Eesti muinasusk" (Estonian Ancient Religion) published in 1908:

> *Christianity was met with natural resistance in our country because in the format that it was brought from the Catholic Church to the world market in the 12th and 13th centuries, it could, it must have been, understandably disagreeable to the Finnish wise men as to every human being with healthy instincts.*
>
> *Prehistoric religion was undoubtedly higher and nicer in many regards, based on the present view of the world, than the religion in the church of the time. Only then, when Christianity was changed pursuant to the spirit of the North, for example as in Protestantism, could it hope to be accepted naturally, could it hope for the decomposition of the Finnish people. But despite everything, Christianity won over the hearts of the Estonians only after their* [collective] *heart had been completely broken and their body was in fetters, i.e. in between the 17th and 18th centuries.* (Luiga 1995 [1908]: 199)

The paragraph above shows eloquently the tendency that emerged already during the Enlightenment but was revived during the time of the national awakening at the end of the 19th century – the ancient religion was harmonious and noble and was destroyed with violence by the Catholic Church, which later on developed into accepted Lutheranism with a quality of "Nordic crispness" to it according to the rhetoric of the time. A critical view towards the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, or more generally "the German

Church", was characteristic also of many academic scholars of the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. Moora 1924).

Such historical and ideological processes formed the background where a "grey zone" emerged in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, in which authors seemingly represented the scholarly approach, while the purpose of these studies was ideological – either to strengthen the national identity or to use history to legitimise ideological statements. There was nothing to be condemned in these writings per se – they completely served their purpose, i.e., to strengthen Estonian national identity and, by opposing the Baltic-German historians, to show the superiority and morality (according to Lutheran values) of the Estonian culture before the Nordic crusades in the 13th century. However, the lack of academic studies into religion became a problem. This led to a situation in which little alternative existed to the genre of fantasy and thus primarily ideological books and papers became main influencers of the common audience. It is well illustrated that soon after the first studies, in which classical mythology was used to interpret Estonian folklore (e.g. Kreutzwald & Neus 1854), we meet the so-called maidens of the God of Taara, the daughters of the Meadow Matron, and other such creatures in Estonian folklore.

In fact, the period saw several academic publications in the field of religion (e.g. Schroeder 1906; Amelung 1877; Buch 1897; Holzmeyer 1873; Andersson & Laakmann 1934) but these did not exert much influence. Possibly one of the reasons for this was that the authors were researchers of Baltic German origin, whose academic discussions of the topic were not so attractive in the popular context. This is why these studies – conducted on a high level, based on the theory and methodology of the period – remained in the background, and in the more general discussions preference was given to the writings of the national ideologists. It was probably a manifestation of a national preference – a young state and a society freed from "700 years of slavery under the rule of the Germans", indeed preferred researchers of Estonian origin to deal with Estonian religion rather than the conquerors and enslavers. This is also well illustrated by the research history, which traditionally starts at the end of the 19th century, together with the folklore collection organised by Jakob Hurt. The earlier, century-old tradition of studying religion by the

Baltic German enlighteners and romanticists, who prepared the field for academic studies, is either ignored or treated as peculiar attempts but has not fitted into the "real" tradition of studying Estonian religion.

Such a national ideological position formed the basis for the development of the local neo-pagan organisation *Taarausulised* (followers of Taara religion) in the 1920s–1930s (see the overview in Vakker 2012). The organisation presented itself as a religious community but, based on its statutes and activities, its main purpose was to help to create the image of a "true Estonian". A similar national ideologist trend can also be observed in the works of scholars before World War II. Among academic scholars the two leading figures, Oskar Loorits and Uku Masing, published also studies (in 1932 and 1939 respectively), which had an academic form but a clearly national and ideological content. It is interesting to note the significant difference between popular books and academic research, particularly on the example of Oskar Loorits. In academic studies Loorits followed the scholarly traditions and methods of his time (e.g. Loorits 1935, 1949, 1951a, 1957a, 1960, etc.). Simultaneously, his main principle in popular books (e.g. 1932, 1951b, 1957b) was that the Estonian pre-Christian religion, preserved in contemporary folk tradition, is in essence similar to that of the eastern Finno-Ugric peoples and worshipping of nature is the main characteristic of their culture and worldview. According to Loorits and Masing, these passive and peace-loving peoples were in opposition to aggressive and conquest-oriented Indo-Europeans (especially Germanic tribes, to which historical Slavic tribes were added later on due to the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union after World War II). Such ethnic psychological conclusions that were, in many ways, influenced by wishful thinking, were moulded into the form of academic literature, and based on these Masing even entered into heated and principled arguments with his European academic colleagues (Masing 1969).

After World War II, research into Estonian religion came to a standstill. Soviet scientific atheism formally supported studying religion as a backward phenomenon of human culture but in fact it resulted in a few studies about Christianity and the clerical system, whereas the topic of folk religion was entirely ignored. Ironically it

is reflected in an article by August Annist (1966), which stresses the importance of the study of folk religion for all researchers dealing with the folk culture of the past. But it becomes clear from the same article that the environment for the research of religion was not that favourable, and Annist had to defend himself as well as the study of folk religion in general in his article because the folkloristic and ethnographic study of the animistic spirits got in the way of Soviet scientific atheism. Atheism was the only official scholarly frame to study religion. It mainly focused on the criticism of the Lutheran Church or Christian religion and the clerical system on a wider scale (Remmel & Friedenthal 2012). Thus, the folk religion remained an unimportant by-subject. Wherever the topic of religion was unavoidable, it was largely based on popular studies by Loorits and Eisen, thus cementing the early 20th-century ideological approach. Single studies about folk religion emphatically stressed the anti-clerical essence of the Estonian folk religion (e.g. Raudsep 1961). Even despite the three specialised collections entitled *Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost* (About the History of Religion and Atheism, 1956, 1961, 1987), the number of studies specialising in religion remained scarce throughout the Soviet era. In single studies about religion in the more distant past anthropological methods were preferred instead of scientific atheism.

A similar scarcity of relevant studies on religion also continued in the second half of the 20th century. However, a remarkable methodological difference can be followed in the folkloristics of that period – having become more critical of sources, the attitude towards the study of prehistoric religion based on folkloristic material became more sceptical (Viires 1986). Interests shifted from the past-oriented studies to the synchronic study of contemporary religions (Valk & Kulmar 2015, 189). The period also saw archaeologists' rising interest in religion (e.g. Jaanits 1961; Tamla 1985; Valk 1995, 2001), but all of these remained lone digressions.

Hence, until the beginning of the 21st century, the Estonian history of religion evolved from an initially ideological treatment into a more source-critical and scholarly approach. At the beginning of the 21st century, however, a new paradigm emerged in addition, where source-criticism and academic theory and methodology again remained in the background. Although unconscious, it exhibits a

great similarity to the former ideological papers by Loorits and Masing. Somewhat surprisingly this new approach arose outside the academic community, from the contemporary pagan or native religion movement.

Estonian Native Religion and Its Background

Estonian native religion – Earth belief (*Maausk*) – (see an overview of the history and beliefs in Västrik 2015) belongs to the broader tradition of European neo-pagan movement, which originates from the middle of the 20th century (Harvey 2010, 358). Paganism encompasses different branches, from the global Wiccans and druids, eco-paganism, etc., to the more local and specific ethnic paganisms, including the Estonian one. According to G. Harvey (2010, 359), nature is the connecting link between these different movements of paganism. The foundation for the emergence of paganism on a Pan-European level was laid by the artists and poets of the 18th and 19th centuries, who found that industrial towns were not worthy living environments and that it was, indeed, the rural areas where one could still find the "awe and majesty of the true cosmos" (ibid). Such an approach encouraged the emergence of neo-pagan movements as well as the preservation and appreciation of pre-Christian phenomena.

Differently from more general and Western paganisms, like the Wicca or Druid movements, the Eastern European ethnic paganisms establish their concepts based on a nation, traditional folklore, and customs, thus also in a limited geographical area, and generally associate their beliefs with pre-Christian tradition of some particular nation. The dominance of ethnic paganism is well illustrated by the results of the national census conducted in Estonia in 2011. According to this, almost 3000 people identified themselves as members of the Estonian native religion and/or Taara religion, while the Western European neo-pagan movements were represented only by a few people (1 druid, 34 Wiccans, 341 pagans, and 272 followers of New Age beliefs – data according to the webpage pub.stat.ee). It also has to be mentioned in this context that during the European poll to study the religiosity of Europeans, where Estonia gained its status as 'the least religious country' in Europe, more than half of

the population admitted to believe in 'higher forces and spirits' (for more details see Remmel & Uibu 2015).

The ethnic pagan movements of Central and Eastern Europe are also characterised by the argument that the religion they practise in modern times is the same as the one their ancestors practised in the past, and it has been passed on (as secret knowledge) inside families since ancient times (Harvey 2010, 366). Adrian Ivakhiv (2005) has shown that the idea of religions belonging to a certain area/place and that it is proper to practise these religions in these exact places is more widely spread in the Eastern European pagan movement. Similar views are repeated in several writings by the practitioners of the Estonian native religion as well (e.g. Eller 2000). Such a principle of territoriality differs clearly from Western European neo-pagan movements, which particularly stress the universal nature of pagan religions. Indeed, many arguments of the Estonian native belief are based on Estonian oral tradition but, following the general trend of globalisation, wider neo-pagan and indigenous movements also make a considerable contribution to the modern native religion. A good example of that is the recently developed understanding of the phenomenon of sacred sites. The concept of a sacred place as a natural reservoir was not present in Estonian folklore until recently but has been adopted in contemporary folklore so strongly that it has been taken over without questioning. Controversially, despite the great interest in the sacred places, we still lack comprehensive overviews about the folklore of sacred places. As a personal impression, it can be pointed out that the earliest records from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries were mostly connected with fear. Offerings were brought to sacred sites, otherwise something terrible was believed to happen. For the same reason, it was not allowed to touch or remove the offerings brought there to avoid punishment from the spirits of sacred sites. In the first decades of the 21st century, a clear change can be observed, and sacred places are advocated as natural reservations. Such a change is clearly influenced by international indigenous and ecological movements and often legitimised by referring to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. As a result of this shift, contemporary deposits are rather brought to sacred places either as a token of gratitude or to increase the power of the place, and the previously dominating motif of 'fear' is missing.

Vague associations with the past and the principle of territoriality lead to the national approach. Neo-pagan religions in Western Europe have often been associated with nationalism and extreme political views. Eastern European neo-pagan communities have until recently shown relatively little interest in politics. There have, indeed, been active politicians among the practitioners of the Estonian native religion and political lobbying has been carried out, but the latter has been restricted to the placement of sacred sites under national protection. In recent years, *Maavalla Koda* (the Estonian House of Taara and Native Religions) has achieved significant political support (Ringvee 2015), which is most clearly manifested in the establishment of a support group of sacred places in the Estonian Parliament in 2012. In a more general ideology, the nationalism related to Estonians has an important position among the practitioners of the native religion. With reference to the Estonian native religion, attempts have been made to create an image that native faith is the traditional religion in Estonia, and that it should also form a part of the cognition of ethnicity (e.g. Kaasik 2007). As the Estonian native religion is not considered to be a religion, but a worldview and a way of life, such claims could be treated on a wider basis. Hence, it has been claimed that everyone who practises the rituals adopted by the practitioners of the Earth believers (such as Christmas and Midsummer) is unconsciously a practitioner of the same religion. In doing so, it has been presumed by default that Christmas and Midsummer are, indeed, Estonian holidays with a pre-Christian background. Such views are published widely in newspaper articles in the declarative mood by the practitioners of the native faith, making the ordinary reader accept that these beliefs derive directly from the pre-Christian past.

The Earth believers' movement remained a small niche community during the 1990s, popularising folk religion and folk customs. The rise of the movement started in the first decade of the 21st century, in connection with major developments and the construction boom as well as the privatisation of properties, which thus changed the status or threatened the existence of natural sacred places. Such cases afforded public attention, which resulted in the growing importance of the convictions of this movement. The first example of the kind was Samma holy grove in the north of Estonia, which the landowner wanted to sell in 2001. As it was a restored sacred grove

and one of the most significant and important gathering places for the followers of the native faith, a proposal was made to register the property as municipal land. One of the arguments given in favour of doing so was that of the freedom of religion and protection of human rights which have, from then onwards, been presented in most of the disputed cases. Arising from the principle that a sacred site is holy in itself, not created by human beings, humans must not destroy a sacred site and should do everything to protect it. Moreover, even if a sacred site is not in active use, then in order to guarantee the freedom of religion, the practitioners of native religion must be able to carry out their rituals in any sacred site in Estonia. Religious events may also be potential, meaning that for the application of the requirement of religious freedom rituals do not have to be carried out at the site time and again, but a respective possibility must be ensured. Such conduct manifested itself vividly in the following cases of Kunda, Paluküla, Panga, Purtse, etc. During these campaigns another important principle arose: the sacred sites constitute the cultural heritage of ancient Estonians and "our ancestors", and the state is tasked with their protection. The latter is usually confirmed also by the reference from the Estonian constitution, which states as the main purpose of the Republic of Estonia to guarantee and preserve the cultural heritage of Estonia, and according to the discourse of native believers sacred places are undoubtedly part of it.

In summary, the Estonian native religion is, on the one hand, indeed understood as a neo-pagan religion, but on the other hand, native religion has acquired the meaning of cultural heritage and cultural identity, and hence native religion and the related phenomena (such as sacred natural sites) are also valued by people who do not practise the religion themselves and do not share such values. It is difficult to criticise cultural heritage from the point of view of national identity, and this is probably one of the reasons why the native religion approach has so strongly and without any criticism spread outside the neo-pagan movement itself.

Balancing on the Edge: Pagan Ideology Becoming Part of Academic World

As was mentioned at the beginning of the article, Estonian religion has attracted little attention among academic scholars due to the synergy of several different factors and, in the little attention it has deserved, national and ideological treatments have turned out to be more popular. During the rise of importance of the Earth believers' movement in the past decades, their publication activity increased significantly. In particular, alongside a wider spread of public and free-of-charge web communication, the movement has found a medium that enables them to exert easy and rapid influence. Particularly journals and newspapers related to nature and the environment (*Eesti Loodus*, *Maaleht*, etc.) became eager to publish these articles. Regular overviews of sacred sites and folk customs followed therein, and more general articles about the movement of Estonian native religions and holidays were published. Most importantly, these overviews also cover the rules on how to behave in sacred places, and as these are related with nature protection and sustainable behaviour, such articles do not look like religious, but rather like cultural and environmental ones. Also the style how arguments are represented rather resembles popular scientific articles and not religious texts. Thus, the conventional reader is seemingly presented the results of academic research, although the content of these articles derives from contemporary paganism.

The establishment of the Centre of Sacred Natural Sites at the University of Tartu took the activities of the practitioners of native religion to a completely new level: unlike other neo-pagan movements in Europe, the Estonian example has achieved a far more significant influence and position in society (Ringvee 2015). As the Centre is part of the University of Tartu, the pagan worldview is presented as an academic approach to the Estonian folk culture. Such an approach was introduced a few years earlier as a result of the organisation of a conference on sacred sites and publication of a collection of articles, in which scholarly and Earth believers' approaches were mixed (Valk & Kaasik 2007). Several courses are organised at the University of Tartu and the Estonian University of Life Sciences about sacred sites, with the aim to introduce sources and traditional customs related to these places. The entwinement

of scholarly and religious approaches is evident in the courses, and it seems that academic participation is partly used for legitimising the religious approach. As the main task of the Centre was supposed to be coordination of the project to locate, map, and prepare sacred sites to be taken under state protection, the Centre also started close cooperation with the National Heritage Board. Thus, after gaining an official position in the academic and administrative structures, the status of the pagan community increased, legitimised by official institutions.

Mingling Pagan and Academic: Some Recent Approaches in Studying Estonian Religion

Proceeding from the earlier tradition of a direct approach to oral tradition as a historical source, a similar uncritical view to interpret oral narratives as reflecting real history has been held in the past decade. Borrowing a metaphor from another discussion (see Tamm 2013), folklore has been taken as "yesterday's newspapers", where oral stories are interpreted literally, without considering basic source criticism or any theoretical background. Partly it has been influenced by the traditional approach in which folklore dominates over all other types of sources in the studies of religion or intangible subjects. Although the style is most strikingly represented by the practitioners of native religion (e.g. Kaasik 2007; Kütt 2007), a similar approach sometimes also appears among researchers with an academic background. Emphasising of pure oral tradition as a primary source, without any critical discussion, is noticeable mainly in disciplines outside folkloristics, and sometimes even inside folkloristics itself. As a combination, it has created an amorphous approach, in which academic form is used for suggesting religious convictions. I will attempt to summarise the main characteristics of this style of research.

A simplistic treatment of sources has led to the approach in which oral sources are taken to represent a "history" that is true and real and that has, despite the fact that it has not yet been recorded in chronicles, been steadily passed on by local inhabitants for centuries. This approach pays little attention to the international motifs represented in oral tradition, folk etymology of toponyms or historical events, such as extensive famines, wars, and plagues, which

decreased the population extensively. Even if these circumstances have been taken into account, folklore has still been considered a former custom that might have been lost to a great extent; yet, by finding the "right" fragments from oral tradition, it is possible to restore the wider picture. Such a modest attention to historical events interestingly corresponds with Oskar Loorits' studies almost a century before. Loorits also dated the origin of most of the folk religion phenomena to the pre-Christian past, and at the same time largely ignored Middle and Modern Age processes. Such a treatment of sources is particularly characteristic of the analysis of behavioural norms established for sacred sites during recent years. By taking the constantly evolving and reinterpreted oral tradition to be a source of information, attempts are made to draft behavioural guidelines to be followed at sacred sites as stated rules (Kütt 2007). These have been presented to be applied more or less universally both in time and space, leaving an impression as if traditions at Estonian sacred sites were organised according to institutional religious norms.

The sustained treatment of folklore also ties in with the vision of the history of Estonians as something of great stability. As expected, such (ab)use of the concept of time often appears in folkloristic studies or theology but surprisingly often occurs also in history and archaeology. Presuming that until the end of the 19th century (and based on contemporary authors and ideologies also in the 20th century) the population of Estonia was rural and agrarian, it is considered to be a coherent link to modern and medieval societies, in some cases dating back to the beginning of the agrarian society or even all the way to the first inhabitants. Based on such seeming continuity of economic and social systems, it has been provided that also the mental world and religion have been continuous. Indeed, some changes or developments are accepted, but as the essence of religion is linked, on the one hand, to the rural society and, on the other hand, to the genetics of the local people, unreasonably stable treatments of religion are easily created. This ties in with the reasoning for the collection of oral folklore that has emerged in recent years: as demographic migration, manifesting itself in the draining of rural areas of inhabitants, can be monitored once again, the collection of folklore would be justified before "the last carriers of folk tradition disappear". Ironically this justification was already used

by the first scholars of Estonian history and from then onwards by almost all scholars over the course of three centuries. For instance, the last Baltic chronicler Christian Kelch used similar references to old customs that were not in use at the time of writing the chronicle in 1688–1691 (Kelch 2004, 28). Hence, folklore has not disappeared anywhere in the course of time and it will not do so because it is a living cultural phenomenon that persists and develops along with the living society. Examples that seemingly confirm the disappearance of folk tradition and occur in stereotyped formats – "we no longer know, but my grandmother knew...", etc. – should be seen as typical truth-constructing mechanisms, in which information of vague origin is legitimised with a reference to the authorities in the past. Naturally, it does not mean that older phenomena are missing in oral tradition, but rather that the meaning of oral stories comes first and foremost from the time of recording, and the application of such references further into the distant past without reasonable argumentations is not justified.

Attempts have been made to confirm the longevity of oral traditions by creating a link between recorded folklore and archaeological sources. Accordingly, the collecting of folklore began at the end of the 19th century, but as it was collected from older people, it seemingly reflects the situation at the beginning of the 19th century. As the period covered by archaeological studies in Estonia ends with the 18th century, it has been claimed that this makes it possible to find a link between archaeology and oral sources separated from one another only by a century (Valk 2006, 311). Such a clearly artificial construct does not, however, justify in any way the significant age of folklore – and even more so when there are several phenomena in archaeological material the occurrence of which is documented until the beginning of the 19th century, but which are almost never reflected in oral tradition. One example could be the coin offerings in churches (Johanson & Jonuks 2015) which, based on the dating information, belong to the period from the Middle Ages to the first decades of the 19th century, after which the depositing of coins in churches ceased. However, coin deposits are not reflected in oral tradition, except in a single example, despite the relatively recent practice. This is just one example that can be compared in different sources and which suggests that folklore should be studied and

understood exclusively in its own chronological and spatial context, and further conclusions could be made only after that.

Simultaneously with continuity, another and even more recent tradition stresses the difference of Estonian beliefs and customs from those of the rest of Europe. Partly it is related to the widely popular thesis that Estonia is principally a stable place where old beliefs and customs have been sustained for a very long time. The thesis was founded already by the ideological books written by Loorits in the 1930s. In the current tradition Estonia is advertised as the only place in Europe where sacred natural sites have been preserved because elsewhere in Europe they were destroyed and forgotten long ago due to Christianisation (Kaasik 2007, 32; Valk 2007, 137). Traditional sacred sites are certainly not a cultural phenomenon attributable only to Estonia. They have been discussed in great numbers and with colourful descriptions elsewhere in European literature, especially in the 19th century folklore publications (e.g. Hope 1893; Magni 1901). References have been made to offerings and specific sacrificial finds on stones, in springs, around trees, etc. Unlike in Estonia and Eastern Europe, such strong public interest towards the former sacred sites has not been witnessed in Western Europe during the past few decades. Some attention is paid to sacred sites by the representatives of the contemporary neo-pagan religions (e.g. Wallis 2003, 142 ff.), but they concentrate more on archaeological sacred sites rather than folkloristic places. However, studying of the recent depositions and combining of archaeology and oral tradition seems to be a rising field (e.g. Hooke 2010; Houlbrooke 2015). It is probably due to the differences arising from the source material and research traditions that Estonian sacred sites seem so different and unique.

In addition to the uncritical approach to sources, the research style characteristic of the Estonian native religion is also described by the preference given to emotionality over reasoning. Emotionality in this context is expressed first and foremost as related to national identity and being an Estonian, and the treatment of the religion of the past and sacred sites as national cultural heritage. Such a starting point makes the whole approach hard to criticise. A similar situation could be seen in the 1930s when Loorits' source publications and earlier ideologists' concepts about Estonian religion were

indeed known and spread among people, but were not discussed in academic circles; although they were selectively adopted, there was no criticism as regards obvious misinterpretations and fantasies. One of the reasons was probably again the association of religion with national identity, and in such a small national society as Estonia, it was difficult to criticise ethnic markers or cultural heritage objects. Simultaneously, the low number of scholars studying religion does not enable advanced academic discussion.

Conclusion

What seems to characterise studies into Estonian religions throughout the scholarly history is the relatively low interest shown by the academic scholars. This has enabled some single authors to become dominant and shape the whole research tradition. As religion did not become a specific topic during the 20th century, Oskar Loorits' methodologically disputable approach dominated all over the field. Besides the lack of academic discussion, another problematic development is a tight connection between folk religion and the Estonian nation. Christianity and church history have often been seen as parallel systems, characteristic of towns and upper classes. Estonian Middle and Modern Age rural society, on the other hand, is seen as following folk religion, which is comprised of pre-Christian beliefs and single Christian effects. Thus folk religion is associated with the Estonian nation. It has become more evident in the past few decades when the contemporary pagan movement *Maavalla Koda* has advertised their belief system as something essential to Estonians. This has resulted in understanding *Maausk* or native belief as cultural heritage, which is shared and accepted also by people who are not members of this community. Such a powerful and emotional approach from the contemporary pagan side and the lack of academic studies have created a situation in which the pagan view is understood as an academic approach and it is not criticised. This has formed a grey zone, in which views of a religious group are published in semi-academic style and authors make it difficult for a common reader to understand the border between scholarly and religious statements. The latter should not be understood as being against the popular style of scholarly writings but the difference between the academic and religious approach should be clearer for

the common reader. The situation has also been blurred by several uncritical studies about the oral tradition. These do offer attractive examples, allowing far-fetched interpretations, yet ignore the very basic of the academic style – to be critical about the source material. Direct interpretations of folk etymologies, ungrounded dating of oral tradition motifs, and wishful thinking do support the idea of Estonia being unique; the idea is easily accepted among the common audience but it has little to do with academic tradition.

The popularity of this "grey zone" is also well understandable in the Estonian context – as the contemporary native religion has been advocated as cultural heritage, it is easier for a common reader to accept this than scholarly studies, which hardly state anything so explicitly. Furthermore, due to the existing and influential framework, the scholarly approach has either to accept (partly) the modern pagan view or has to argue against it, which can hardly be a constructive way. And altogether it supports the situation where little academic alternative exists to the contemporary pagan views. Indeed, academic scholars have studied and published articles about religion in Estonia in the past, about contemporary paganism (e.g. Västrik 2015) or different spiritual movements (e.g. Uibu 2016). As most of these have been published in academic journals and often in a foreign language, such studies cannot be used as an alternative to the grey zone studies.

Emphasising the cognition of ethnicity is still one of the main topics. By claiming to be the bearer of the continuity of historic Estonian faith on the one hand and the guard of intangible cultural heritage on the other, the native belief movement achieved such an important position in society that outside of it, among ordinary people, the native religion is considered a continuous religion with a beginning that precedes the conquests of the 13th century. And hence, ironically, the neo-pagan religious group has become very influential in a state that is publicly advertised as the most secular state in the world.

Acknowledgments

The author of the article is particularly grateful to Ergo-Hart Västrik and Atko-Sulhan Remmel for their valuable comments to the earlier draft of

the article. Writing of this paper has been supported by the institutional research grant IUT 22-5 and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies).

References

Amelung, Friedrich 1877. *Über den volkstümlichen estnischen Aberglauben und den estnischen Antonius-Cultus*. Dorpat: C. Mattiesen.

Andersson, Walter & Laakmann Heinrich 1934. *Ein neues Dokument über den estnischen Metsik-Kultus aus den Jahre 1680.* Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis (Dorpatensis), 32 (5). Tartu.

Annist, August 1966. Eesti rahvausundi uurimise olukorrast. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 8, pp. 457–467.

Buch, Maximilian Theodor 1897. *Ueber den Tõnnis-cultus und andere Opfergebräuche der Esthen*. Vorgetragen in den sitzungen der Gesellschaft den 18 jan. u. 15 febr. 1896. Helsingfors: Finnischen Litteratur-Gesellscaft, pp. 1–8.

Eisen, Matthias Johann 1918. *Eesti muistsed jumalad ja wägimehed.* Tartu: G. Roht.

Eisen, Matthias Johann 1926. *Eesti muistne usund*. Tartu: Postimees.

Eller, Kalle 2000. *Omauskudest tänapäeva maailmas*. http://www.maavald.ee/koda/jumioie-jutud/29-noatera-jutt

Harvey, Graham 2010. *Contemporary Paganism: Listening people, Speaking Earth*. New York: New York University Press.

Heraklides, A. [Aleksander Treimann]1908. *Eesti usk*. Tallinn: Mõte.

Herder Johann Gottfried 1773. *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker.* http://www.uni-due.de/lyriktheorie/texte/1773_herder.html (2.03.2017).

Holzmeyer Jean Baptiste 1873. *Osiliana. Erinnerungen aus dem heidnischen Göttercultus und alte Gebräucheverschiedener Art, gesammelt under den Insel Esten.* Vehandlungen der Gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft, 7 (2). Tartu

Hope, Robert Charles 1893. *The legendary Lore of the Holy Wells of England, including Rivers, Lakes, fountains and Springs*. London: Elliot Stock.

Hooke, Della 2010. *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape*. Woodbridge: Boydell.

Houlbrooke, C. 2015. Small change: Economics and the coin-tree in Britain and Ireland. *Post-Medieval Archaeology,* 49 (1), pp. 114–130.

Hupel, August Wilhelm 1774. *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland*, I. Gesammelt und herausgegeben durch August Wilhelm Hupel. Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch.

Ivakhiv, Adrian 2005. In search of Deeper Identities. Neopaganism and "Native faith" in Contemporary Ukraine. *Nova Religio,* 3, pp. 7–38.

Jaanits, Lembit 1961. Jooni kiviaja uskumustest. E. Jansen (ed.). *Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost Eestis.* Artiklite kogumik II. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, pp. 5–70.

Jakobson, Carl Robert 1870. *Kolm isamaa kõnet*. St Peterburg: E. Pratz.

Johanson, Kristiina & Jonuks, Tõnno 2015. Superstition in the House of God? Some Estonian Case Studies of Vernacular Practices. *Mirator,* 16 (1), pp. 118–140.

Kaasik, Ahto 2007. Ajaloolised looduslikud pühapaigad – väärtused looduse ja kultuuri piirimail. Valk, H. & Kaasik, A. (eds.). *Looduslikud pühapaigad. Väärtused ja kaitse*. Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Toimetised, 36. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool, Õpetatud Eesti Selts, pp. 23–74.

Kelch, C. 2004. *Liivimaa ajalugu.* Tõlkinud ja eessõna Ivar Leimus. Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv.

Kreutzwald, Friedrich Reinhold & Neus, Hans 1975 [1854]. *Mythische und magische Lieder der Ehsten. Gesammelt und herausgegeben von Fr. Kreutzwald und H. Neus.* St Petersburg: Buchdrukerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Nachdruck 1975. Verlag Harro v. Hirschheydt Hannover-Döhren.

Kütt, Auli 2007. Maarahva pühade puude ja puistutega seotud käitumisnormid. Valk, H. & Kaasik, A. (eds.). *Looduslikud pühapaigad. Väärtused ja kaitse.* Tartu. Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Toimetised, 36, pp. 185–212.

Lang, Valter 2006. The History of Archaeological Research (up to the late 1980s). Lang, V. & Laneman, M (eds.). *Archaeological research in Estonia 1865–2005*. Estonian Archaeology, I. Tartu: Tartu University Press, Humaniora: archaeologica, pp. 13–40.

Loorits, Oskar 1932. *Eesti rahvausundi maailmavaade*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts.

Loorits, Oskar 1934. Kujutelmade ja motiivistiku päritolust ja vanadusest. *Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Aastaraamat,* IX–X. Tartu: Sihtasutis "Eesti rahva muuseum", pp. 165–175.

Loorits, Oskar 1935. *Mulgimaa ohvrikohad. Die Opferstätten in Mulgimaa*. Kaleviste mailt. Tartu: Õpetatud Eesti Selts, pp. 226–319.

Loorits, Oskar 1949. *Grundzüge des Estnischen Volksglaubens,* 1. Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för folklivsforskning, 18 (1). Lund: Carl Blom.

Loorits, Oskar 1951a. *Grundzüge des Estnischen Volksglaubens,* 2. Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för folklivsforskning, 18 (2). Lund: Carl Blom.

Loorits, Oskar 1951b. *Eestluse elujõud*. Stockholm: Tõrvik.

Loorits, Oskar 1957a. *Grundzüge des Estnischen Volksglaubens,* 3 (1). Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för folklivsforskning 18 (3:1). Lund: Carl Blom.

Loorits, Oskar 1957b. Eesti hõimu olemusest. *Minu varamu.* Koguteos noortele Eesti kultuuritegelastelt. Toronto: Eesti gaidid paguluses.

Loorits, Oskar 1960. *Grundzüge des Estnischen Volksglaubens,* 3 (2). Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för folklivsforskning, 18 (3:2). Lund: Carl Blom.

Luiga, Juhan 1995 [1908]. Eesti muinasusk. *Mäss ja meelehaigus*. Tartu: Ilmamaa, pp. 194–201.

Magni. Antonio 1901. Pietre cuppelliformi nuovamente scoperte nei dintorni di Como. *Rivista archeologica della provincial di Como.*

Masing, Uku 1939. Taara päritolust. *Usuteadusline ajakiri,* 1, pp. 1–16.

Masing, Uku 1969. C. Scott Littleton. The New Comparative Mythology: an anthropological assessment of the theories of Georges Dumézil. Reviw article. *Semiotica,* 1 (3), pp. 339–355.

Merkel, Garlieb Helwig 1798. *Die Vorzeit Lieflands: ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes,* I. Berlin: Voss.

Moora, Harri 1924. Eestlaste, liivlaste ja lätlaste vaatest ristiusule nende kristianiseerimise algul. *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, pp. 81–90.

Peterson, Kristjan Jaak 1822. *Christfrid Ganander's Thomasson's Philos. Mag. Finnische Mythologie. Aus dem Schwedishen übersetzt, völlig umbearbeitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Christian Jaak Peterson,*

Literat in Riga. Beiträge zur genauern Kenntniss der ehstnischen Sprache. 14 heft. Pernau: Reval bei Bornwasser, pp. 2–114.

Raudsep, Loreida 1961. Eesti rahvaluulekogudes leiduvad meieisapalve paroodiad. *Keele ja Kirjanduse Instituudi uurimused,* VI. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, pp. 141–153.

Reiman, Villem 1901. *Eesti muinasusk.* Kõne. Jurjev: Postimees.

Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost Eestis, I. 1956. Ed. E. Jansen. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus.

Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost Eestis, II. 1961. Ed. E. Jansen. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus.

Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost Eestis, III. 1987. Ed. J. Kivimäe. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus.

Remmel, Atko-Sulhan & Friedenthal, Meelis 2012. Religiooni ja ateismi ajaloost Eestis. *Ajalooline ajakiri,* 141/142, pp. 203–220.

Remmel, Atko-Sulhan & Uibu, Marko 2015. Outside Conventional Forms: Religion and Non-Religion in Estonia. *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe,* 1, pp. 5–20.

Ringvee, Ringo 2015. Funding Religious heritage in Estonia: From sacred Buildings to Sacred Groves. A. Fornerod (ed.). *Funding Religious Heritage.* Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 113–125.

Schroeder, L. v 1906. Germanische Elben und Götter: beim Estenvolke. *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien.* Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 153 (1). Wien: Hölder.

Tamla, Toomas 1985. Kultuslikud allikad Eestis. Tedre, Ülo (ed.). *Rahvasuust kirjapanekuni: Uurimusi rahvaluule ja proosaloomingu kogumisloost.* Emakeele Seltsi toimetised, 17. Tallinn: Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia, pp. 122–146.

Tamm, Marek 2013. Vahtre loeb Henriku kroonikat kui üle-eilset ajalehte. *Postimees* (5.02.2013).
http://arvamus.postimees.ee/1128058/marek-tamm-vahtre-loeb-henriku-kroonikat-kui-uleeilset-ajalehte

Uibu, Marko 2016. Re-emerging religiosity: the mainstreaming of new spirituality in Estonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies,* 47 (2), pp. 257–274.

Vakker, Triin 2012. Rahvusliku religiooni koostamise katsed – Taara usk. *Mäetagused,* 50, pp. 175–198.
https://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2012.50.vakker

Valk, Heikki 1995. Lõuna-Eesti XIII–XVII/XVIII sajandi külakalmistud rahvatraditsioonis ja uskumustes. Hiiemäe, Mall & Kõiva, Mare (eds.). *Rahvausund tänapäeval*. Tartu: Eesti TA Eesti Keele Instituut & Eesti TA Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum, pp. 454–471.
http://www.folklore.ee/rl/pubte/ee/usund/eesti/valkh.pdf

Valk, Heikki 2001. *Rural cemetries of southern Estonia 1225–1800 AD*. CCC papers, 3. Visby: Gotland University College & Centre for Baltic Studies & Tartu: University of Tartu, Archaeology Centre.

Valk, Heikki 2006. Archaeology, Oral Tradition and traditional Culture. Lang, V. & Laneman, M (eds.). *Archaeological Research in Estonia 1865–2005*. Estonian Archaeology, 1. Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 311–316.

Valk, Heikki 2007. Looduslikud pühapaigad kui muistised: arheoloogia vaatenurk. Valk, H. & Kaasik, A. (eds.). *Looduslikud pühapaigad. Väärtused ja kaitse*. Tartu: Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Toimetised, 36, pp. 135–170.

Valk, Heikki & Kaasik, Ahto (eds.) 2007. *Looduslikud pühapaigad. Väärtused ja kaitse*. Tartu. Õpetatud Eesti Seltsi Toimetised 36.

Valk, Ülo & Kulmar, Tarmo 2015. Estonian study of religion: A historical outline of the 20th century developments. T. Bubik & H. Hoffmann (eds.). *Studying Religions with the Iron Curtain Closed and Open. The Academic Study of Religion in Eastern Europe.* Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions. Leiden, Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 166–198.

Viires, Ants 1986. Paar pilguheitekatset eesti muinasusku. *Looming*, 12, pp. 1666–1675.

Västrik, Ergo-Hart 2015. In search of genuine religion: the contemporary Estonian maausulised movement and national discourse. K. Rountree (ed.). *Pagan and Native Faith Movements in Europe: Colonialist and Nationalist Impulses*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 130–153.

Wallis, Robert J. 2003. *Shamans/Neo-Shamans: Ecstasies, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans*. London: Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.09

Constructing New Spirituality in Modernity – the Case of the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria

Svetoslava Toncheva

Balkan Ethnology Department, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
svetoslava.toncheva@iefem.bas.bg

The article is dedicated to a unique Bulgarian case of new spirituality or new religiousness, developed within the discourse of formation of a new Bulgarian nation in the beginning of the XX century. The structure of spiritual leader – worldview – community of followers is examined as specific spiritual culture aimed at facing the challenges of the modern world for the human of the XX–XXI century.
Key words: new religiousness, spiritual teacher, modernity, spiritual culture

The emergence of new religious movements at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century marks a significant transformation in both religious as well as social spheres of Europe (and the world). They could be viewed, in this context, as "efforts by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace 1956: 265).

The White Brotherhood, created by the spiritual teacher Petăr Dănov in early XX century, is a unique Bulgarian movement in the sphere of new religiousness/spirituality. Having emerged during a period dominated by the construction of a new Bulgarian nation (beginning of XIX century), it aims, first and foremost, at the "raising" (in Petăr Dănov's words) of the Bulgarians through development of a specific religious culture. The ideas of Petăr Dănov, who graduated in the USA, are an embodiment of the new universal trends in this field.

The movement appears relevant not only during the period of its establishment, but also during the period of postmodernity, which saw Petăr Dănov voted as the second "The Greatest Bulgarian"[1] in Bulgarian history. Moreover, the movement attracts followers worldwide (in France, Russia, Germany, Poland, USA, etc.).

In the present article I will pay attention to some key points in relation to the three main elements, which, in our point of view, construct the phenomenon of the new religiousness – the spiritual leader, the spiritual system/worldview (established by him) and the community of followers. Having achieved this aim, I will try to outline some conclusions concerning the essence of the phenomenon and the necessity for existence of the new spiritual movements.

The Figure of Petăr Dănov (Beinsa Duno)

The image of Petăr Dănov appears to be mythologized to a great extent by his followers. For them the stressed accent is not on the human Petăr Dănov or on his secular biography, but on the spiritual master known under the mystic name Beinsa Duno.[2] For this reason I will examine his biography from two points of view – secular and mystic.

Secular Biography

Petăr Konstantinov Dănov[3] (1864 – 1944) is born in the village of Hadarcha, today – Nikolaevka in Northeast Bulgaria. He receives his education in the Methodist scientific-theological gymnasium in the town of Svishtov, later in the Methodist Seminary Drew, in Madison, USA, and in the Faculty of Theology, University of Boston. After finishing the theological course, Petăr Dănov transfers to the Faculty of Medicine in the same university in order to complete a one year specialized course for missionaries. Having received a certificate for participating in this course in 1884, Petăr Dănov interrupts his study, for reasons still unknown, and returns to Bulgaria.

According to the biographies of Petăr Dănov, having returned to Bulgaria, he decides to fulfil his duty to Methodism and becomes a preacher at the Methodist church in Yambol. However, his attempt to apply some of his new ideas runs up against the unwillingness of the leaders of the local church to change. As a result, he withdraws and begins (in 1900) his phrenological and psychological research into Bulgarians, in parallel with his preaching. These investigations continue for 11 years. During this period he establishes the first organization of followers known as "The Network".

1904 he moves to Sofia and takes up residence in the house of one of his followers. Here, when not travelling around the country, he delivers his Sunday lectures, which are the beginning of his organized activity.

1914 Petăr Dănov declares the start of the new era of Aquarius and lays the foundations of his first organized lectures. The school of the White Brotherhood is officially opened in 1922 and the lectures continue weekly until 1944.

Of particular importance for Petăr Dănov's activity is the establishment of a settlement known as "Izgrev" (in Bulgarian, meaning Sunrise) near Sofia where he lives with his followers until his death. It is seen as a realization of the idea of brotherly life. From the 1930s on the ideas of the White Brotherhood start spreading around the world and their message is carried by followers, which leads to the transnational distribution of the movement. Finally, on 27 December, 1944 Petăr Dănov's time on earth comes to an end.

Mystic Biography

On the other hand and with much higher importance for the followers of the White Brotherhood, is the figure of the spiritual teacher Beinsa Duno. The first elements of mysticism in Petăr Dănov's biography appear from the very beginning with his birth which, according to his biographers, was linked to divine intervention and signs of being chosen by God. This is a traditional motive in a number of biographies of saints or so called "religious experts" – prophets, clairvoyants (see for example Vălchinova 2006) or founders of religious movements. It is the category of the so-called "special" people, traditionally defined as mediators (intermediaries) or messiahs (personifications of god) who establish contact between the profane and the sacral. Their life is marked by a series of miraculous events, which are seen to prove their special position and guarantee their ability to communicate with the supernatural world.

The childhood of Petăr Dănov is also described in an almost fairy-tale-like or legendary manner. He possesses unusual characteristics: his health is delicate; he doesn't speak until the age of three, or according to other sources, the age of six. He is a clairvoyant who predicts that his sister's forced marriage would fail, warns villagers

of an approaching storm, etc. His most mystic life period could be described by the following important key points:

Initiation – this is a central moment of Petăr Dănov's life described personally by him. He uses the term "implantation" (of the Holy Spirit) to describe the process of establishing his connection with the divine and by which the man Petăr Dănov transforms into the spiritual Master Beinsa Duno. The initiation proceeds in three phases over a relatively long period.

Legitimation – or the conversations with God. The initiation of Petăr Dănov finds legitimation in an interesting document – his personal notebook (Dănov 1999). We are able to distinguish a few symbolic categories in this document: conversations with God by means of which a message is transmitted; the passage through a test; signs and visions. In the part of the notebook carrying the intrigue title "Seven Conversations with God's Spirit", there is described the test he needs to pass in relation to the mission of transmitting the teachings of God to the world. In order to be able to do this, Petăr Dănov needs to be born from God and to receive an initiation.

Mythologization – as mentioned before, the image of the spiritual teacher Beinsa Duno is mythologized to a great extent. The myth of Dănov displaces his secular biography to such an extent that such logical questions as: What did Petăr Dănov do for a living? Who was his mother? Etc. either do not arise or else remain unanswered amongst his adepts.[4] Undoubtedly this situation is the result of Petăr Dănov's charisma which makes such "profane questions" meaningless (compare Weber 1922).

Among the community of followers are numerous stories of miracles and healings performed by him, which define him not only as a spiritual leader, but also as a magician and a prophet (following Weber's terminology). These charismatic qualities provide a motivation for many to become his followers: Petăr Dănov personally accepts numerous visitors who are drawn to him by the stories of his abilities and provides answers to questions about people who have gone missing during the wars (a typical function of clairvoyants) as well as questions connected to health and other problems.

The teaching of the White Brotherhood

Petăr Dănov (The Master), as already mentioned, arrives in Bulgaria from the USA having experienced a world very different from the one he returns to. Even today (when globalization has, to a large extent, unified the world), visits to the USA are very often referred to as a "cultural shock", so one can imagine how great the contrast was in Dănov's time. Petăr Dănov sets himself other goals, influenced not only by the triumphant march of science and the variety of spiritual teachings in the 20th century, but also by both the Bulgarian reality and the spirit of Protestantism which undoubtedly determines to a large extent the concrete, practical purpose of his teaching.

Petăr Dănov defined the spiritual system created by him as a teaching, calling it the New Teaching. It is declared divine, a Teaching of love, one that shows humanity a new path, and which is equivalent to the teachings of Christ. Petăr Dănov focuses precisely on the term teaching, distinguishing it from religion: "I do not give you religion but a teaching about life"; "I do not profess any religion, but I talk about the good life. My science is about the life that people lost." (Dochev 1998: 11) Here, apart from teaching, science is talked of – Dănov supports the ideas of the age as an essential link between religion and science.

Another important term for this spiritual system is school (and namely spiritual school), where practical knowledge about the spiritual world is taught: "One of the qualities of the Great School of Life – the School of the White Brotherhood or the so called Divine School – is this: it sets out everything based on experience" (Konstantinov 2005: 46). In other words, the practical background, applied in all elements of everyday life, defines the spiritual system created by Petăr Dănov as a Teaching. A key principle of the Teaching is the practical applicability – i.e. theory and practice are inextricably linked (a detail less noticeably present in anthroposophy, which, along with individual improvement, is realized in a number of public fields, as will be seen later).

Dănov offers a "purification" of its misunderstood elements, which have become embedded over the centuries. Here the focus is directed towards the "esoteric" Christianity (the terms occult and esoteric

are considered as synonyms in the Teaching) and the idea of the coming of Christ in a non-material form, as an "inner light in the minds and hearts of men".

Another important element is the introduction of a divine archetype – the so-called Universal White Brotherhood. According to members of the White Brotherhood, it guides world culture in its entirety, and has existed since the creation of the universe. It is a community of beings who have accomplished their earthly evolution, and become teachers of humanity; their leader is Christ. The Universal Brotherhood has appeared throughout the course of human history in the so-called occult schools that existed before the birth of Christ.

According to Petăr Dănov the Teaching unites the whole wisdom of humanity: "I want you to study the teaching of the White Brotherhood. You will find it scattered throughout occultism, in Theosophy, in Christianity, everywhere you will find it" (Daskalova 1996: 181). The Teaching suggests that all geniuses, great teachers and artists are its representatives, i.e. culture in its entirety is a product of its work and created under its inspiration. It is also regarded in the same sense. Its ideas are defined by the community as the "Word", with a divine character, and transmitted by the figure of the Master along a divine – earthly chain, i.e. inspired by the spiritual world.

On the one hand, the Teaching of Petăr Dănov develops in the context of Protestantism, and on the other, in the context of new spirituality/new religious movements, which attracts more and more followers during the period which Petăr Dănov spent in the USA. In his methodology he can be seen to use some obvious influences from Protestantism (particularly from Methodism) such as missionary practice as well as sermons called talks/lectures. Another obvious analogue can be drawn between the fundamental principle of Methodism – the practical implementation of Christian duties (Slavkova 2007: 48), and the pragmatism of Petăr Dănov's Teaching.

The connections between the Teaching and esotericism are also very strong. They are visible in a number of ideas, terms, and practices. During the period spent by Petăr Dănov in the USA, public attention turns towards theosophy, spiritualism[5] and new spiritual movements. In this way, the Teaching of Petăr Dănov is especially

topical for the period in which it appears, introducing new elements into the Bulgarian spiritual sphere.

Summarising, we could describe Petăr Dănov's system as consistent with the spirit of the modern times. It seeks to renovate and modernize the religiosity/spirituality of the Bulgarians[6] and the Man as a whole. In this connection, the Teaching offers ideas of all kinds, including solutions for seemingly small, everyday problems (but extremely important in the context of the so-called "cultural nations"). It differs from other forms of official religion and alternative religiosity that were known in the Bulgarian sphere. As a new phenomenon, it involves confrontation between old-new (tradition-modernity), offering a new spiritual system – a new vision of the world, a reinterpretation of traditional Christian models, combined with Eastern ideas, in synchrony with developments taking place in the European cultural sphere at the time. In this way, the Teaching of Petăr Dănov can be defined as a specific religious-cultural system which attempts to answer new questions about Man himself (first and foremost about the Bulgarians) as well as about the surrounding (modern) world. Placing Man at the centre of his universe (recreated using the symbol of Pentagram – a model of human development and improvement), the Teaching defines its goal as the creation of the "new Man", the Man of the new culture and the new world who will possess a new way of thinking, culture, social role, etc. Transforming Man, the Teaching aims to change the world through the establishment of a new society, built on the basis of the idea of brotherhood between people.[7]

The community of the White Brotherhood

The community – *dunovisty* (etic term), White Brotherhood (emic) – formed around Petăr Dănov constructs the spiritual school created by him. It is the social environment, the micro-society where the concepts of the spiritual teacher are being applied.

According to the followers the White Brotherhood (WB), it is a mundane realization of the "spiritual community" of the Universal White Brotherhood, which is conceived as "permanently existing in the spiritual world." Idea of such otherworldly community – a

heavenly archetype is very strong among the White Brotherhood. Thus, for the followers, the WB exists on several levels:

* Heavenly archetype (Universal WB);

* Spiritual community (the spiritual network of WB);

* "Mundane" unification of the community during the meetings on certain occasions (WB).

The structure of the community during the life of its founder is built on the basis of the separation of the followers into different classes (according to the categories of lectures which they are allowed to participate in). They outline a scheme traditional for a religious/spiritual community, reflecting the levels of initiation (from neophytes to the core of the dedicated):



Figure 1. The Summer Spiritual Camp of the White Brotherhood. Rila Mountain, Bulgaria. Photo by Svetoslava Toncheva.



Figure 2. Sunrise at the Peak of Prayers, Rila Mountain. Photo by Svetoslava Toncheva.

1. public/external circle;

2. intermediate level/middle circle;

3. central circle.

Petăr Dănov himself classifies the path of followers, whom he defines as **listeners, catechumens** and **students** (in modern times such levels do not exist because of a lack of authority to define them).

The specifics of the community – its consolidation and communal life during Petăr Dănov's lifetime (in the Izgrev settlement) create conditions for a **living and practical spiritual school.** The whole life is seen by the followers of Petăr Dănov as work in a spiritual school – an idea applied today on individual level is seen as work with Dănov's lectures or on one's own self. The "Sunrise" settlement is an attempt for practical and social application of the ideas of the

Master in the life of a micro-society, creating traditions, many of which are still alive today.

The tradition of communal life from the period of existence of the "Sunrise" is the reason for the importance of a society (as a community) or social interaction nowadays. Even in the paneurythmy[8] (Duno 1938: 69) which is group practice, the importance of the community is visible – the symbol of the circle and the play in couples are important there.

The main spaces for group practices are the periodic meetings of the community (at least of part of it) – the so called assemblies. They are local (in the towns of Arbanassi, Ruse Karnobat, Pernik, etc.), hosted by local groups, culmination of which in the spiritual Summer School – the assembly at the Seven Rila lakes. These allow for the continuation of common practices like group prayers, meeting the sun, playing paneurythmy, common (brotherly) lunches, singing songs, lectures, concerts. This most visible shared space of the



Figure 3. Paneurythmy. Seven Rila Lakes.
Photo by Svetoslava Toncheva.



Figure 4. The Circle of the Paneurythmy above the Lake "Purity".
Photo by Svetoslava Toncheva.

followers of the WB is transnational – at Rila assembly adherents come from various national groups, which leads to interactions between them.

On other side stands the work of followers at an **individual level** – significant today, when, in spite of the continuation of the tradition, the community is not consolidated. This application is in synchrony with the principle, laid in the new spiritual movements – taking responsibility for one's own spiritual development or the "privatization" of the religion/the religious (Berger 1967, Luckmann 1967). For this purpose, there are a number of adequate methods, left by Petăr Dănov – various exercises for meditation and establishment

of connection with the spiritual world, affecting by doing so physical and mental health, songs, prayers, etc.

Generally, the collective activities within the community are considered more significant – a result of Petăr Dănov's ideas and the real experiences for their implementation in the "Izgrev" settlement. The idea of a communal way of life is not foreign during the period of the construction of "Izgrev" – in Bulgaria there are communes of followers of Tolstoy, alternative followers of Petăr Dănov outside the WB (temporary communes in Arbanassi, Karnobat – see Slavov 2010: 117), as well as attempts by anarchists and communists to create communes – all of these have short period of existence. The settlement of the followers of Petăr Dănov is particularly sustainable precisely because of his authority –whether it would still exist today if it had not been destroyed by the socialist government, remains an interesting question. Commune ideas continue to inspire



Figure 5. Lecture in astrology at the Seven Rila Lakes. Photo by Svetoslava Toncheva.

the followers until today, but, however, second "Izgrev" does not appear. This desire manifests itself in the great significance of the organized assemblies (especially at Rila mountain) as a kind of application of the community life.[9]

* * *

Not taking into consideration the specific national context which also determines the appearance of the spiritual movement of Petăr Dănov, we could conclude that it is part of the world's spiritual tendencies of modernity and postmodernity. Scientific progress and the withdrawal of religion are preconditions for new challenges, which the modern man is meant to face. Such challenges include disorientation, new public roles, necessity for a new worldview (way of thinking), adequate for the new cultural situation. The new spirituality (or the new religious movements) claims to be able to fulfil this niche, or the vacuum between strive and reality (see Bruce 1995). The movement of Petăr Dănov is, in this context, a successful one judging by the number of its followers and its vitality (it is still current today and attracts new adherents). It offers a worldview corresponding to the new world tendencies in the period of its establishment (as well as today) and manages to create a community, which shares the postulated ideas. This is possible, however, due to the figure of its creator, whom we could describe as a new spiritual teacher – a figure, as we already saw, combining traditional qualities like charisma (Weber 1922) with very good modern education (Gellner 1983). For the community of his followers, these are attractive characteristics, which support the formation of a peculiar spiritual culture and specific mentality.

Finally, taking into consideration the three elements – spiritual teacher, worldview (philosophy) and community of followers we could go deeper into the research of the phenomenon I discuss here, referred to as spiritual culture.

Notes

[1] "The Greatest Bulgarians" was a campaign of the Bulgarian National Television (licensed by BBC). It took place from June 9, 2006 to the end of

February 2007. To the surprise of many Petăr Dănov was ranked second after the national revolutionary hero Vasil Levski (Biblioteka "Triăgălnik").

[2] Beinsa Duno is the name that Petăr Dănov receives after his initiation as a spiritual master or the so called inoculation (*vselyavane*). The etymology of the name is controversial. Some believe that it has roots in Sanskrit and means "One who brings the good word". According to other interpretations, it comes from a language called "vatanski" which, according to Petăr Dănov, is the original language of mankind. The theologian Svetoslav Ivanov believes that Beinsa Duno is an occult name that reflects the spiritual and the creative interaction between God, Master Petăr Dănov and his disciples in their collaboration over text, music and Paneurhythmy (http://triangle.bg/books/1935-09-22-10.1998/1936-01-19-10.html; Radev 1998).

[3] Biographies of Petar Dănov are available only in Bulgarian. See: Georgiev 2005, Konstantinov ja Boev 2005, Kraleva 2001, Slavov 1998, Slavov 2010, Khristov 2012.

[4] Only in recent years do we see attempts being made to reconstruct Petăr Dănov's real biography – see Khristov 2012.

[5] The Teosophical Society is founded in New York in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky (traveler, philosopher, writer, occultist and spiritualist), lieutenant colonel H. S. Olcott and the lawyer W. Q. Judge. The society aims: to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour; to encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science; to investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man. H. Blavatsky is an author of "Isis Unveiled" (1877) and "The Secret Doctrine" (1888). Reactions towards her, as well as towards her works, are, even today, controversial (ranging from admiration in some to an evaluation by others that she is a charlatan and her books "trash").

[6] The Modern Spiritualist movement dates from 1848 when the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York produced knocking sounds that were alleged to be messages from a spirit. Spiritualists claim to be able to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

[7] More about these ideas see in Krasztev & Kerenyi 2001.

[8] Here I don't mention the messianic ideas of Petăr Dănov in relation to the future of the Slavic nation. Concerning these ideas see more in Heinzel 2011.

[9] Paneurythmy is a complex of dance moves performed at dawn, in the nature and accompanied by music in the period between March 22–September 22. It contains the basis of the spiritual system of Petăr Dănov.

Paneurythmy contains a number of semantic levels associated with the various movements. Etymologically it means "supreme cosmic rhythm or movement of universal harmony". The aim of Paneurythmy is to recover the missing connection to nature and the harmonization of the universal life. See more about Paneurhythmy in Duno 1938.

References

Atanasova, Violina 2001. The Social Adaptation of the White Brotherhood (Mid-40s–Late 60s of the 20th Century). *Bulgarian Historical Review,* 1-2:, pp. 158–183.

Berger, Peter L. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy*. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

Biblioteka "Triăgălnik" = Библиотека "Триъгълник" http://triangle.bg/books/1935-09-22-10.1998/1936-01-19-10.html

Bochinger, Christoph 1994. *"New Age" und moderne Religion: religionswissenschaftliche Analysen.* München: Chr. Kaiser/Gutersloher Verlagshaus.

Bruce, Steve 1995. *Religion in Modern Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dănov, Petăr 1999. *Dnevnik na Uchitelja Beinsa Duno (Petăr Dănov)*. Sofia: Dar–Logos.

Daskalova, P. & Ancheva, D. (comp.) 1996. *Vsemirovijat Uchitel Beinsa Duno i Veliko Tarnovo*, II. Veliko Tarnovo: Alfiola.

Dochev, Hristo 1998. *V kakvo nie vjarvame*. Sofia: Kralica Mab.

Duno, Beinsa 1938. *Panevritmija.* Sofia: Meka.

Gellner, Ernst 1983. *Nations and Nationalism.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Georgiev, Aleksander 2005. *Za rodoslovieto na Uchitelja Petăr Dănov*. Sofia: Bjalo Bratstvo.

Heinzel, Thomas 2011. Slavic Messianism in Southeast Europe. The White Brotherhood and the Question of National Identity. *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*, 2 (1), pp. 55–75.

Hristov, Georgi (comp.) 2012. *Mladijat Petăr Dănov.* Biografija. Burgas: Slănchogledi.

Konstantinov, Metodi & Boev, Bojan & Nikolov, Boris & Todorova, Maria 2005. *Uchitelja.* 3 ed. Sofia: Bjalo Bratstvo.

Kraleva, Milka 2001. *Uchiteljat Petăr Dănov – zhivot i uchenie.* Sofia: Kibea.

Krasztev, Péter & Kerenyi, Szabina 2001. Spirit Awakening at Sunrise. Petăr Dănov and the White Brotherhood: Attempting Interpretation. *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 5, pp. 79–100.

Luckmann, Thomas 1967. *The Invisible Religion.* New York: Macmillan.

Slavkova, Magdalena 2007. *Ciganite evangelisti v Balgarija.* Sofia: Paradigma.

Slavov, Atanas 1998. *Pătjat i vremeto.* Svetska biografija na Petăr Dănov. I. Sofia: Bjalo Bratstvo.

Slavov, Atanas 2010. *Izgrevăt. Kăm svetskata biografija na Petăr Dănov.* Sofia: Heliopol.

Vălchinova, Galina 2006. *Balkanski jasnovidki i prorochici ot 20 vek.* Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski".

Wallace, Anthony F. C. 1956. Revitalization Movements. *American Anthropologist,* 58 (2), 264–281.

Weber, Max 1922. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriß der Verstehenden Soziologie.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.10

Constructing Contemporary Periodical and Occasional Rituals

Mare Kõiva

Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Musem;
Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies
mare@folklore.ee

This paper investigates and compares two kinds of contemporary rituals: 1) the native (pagan, new spiritual movements) periodical rituals performed around equinoxes and solstices, and 2) occasional rituals performed by masters of new rituals. The aim of the paper is to re-evaluate and deconstruct these rituals using Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of invented tradition (1983) and studies of new religiosity/spirituality. The structure of ritual, text and presentation settings of four ritual masters of different world views are highlighted, aimed at mapping the similarities and the differences between these religious and spiritual phenomena. Part of the rituals under investigation were dedicated primarily to solstices and astronomical bodies, or their text reflected interconnections of celestial bodies and human culture.
Key words: incantation, new spiritual movement, prayer, ritual

Introduction

The article continues observation on microscripts of new rituals celebrating equinoxes and occasional rituals. One of the common denominators selected for this article is the making of verbal connection between the ritual and astronomic phenomena. Today, appeals addressing the Sun, the Moon and other astronomical bodies and phenomena form an indelible part of new religious and cultural rituals. At the beginning of 20th century, verbal charming was used for medical purposes, magical enhancement of household efficacy (intended to bring about economic success, especially with cattle keeping and agriculture) or to increase wealth. The core of a typical ritual consisted of a prayer/appeal, incantation or short formula of verbal magic addressing the sun or the moon. Astral bodies other than the sun and the moon were addressed less frequently and usually by the common denominator *täht* 'star'. The invariant messages in rituals addressing the astronomical bodies pertained to their status and attributed powers. The belief system based on analogy magic related lunar phases with respectively growing (waxing) and

diminishing (waning) powers, while the so-called inter-moon period (new moon) had additional significance. Also, vernacular belief considered solar light to carry different healing and repelling energies at dawn, sunset and midday. For example, certain activities were forbidden at dawn and sunset (e.g., hanging clothes to dry outside) while others (e.g., healing tumours and illnesses on the surface of the body) were encouraged. In addition to the time of conducting a ritual, its duration and temporal sequence of elements, i.e. the timing and temporal structure of rituals was significant (e.g., about incantations see Kõiva 2009).

Texts and customs dwindling from active use were adapted for modern society already in the early 20th century. At the same time, new spiritual movements inscribed the society with newly created practices. This was not a single event but rather a repetitive enhancement and reinterpretation of earlier texts, concepts and rituals in order to inscribe them into modern society. Eric Hobsbawm has noted that the most interesting feature of the phenomenon of invention is the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes (Hobsbawm 1983: 6). In the cases under examination (selected rituals from the 1980s to date), rituals are tailored to resemble traditions of the past but they have many innovative integrated parts and elements.

While terms connected with new spirituality and native (indigenous, Pagan, Neo-Pagan) religiosity vary greatly, I have here taken the view that they are coherent sets of beliefs and practices (e.g. Hanegraaff 1996, Heelas 1996, Harvey 1997, Greenwood 2000, York 2001, Blain 2002, Wallis 2003, Heelas and Woodhead 2005, Wallis 2010, etc.) through which a movement comprises/converges a variety of traditions. Academically, they are sets of discourses and practices providing their followers or disciples standpoints from which to engage with the social worlds, ritual practices, and concepts with which to develop these engagements (c.f. Wallis 2010).

Emphasis on and special celebration of equinoxes as a critical time is supported by different cultural phenomena[1], new religious practices in particular. Many of the theorists listed above have considered celebration of equinoxes to be one of the distinguishing markers of New Age or spiritual movements (Hanegraaff 1997, Heelas and Woodhead 2005, Wallis 2010). Based on Estonian material, I can

affirm that equinox celebration in recent decades has been promoted by various official, state institutions and the media, and seems to be one of the cultural markers of our times. It is also among the traditions which folk healers and mediums have introduced as a part of vernacular new rituals.

Renowned religion researcher Roy Rappaport has defined ritual as a unique structure despite the fact that none of its elements – performance, invariance, formality – belong to it alone. Rituals consist of self-referential messages; invariant additional messages, although transmitted by the participants, are not encoded by them (Rappaport 1997).

This paper investigates and compares two kinds of contemporary rituals: 1) the rituals performed around equinoxes and solstices, and 2) occasional rituals; often performed by masters of new rituals for different purposes and in different settings, different private and public rituals from the 1990s until 21st century. The structure of ritual, text and presentation settings of four ritual masters of different world views are highlighted: Vigala Sass (1941–2016), Thule Lee (b. 1972), Urmas Sisask (b. 1960), Igor Mang (b. 1949); additionally, ritual practices of other significant practitioners are referred to (Ene Lukka-Jegikjan, Helve Laksberg, Heie Tuli, Mikk Sarv, Errol Vares) with the aim of mapping the similarities and the differences between these religious and cultural phenomena. Part of the rituals under investigation were dedicated primarily to solstices and astronomical bodies, or their text reflected interconnections of celestial bodies and human culture.

1) The rituals performed around equinoxes and solstices

In many European countries sets of beliefs and practices that could be called native religiosity emerged and bloomed in the early 20th century. In the Estonian case, the religious movement called *Taara-usk* (Taara-belief), complete with rituals, ritual objects and sacred groves emerged in the 1920s (Vakker 2013). During and after WW2, many of the leaders of these religious movements emigrated from Estonia. The tradition was carried on in exile: in Canada, USA, Australia and elsewhere. These traditions were also part of the so-called forest universities[2] that were regarded as ethnically

important continuation of ancient traditions and honouring of forefathers. Meanwhile in Estonia, after the Republic of Estonia was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940, the pagan believers were one of the groups deemed dangerous for the new regime and therefore forcibly deported to Siberia. Those that survived the Siberian prison camps returned in the 1950. It is very difficult to give an accurate overview of the activities of small alternate religious groups in the 1940s and 50s. However, after Estonia regained independence in 1992, paganism underwent an explosive revival.

In late 20th century, a new native religious movement emerged beside the *taara-usk*, spearheaded by young people with different educational background and attitudes – *maausk*. The new movement shared several touching points with analogous Baltic movements. The dynamic nature and variety of branches of paganism has been overviewed by many scholars, but it nevertheless seems important to point out that even close geographical neighbours sprouted unique strains of paganism (cf Strimska 2005, Krumina-Konkova & Gills 2010, etc.). Still, recent times have seen some coordination and homogenization (in, for example, rituals of welcoming the Sun at solstice in Latvia and Estonia) due to reciprocal visits and discussion among leaders (Kõiva 2014).[3]

The end of the Soviet era and late 20th century is characterised by a boom of spiritual and religious self-seeking, trainings, autodidactic acquisition of religious knowledge and different techniques. Equally important were the charismatic leaders and the individual contributions of participants. Some researchers (e.g., van Gulik 2010, Hubbes & Bakó 2011) have emphasised the creativity of the participants of new religious movements. In the Estonian case this meant creativity in establishing new locations, new topographies and establishing models appropriate for rituals, complete with all the related elements and choosing structural templates. Sites embedded with new sacrality were established under the leadership of institutions and leaders. New spiritual movements also attributed value to old cult sites as well as a number of historical, archaeological and cultural memorials, initiating their reinterpretation and introduction to modern sacral practice.

One of the pioneers in celebratory equinox rituals in late 1980s and early 1990s was the healer Vigala Sass or Sass of Vigala (legal name



Vigala Sass performing a chant in 1990.
Photo from private archive.

Aleksander Heintalu) (1941–2016), who conducted the rituals in a cult site he established near his home in Triigi village, Saaremaa Island. His rituals reflect combinations of different religious and secular approaches. It is significant to note that the new rituals were a reinvention of older tradition with the help and on the bases of printed scholarly books and folklore archives. Some of his early rituals were solo performances where neither audience nor participants were welcomed (interviews 1990). During these sessions, Sass communicated with so-called tribal spirits (*hõimuvaimud*). One of his very first rituals he addressed the fire, and addressed the ritual the fire spirit and the elements connected with fire. Experientially, this was a significant step: to actually experiment with one's body and mind in order to comprehend what takes place during a ritual. In the case of the fire ritual, he was later fascinated by the fact that the hot coals he grabbed from the fire did not leave burn marks on his body or hands, as well as the accompanying mental process. He was deeply impressed and exalted by what happened. Other (equinox) rituals also offered him personal experiences with supernatural beings (e.g., the experience of meeting with spirits of the tribe (*hõimu vaimud*), in the course of which he received prophetic messages, experienced the fulfilment (or failure) of the ritual's purpose. Physically and mentally, descriptions of his experiences are reminiscent of those of North and East Siberian shamans' classic initiation and healing rites (cf., Bulgakova 1995, Gratševa 1993, et al). Later, Vigala Sass started to conduct equinox rituals with a definite group of people or with visitors. During his 1990s group rituals Vigala Sass insisted that equal numbers of women and men participate in a ritual as this would have a balancing effect.

At the same time the rituals were conducted, for example, in the Roiu holy site near Tartu. The establishing and introduction of this holy site with sacrificial stones surrounded by trees was the work of Heie Tuli, a conceptual thinker and practical applier of new spiritual practices. The incantation text and instructions for its performing were an original adaptation of the text Vigala Sass used for his rituals. The instruction taught how to give honour to the place, express piety and leave offerings to the stone.

To the same period dates the ritual site established by the healer Thule Lee (b. 1972) whose holy grove (*hiis*) lies in the farmstead of



Thule Lee and her ritual space in Leesoja.
Photo from private archive.

Leesoja, situated in Varbla parish in western Estonia, well away from the larger cities and settlements. The Leesoja holy grove is among the oldest of the newly recreated sites. Thule Lee has been an important alternative healer since the 1990s and is an important figure in contemporary new spirituality. The ritual site blended elements from different cultures: straw dolls from older Estonian tradition, a miniature copy of the Stonehenge circle, a wagon wheel (symbolising the Sun) on top of a high pole, etc. Her ritual place comprises and invents details from local folk traditions, details from the models of other ritual masters. Her rituals, also, creatively combine her own mental and cognitive discoveries with models proposed by others. Rituals are conducted at solstice and equinoxes, the most important being rituals performed during the Midsummer Day (summer solstice). During that ritual all the World Mothers are called upon to take part in the ritual through special prayer; different small offerings (eggs, home-cooked bread, water, ribbons) are sacrificed. Strict rules concern both objects used during the ritual as well as the dress code – folk costume or long ritual skirts, scarves on heads and knife on the belt, talismans and jewellery (in more detail, Kõiva 2011).

In the 1990s, rituals dedicated to the Sun emerged simultaneously from several performers, and by no means were all of them healers, spiritual guides or people practicing new religions. In addition to new spiritual rituals, also rituals based on folk tradition appeared. I have discussed the rituals that cultural professional, teacher of folk traditions Ene Lukka-Jegikjan (b. 1954) restored and introduced (see Kõiva 2011 chapter on women's rituals). She started the process together with her students in 1996. The ritual dedicated to the Sun is a women-only celebration, which starts before 6 AM on Annunciation: before the sunrise in order to welcome the sun with the singing of old epic songs and performing a small charm dedicated to the Sun. A small sacrifice (tying a ribbon to a tree) follows the greeting. Later follows an indoor gathering with food and drink traditionally served on Annunciation. Requirements for ritual clothing are minimal but emphasise the importance of the event – the dress code calls for full or partial national costume. The structure and texture of Ene Lukka-Jegikjan's rituals does not differ much from those of new spiritual teachers. The largest difference lies in how the ritual site is used. Although she does regularly return to certain locations

to perform a certain ritual, she is a travelling ritual master – she does not participate in the creation of landscape-altering holy sites but rather brings the rituals to locally treasured cultural, natural or historical locations. Her role is, as is that of many other ritual masters, attribution of new functions and applications to ethnically and locally important places.

2014, the Estonian Annunciation sun-greeting ceremony was participated by organisers of a similar Latvian event. The Latvian women who joined the ritual performed songs in Latvian in parallel with the Estonian participants. The next day, students and interested parties were treated to an overview of how the sun is greeted in Riga, displaying videos and photos. Personally, I consider the conversations and discussions the ritual masters had the night before the event to be most significant. Folklore contains no ready-made models and creators of new rituals need to fill up a lot of so-called white space. During the discussion, both sides introduced their folkloric backgrounds, ritual texture and structure together with different choices and solutions (vt Kõiva 2014).

2) Occasional rituals

In addition to cyclic and periodically repetitive rituals there are also occasion-based rituals with their distinctive florid array of details and network of solutions. Dedicated rituals are usually markedly ethnical, for example relating to ethnically significant objects and locations.

Since the late 1980s, rituals (with charming) have been an integral part of Estonian public events: group observation of natural phenomena, gatherings, cultural events dedicated to local history, concerts and cultural events, local markets, dedications of monuments, some political events but also public crises rituals. All technical aspects of this kind of rituals are commonly left to the care of the ritual master who conducts the ritual and compiles the verbal side of the ritual.

Well-known people are asked to conduct rituals accompanying public secular and spiritual events. Often, one of the earth believers, or a neo-shaman, leader of an alternative spiritual movement or other experienced ritual conductor is invited to perform the role of

the ritual master. Many counties and towns have their own ritual masters of wider renown who are commonly contracted. For example, Urmas Sisask (b. 1960) has directed various rituals.[4]

Urmas Sisask is a well-known composer, but also amateur astronomer. Urmas Sisask started to observe the night sky as an early teenager. He has reminisced that walking home from school by himself he used to admire the grandiose beauty of the starry sky. The starry sky remained a constant source of inspiration throughout his life. A significant portion of his music is dedicated to constellations and phenomena of the starry sky. While performing his pieces and on stage, Urmas Sisask adds a narrative part to his music. This combines myths of different nations and a personal blend of religious and spiritual explanation models. However, he has the skills of a storyteller and his performed myths are individually ordered, blended and retold variants.

From the 1990s till early 21st century, he owned an amateur observatory in the Jäneda manor house. In the tower he had the equipment for star watching. He used to perform a piano concert at the Jäneda tower, followed by an observation night, introducing various astral myths, sometimes also performing a ritual.

Urmas Sisask has also conducted dozens of public rituals in places other than his observatory. He has been invited to opening ceremonies of new monuments, study camps, events of science school, musical events, etc.

Urmas Sisask does have a teacher whose rituals were the example he followed in order to perfect his own, and who has been his partner in discussion of spiritual issues. His teacher is one of the leaders of the reinvention of authentic folklore, and folk song culture, but also the importer and teacher of core-shamanism, Mikk Sarv (b. 1950). Mikk Sarv, in turn, has good knowledge of the religion and beliefs of Estonian, native Siberian peoples, and Sami peoples, both from literature and first-hand fieldwork. He belonged to the network of friends working on the reinstitution of ancient Scandinavian culture, music and religion, teacher of new age spiritualism like Jonathan Horwitz. Mikk Sarv and Urmas Sisask both joined the Roman Catholic Church in the 1990s. The ritual texts of Sisask reflected the blending of old folklore texts and catholic motifs in

his improvised texts, but both men use drums to accompany their rituals, a characteristic feature of both Siberian and northern native cultures as well as neo-shamanistic and neo-spiritual movements (c.f., drumming, neo-shamanism and new spiritual movements in contemporary Siberia and close areas – Kharitonova 1999; 2002).

Rituals and verbal art performed by Urmas Sisask became a traditional part of the annual Estonian hobby astronomers' summertime Perseid-watching nights (since 1996). Participants include people of all ages, mostly male, most with a (hard) science degree and academic career. The locations of the annual meeting vary: every other year is in Tõravere, at the prominent Estonian Observatory, otherwise in different parts of the country featuring a significant natural monument. For observation purposes, distance from light pollution sources is important. Incantations are usually performed around 9 PM, before starry sky observation. Sometimes, if possible and permitted, a fire is lighted. So-called opening and introductory rituals are usually performed in a circle, moving in a manner reminiscent of that accompanying the singing of old traditional epic songs. Urmas Sisask acts as the master of the ritual, he is drumming and decanting the incantation or prayer. The incantation text uses elements of sun words, but also addresses nature spirits and the goddess mother, St Mary, uses some elements of canonical prayers, to mention some sources – verbal art is piecemeal converged from different cultural segments.

Sisask's drummed incantations to lure out the Sun or repel rain and clouds are also traditionally performed before the society trips abroad (1998 Hungary, 2007 Turkey, 2009 China) to observe a solar eclipse. Clear skies are a must for successful astronomical observations. The rituals prior to solar eclipse observation are performed by Urmas Sisask in solo. The soundscape of the ritual consists of drumming, using Buryatian throat singing, loudly performed adaptations of Estonian sun incantations, and other elements. In Turkey, in 2006, after the successful observation of the solar eclipse, the musical instruments used were a water bottle and screwdriver. His performance is syncretic using improvised dancing and archaic circular movement. Still, sometimes the participants join in the music-making: his drumming has been accompanied by someone playing a Jewish harp, for example. In fact, the whole group can be

involved in coaxing the sun by engaging in ancient circular movement (as happened in Turkey in 2007).

There are no requirements for ritual clothing. Urmas Sisask sometimes wears white linen clothing, which is close to traditional Estonian peasant men's wear. At other occasions he has worn urban casual costume. Vocals, drum and drumming is the main attributes typical to the rituals. At the opening of the monument to the Witch of Äksi he used a drum and Australian didgeridoo. One of his most publicised performances was the ritual performed to protect the Tuhala karst well from mining initiatives (see video clips on YouTube, Sisask 2012).

No offerings or other objects are used at the rituals, and the rituals were participated by local people and visitors.

Occasional rituals are converged, multi-layered and based on mixed ideas. In 2006, near the forestbound Elva Tervisekeskus (Elva Health Centre) an alley of wooden sculptures was opened for public use by the mayor of Elva.[5] The idea of the alley was inspired by the polytheistic Ancient Greece where statues of Gods stood near the stadium. The concept of a park of Earth Gods was proposed by local Elva artists Anni Irs and Mariina Tiidor who also designed the 18 statues of old Estonian deities. The statues, carved by various sculptors, were erected on two sides of the stadium where the longest Estonian ski marathon finishes. Estonian mythological beings have been turned into statues by way of different texts, signs, symbols as well as free-flying fantasy. Symbols have been cut into the gigantic statues and the foot of each statue feature its name.

Since only single fragments have survived of the pre-Christian Estonians theistic network, nature spirits (so-called mothers and fathers) have been elevated into members of the pantheon. The erected statues include the World Egg, the main god Taara as well as figures of wind and water mothers-fathers, etc. The statues feature visual cues typical of the sculpture of various Nordic and linguistically related nations' (Mordvinian, Mari) mythological wooden sculptures.

The usual inaugural speeches were followed by a public ritual directed by the Earth believer and poetess Kauksi Ülle. Poetess emphasised at the beginning of the syncretic ritual uniting vari-



A sun-ritual lead by Urmas Sisask in Turkey, 2007. The whole group is involved in coaxing the sun by engaging in ancient circular movement. Photo from private archive.

ous official and unofficial institutions and textual discourses that this religious undertaking of the Earth Believers must be taken in full seriousness. The public observed the sacred performance sedately. For many, this was the first contact with native religion. The verbal part comprised an adaptation of and expansion on an epic runic song: a long prayer text that addressed the statues. The ritual master was assisted by women wearing national costume and holding a bucket of thickened juice and a basket of pies: every statue was treated to a ladleful of thickened juice and a pie was laid at its feet. At the end of the ritual, Kauksi Ülle addressed the public, calling on them to tie ribbons on the sculptures, explaining the significance of the ribbon colours and the action itself. Most of the public participated.

The other ritual example comes from 2014, May, Tallinn in honour of 20 years of Maaema Mess (Earth Mother Fair)[6]. A ritual with open fire was conducted by the organizer of event – Helve Laksberg, but the parts of ritual being conducted by different ritual masters. The multipart ritual took place on top of the Skåne Bastion, the mightiest Baroque fortification building in Tallinn Old City. The public included people differing in world views and age, former performers and organisers of the fair. Maaema Mess is a mixed event where teachers and representatives of various alternative spiritual schools, folk healers as well as sellers of eco- and health products meet – the whole event is a big market place and forum. The Mess is traditionally accompanied by a number of events: conference, cultural program with films and physical trainigs, exhibitions and workshops.

The public ritual was opened by the Earth Believer, Errol Varres, using a shaman drum and communicating with fire. He circled the fire addressing sprites, forefathers and various old powers. Next, Helve Laksberg picked six worthy male participants to break up and distribute a loaf of bread she had baked, and six women for another loaf. Some bread was placed on the grass for the Earth Mother. The next section was conducted by Igor Mang (b. 1949), Scion of Christ, astrologer and lector at the Estonian Astrological School. For the past 22 years, Igor Mang has conducted magical rituals in the medieval fort Varbola at the four solstices every year. At Maaema Mess, he has given lectures on lifestyle and astrology.

He conducted his portion of the ritual at the Skane Bastion, sharing wine from a self-made clay cup, chanting one of his best known ritual texts with participants repeating the verses in chorus. His ritual addressing the planets and the Sun has been broadcast by commercial TV programs. At the start of the Bastion ritual, he asked the participants to form groups according to their zodiacal signs, and then chant:

I am prepared for cooperation with the cosmos . . .
Exalted Sun
Motherly and caring Moon
Smart Mercury
Lovable Venus
Courageous and dapper Mars
Rich Jupiter
Dutiful Saturn
Genius Uranus
Mystical and musical Neptune
And magical Pluto
Fill this cup with your best forces
and features
Everyone that takes a sip from this cup
Partakes of this shared power

This was followed by a short informal blessing by Helve Laksberg and the ritual was declared finished. Participants dispersed, some went on to gathering while people from peripheral Estonian regions started on their way home.

Conclusions

The article discussed seasonal rituals and occasional rituals, also the rituals addressing astronomical objects. Rituals related to pivotal periods of the calendar year and astral phenomena are merely one small segment of all contemporary rituals. Wouter Hanegraaff (1996) emphasises the distinctive feature that new spiritual movements rely on past traditions. Appreciation of past mentality is a feature also highlighted by Paul Heelas and Woodhead (2005): one whole branch of British Paganism is stamped by re-use of archaeological monuments (c.f., Wallis 2010). Eric Hobsbawm declared,

based on much broader data that the most interesting feature of the invention of tradition phenomena is "the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes" (1983: 6). Although he did not investigate new spirituality the definition also fits here. He declared that invented tradition is a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past (Hobsbawm 1983: 1–2).

During the last decade, more attention has been paid to construction and invention of new religions in East European countries as they emerged from the Socialist period (Aitamurto & Scott 2013, Shnirelman 2002, Hubbes & Bakó 2011, etc.). In Eastern Europe essence of regional religiosity is reconstruction of local or native pantheons that are strongly related to (national) identity. The newer trends, e.g. Slavic native religions, have received more attention while their relations with early 20th or late 19th century movements have been largely obscure. It is only recently that the activities of various teachings and schools have been analysed and described (e.g., studies published by the ISORECEA in 2014).

In the case of Estonia, the movements are extremely heterogeneous their leaders differ in world view. They blend different discourses and their teaching forms complicated networks. In the Estonian case the process is tinged by the fact that elements of native rituals, folkloric texts or adaptation thereof are used in local secular events and rituals. The same characterises new spiritual movements.

Both native or pagan and occasional rituals have similarities in details. Representatives of different schools can attend one and the same ritual (e.g., the Skane Bastion ritual discussed above). In the cases of Ene Lukka-Jegikjan, Vigala Sass and Thule Lee, rituals are tailored to resemble traditions of the past, use traditional local elements, including prayers to stellar objects. The kinetics, ritual food and re-interpreted mythology or folklore play an important role.

Hobbyists, students and patients have been visiting Vigala Sass for three decades. He is a peculiar teacher who has built up his own

school of thought. The solstice rituals of Thule Lee are advertised in newspapers as alternative events for local people and any interested parties. Both teachers are certain one must learn to develop personality. Both have admitted that they continue to learn about the secrets of human psychology and they create new psychological techniques and practical exercises (for more, see Kõiva 2011).

Besides the human search for the self, finding the core, philosophy and life perception in ethnic knowledge are central values. They are sought from not just ethnic sources but archaic wisdom and knowledge is sought from different sources, time periods and cultures.

However, the literary sources, are different as these individuals belong to different generations or have different preferences. Vigala Sass was influenced by and he integrated Russian cultural and esoteric space (e.g. Blavatsky, books of Russian ethnographers and religion researchers). Yet, he as well as Thule Lee are interested in, Carlos Castaneda's teachings. Thule Lee is attracted to Chinese and Japanese folk medicine. Both admit that Estonian original rituals and aromas are important, and they use and create their own rituals by assimilating knowledge from archives, different cultural sources and their personal experiences into a special personal mixture. For example, for Urmas Sisask his personal knowledge of world myths and their interpretations, love of astronomy and musical self-seeking, all play a role. The rituals of Igor Mang were changed and shaped by his meeting the descendant of the esoteric Eduard von Keyserling – Arnold von Keyserling – and participation in his courses.

Correspondingly, the ritual masters act as authors, they create created new poetic forms of ritual texts, that reflect personal skills, means of expression and messages they wish to convey. The individual texts can be formed for that specific rite. The texts are full of intertextual links, author used dialectic forms of language and the form of runic songs (e.g, Kauksi Ülle's ritual in Elva), or intertextuality with prayers (Urmas Sisask). At the same time the individual ritual text (invocation, charm) can also be used in several rituals if they have become sacral text stems (I. Mang, E. Varres).

Notably, recent decades have seen a marked change in ritual dress code: female ritual masters emphasise national costume or elements

thereof; occasional rituals are conducted in casual clothing. In time, ritual masters have experimented with special costumes (Thule Lee with white and black robes with different symbols; Vigala Sass with a black robe; Igor Mang with an attractive staff, hat and black robe). Similar changes and evolution has occurred in sacral space design.

Generally, what makes new spirituality and its rituals significant is experience with the supernatural and the revival of cultural practices and old powers that are aimed to attain harmony with. One of the most common attitudes is that of respect towards nature, the attempt to communicate with it and ecological attitudes (c.f., Aitamurto & Scott 2013: 56 ff.).

The constellations of textual, ritual and time-space parameters change and depend on social needs. Nevertheless, due to their longstanding repetitive use, the rituals of Igor Mang or Thule Lee or Ene Lukka-Jegikjan can be considered successful reinventions and reconstructions of rituals. The old forms are combined with the present time and ancient texts performed side by side their own invocations, incantations, charms. We can see many individual solutions and nearly universal, similar outcomes. Remarkable is that the level of institutionalization is similar (no matter they belong to the congregation of official church or not), –as teachers of new spirituality, masters of rituals they are not part of certain pagan community, they perform rituals during crucial points of ritual year for different interested persons. They can build up occasional ritual, or participate at the public ritual as invited master.

Acknowledgements

Research for this article was supported by the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES, European Regional Development Fund) and is related to research project IRG 22-5 (Estonian Research Council). I would like to thank Rahel Laura Vesik for assistance at the field works, and Andres Kuperjanov, who shared the information about Igor Mang's rituals.

Notes

[1] Two Estonians calendar feasts fall almost on the equinox – Christmas on the winter equinox and St. John' s Day on the summer equinox – and are bundled with many rituals and cultural entertainments as well as rituals with mundane or religious significance. Lighting candles in public space, decorating urban landscape and trees with electric lights, and conducting various light rituals in December are customs borrowed in the 1990s from the Scandinavia. This has transformed the darkest period of the year into a time of light festivals where the illuminated party period contrasts the cold and dark weather. Well-known folk healers conduct rituals dedicated to the time. Candlelight is also part of the cemetery culture – candles are lit on the graves of the dearly departed on both equinoxes. On the other hand, spring and autumn equinoxes are emphasised by the media and formal education, and had become celebrations for folk healers and masters of rituals by the end of the 20th century.

[2] *Metsaülikool* 'Forest university' – an umbrella term including all informal summer schools organised by the Estonian diaspora where lectures, workshops and cultural events of various nature took place.

[3] Estonian and Latvian masters of rituals have reciprocated in participating major celebrations. One of the most emotional and detailed descriptions of pagan St. John's Day celebrations came from my Bulgarian friend Nikolai Sivkov. He, together with the Bulgarian Rodopi folk music and folk dance ensemble accidentally joined a pagan St. John's Day celebratory ceremony. In 2014, the Estonian Annunciation sun-greeting ceremony was participated by organisers of a similar Latvian event. The Latvian women who joined the ritual performed songs in Latvian in parallel with the Estonian participants. The next day, students and interested parties were treated to an overview of how the sun is greeted in Riga, displaying videos and photos. Personally, I consider the conversations and discussions the ritual masters had the night before the event to be most significant. Folklore contains no ready-made models and creators of new rituals need to fill up a lot of so-called white space. During the discussion, both sides introduced their folkloric backgrounds, ritual texture and structure together with different choices and solutions.

[4] Mare Kõiva has recorded Urmas Sisask's rituals performed at hobby astronomers' gatherings, and a lengthy interview dates to 1998.

[5] The ritual was video recorded by Rahel Laura Vesik. The ethnofuturistic movement was central to the introduction of wooden sculptures. Ethnofuturistic camps brought to Estonia young Finnic-Ugric artists who introduced the wooden sculpture tradition that was part of their folk art (about

ethnofuturism Mihkelev 2002, Etnofutu 1996–2004). Today, producing wooden sculptures for private gardens is the livelihood of several sculptors (see Kõiva, Kuperjanov, forthcoming).

[6] The ritual was video recorded by Rahel Laura Vesik in 2014.

References

Aitamurto, Kaarina & Simpson, Scott 2013. Modern Pagan and Native Faith Movements in Central and Eastern Europe. *Studies in Contemporary and Historical Paganism*. Durham, UK and Bristol, CT: Acumen.

Blain, Jenny 2002. *Nine Worlds of Seid-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in Northern European Paganism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Blain, Jenny & Wallis, Robert J. 2007. *Sacred Sites Contested Rites/Rights: Pagan Engagements with Archaeological Monuments*. Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press.

Blain, Jenny & Wallis, Robert J. 2009. Beyond Sacred: Recent Pagan Engagements with Archaeological Monuments – Current findings of the Sacred Sites Project. *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*, 11 (1), pp. 97–123.

Greenwood, Susan 2000. *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthropology*. Oxford and New York City: Berg.

van Gulik, Leonardus A. 2010. On the Pagan Parallax: A Sociocultural Exploration of the Tension between Eclecticism and Traditionalism in Contemporary Nature Religions. *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies,* 12, pp. 48–69.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 1997. *New age religion and western culture: esotericism in the mirror of secular thought.* Albany, New York: State University Press.

Harvey, Graham. 1997. *Listening people, speaking earth: Contemporary Paganism*. London: Hurst & Company.

Heelas, Paul 1996. *The New Age movement: celebrating the self and the sacralization of modernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Heelas, Paul & Woodhead, Linda 2005. *The Spiritual Revolution*. Blackwell.

Hobsbawm, Eric & Ranger, Terence (eds.) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hubbes, László-Attila & Bakó, Rozália Klára 2011. Religious Minorities' Web Rhetoric: Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-Pagan Organizations. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10 (30) (Winter 2011), pp. 127–158.
http://jsri.ro/ojs/index.php/jsri/article/view/550/516

ISORECEA = International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association.
http://www.isorecea.net

Jõerand, Ragne 2013. Astroloog Igor Mang peab end Kristuse vereliini pärijaks. *Naised* (03.01.2013).
http://ajakirinaised.ee/persoon/17B1F/

Kharitonova, Valentina (ed.) 1999. *Traditsionnoe shamanstvo i neoshamanism*. Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, pp. 160–83.

Kharitonova, Valentina 2004. Shamany i shamanisty: nekotorye teoreticheskie aspekty izucheniia shamanizma i inykh traditsionnykh verovanii i praktik. [Shamans and Shamanists: Some Theoretical Aspects of the Study of Shamanism and Other Traditional Beliefs and Practices.] *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 2, pp. 99–118.
http://journal.iea.ras.ru/archive/2000s/2004/2.htm (Accessed 21.10.2015).

Kõiva, Mare. (2014). Naistepühad ja -riitused – etnilistest kultuuritavadest uusreligioossete rituaalideni. Kõiva, Mare (ed.). *Maailm ja multitasking*, 2. 2nd ed. (Tänapäeva folkloorist, 10). Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Teaduskirjastus, pp. 133–162.

Kõiva, Mare 2011. Women's Holidays and Porridge Rites. *Yearbook of the SIEF Working Group on The Ritual Year*, 6, pp. 83–106.

Kõiva, Mare 2009. Time and Space in Estonian and Bulgarian Incantations. Anastasova, Ekaterina & Kõiva, Mare (eds.). *Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe: History, Religions, and Cultures*. Sofia & Tartu: Bulgarian Academy of Science, pp. 14–23.

Kõiva, Mare & Kuperjanov, Andres (In Print). The Time of Wooden Gods. Abstracts. Magdalena Slavkova & Mila Maeva & Rachko Popov & Yelis Erolova (eds). *Between the Worlds: People, Spaces and Rituals*. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Science.

Krumina-Konkova, Solveiga & Gills, Nikandrs 2010. Paganism in Latvia. Melton, J. Gordon & Baumann, Marin (eds.). *Religions of the World. A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*. Santa Barbara, California & Denver, Colorado, Oxford, England: ABC-CLIO.

Mang, Igor 2014. Mida toob aasta 2014? *Maaleht* (4.04.2013). http://www.maaleht.ee/news/uudised/eestiuudised/igor-mang-mida-toob-aasta-2014.d?id=65918514

Publik.ee 2013. *Astuge haldjaringi! Igor Mang pidas Kadriorus maha maagilise riituse.* (26.05.2013) http://publik.delfi.ee/news/inimesed/fotod-ja-video-astuge-haldjaringi-igor-mang-pidas-kadriorus-maha-maagilise-riituse.d?id=66187202

Rappoport 1999. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Shnirelman, Victor 2002. "Christians, Go Home!": A Revival of Neo-Paganism Between the Baltic Sea and Transcaucasia (An Overview). *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 17 (2), pp. 197–211. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13537900220125181

Strmiska, Michael F. (ed.) 2005. *Modern Paganism in World Cultures. Comparative Perspectives.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Vakker, Triin 2013. Rahvusliku religiooni konstrueerimise katsed 1920.–1930. aastate Eestis – taara usk. *Mäetagused,* 50, pp. 175–198. https://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2012.50.vakker

Wallis, Robert. J. 2003. *Shamans / neo-Shamans: Ecstasy, alternative archaeologies and contemporary Pagans*. London: Routledge.

York, Michael October 2001. New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 16 (3), pp. 361–372. http://www.wilfridlaurieruniversity.ca/documents/6490/New_Age_Commodification.pdf https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13537900120077177

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.11

The Making of a Sacred Place: An Example of Constructing Place Identity in the Contemporary Mentality

Reet Hiiemäe

Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Musem;
Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies
reet@folklore.ee

In the recent decades Kassinurme Hills in the county of Jõgevamaa (Estonia) have served as a crystallisation point of mythological and other expectations of various groups and individuals. I will show how fragments of archeological and historical evidence, folk legends and various national symbols have been woven into a unique whole that makes up Kassinurme Hills as a sacred place, yet I will also show how the very components are de-coded and interpreted differently by distinct groups of people, giving rise to debates about authenticity and place identity issues. Emerging contradictions on this level cause certain adjustments – some groups and individuals stop visiting Kassinurme and find new sacred places that are more in accordance with their needs and expectations, yet some visitors may find their "authentic" sacred place in Kassinurme namely because of the newly constructed meanings and images.
Keywords: sacred places, place identity, place lore, autheticity

In the contemporary Western society, an ever-increasing proportion of time is spent in places that Marc Augé calls non-places (e.g. supermarkets, traffic jams, locations that we access through computers or TV). To counterweight this trend, there is an increasing desire and need among people for "authentic" places, or places that offer "authentic" experiences and emotions. Yet the category of the "authentic" is defined variously by different social groups (and even by researchers). Authenticity problematics has been thoroughly analysed by folklorist Regina Bendix, who in her book "In Search of Authenticity" talks about creating a market of identifiable authenticities in the contemporary society (Bendix 1997: 3). Several authors have pointed out the interactive character of society and space. Human geographers and sociologists Derek Gregory and John Urry argue that "social relations create spatial relations and spatial relations create social relations" (Gregory & Urry 1985: 13). In ac-

cordance with Jean Baudrillard, Bendix states that the genuine and the spurios are converging, their identities being separable only by their narratives (Bendix 1997: 4). Hence, the narrative attached to a place plays the decisive role in if and how the identity of a person is anchored to a place.

Debates about narratives and beliefs connected with authenticity of places are also one of the main topics of this article and, based on these debates, conclusions are drawn about ways of constructing place identity and about the notion of "sacred" among certain groups and individuals. The place that I have chosen as an example of such construction mechanisms, Kassinurme Hills, is situated in Eastern Estonia in Jõgevamaa county. One of the reasons why I chose to write about Kassinurme is the fact that I have seen closely its step-by-step development in the recent more than ten years and participated in several events that have been organised there (most recently in the festival Mytofest in August 2013), also I have been in contact with a number of people who have shared their experi-



Figure 1. Kassinurme Hills with a wooden stronghold.

ences in connection with this place (I have conducted 25 interviews and followed numerous postings in internet forums and newspaper commentaries about the topic).

In the following I will show how fragments of archeological and historical evidence, folk legends and various national symbols have been woven into a unique whole that makes up Kassinurme Hills as a sacred place, yet I will also show how the very components are de-coded and interpreted differently by distinct groups of people, giving rise to debates about authenticity and place identity issues.

Kassinurme Hills as a Sacred Place

A visitor who first arrives in Kassinurme Hills can see just some hills surrounded with forest, a couple of water ponds and big stones, everything else is manmade in the recent 20 years. What then makes it a sacred place?

In order to call a place a sacred place, two conditions must be fulfilled: first, there must be a place, and second, at least one person who thinks that it is sacred or has been sacred in the past. Actually, any place that is perceived as meaningful by an individual or a group can potentially become a sacred or a supernatural place. However, not all places that have suitable qualities for becoming sacred places, will become such places. Also the ideas about what characteristics should a place possess in order to become a sacred place and the amount of personal belief connected with it, change in time. But the need to perceive some places as sacred or supernatural, and share this knowledge with a certain group or groups is without doubt still topical in the contemporary world.

In the following I will use Kassinurme Hills as an example of a contemporary sacred place but many tendencies that I have observed are also true with other sacred or supernatural places in Estonia and elsewhere (cf. Gustafsson 2000 about trends of mythologising certain places and historical periods in Sweden, and Bedynski/Mazur-Hanaj 2011: 174ff. about the mythologising of the Attila Hill in Hungary). However, insofar I have found only few works that analyse the complexity of constructing a sacred place through so many different prisms.

In the recent decades Kassinurme has served as a crystallisation point of mythological and other expectations of various groups. As prerequisite for functioning in such a role, the hills join several attractive components:

— natural-geological (the hills have been shaped by the ice age),

— settlemental (proven settlement from about 6000 years ago),

— visual (dramatic landscape forms, a newly reconstructed wooden stronghold with wooden sculptures of mythological characters; a separated holy grove with impressive entering gates, big stones and wooden wheel crosses),

— mythological (several folk legends about Kassinurme are connected with the mythological giant Kalevipoeg, who is a popular figure in Estonian traditional folklore and who later, in the second half of the 19th century, became the main character in the Estonian national epic Kalevipoeg).



Figure 2. Entrance to the holy grove in Kassinurme.

— spiritual (in the recent time, the place is claimed to be an ancient cult place, centring around a "powerful energy pillar" – an expression that is characteristic to the modern *new age* vocabulary).

The visual aspect is artfully combined with the mythological – there are newly added wooden figures of warriors, mermaids, animals, etc. that make the place look "ancient" and add a supernatural touch. The entrance of the holy grove is marked by a wooden gate, clearly indicating its borders on the landscape. The current visual atmosphere is supported by more than 100 years old legend texts that describe encounters between mythological beings and people in Kassinurme. The following two example texts from the manuscripts of the Estonian Folklore Archives are used in the internet materials about Kassinurme Hills:

> *By a legend Kassinurme Hills were formed by Kalevipoeg, who brought sand in his leather apron and piled it up here. The well is called his washing basin. In the surroundings a lot of small hollows, so called Kalevipoeg´s handprints and the mark of his horse's hoof, can be found. 200m from the biggest hill, in the forest, a stone has a red stripe on it like a trace of a sling; it is Kalevipoeg's Slingstone.* (Palamuse 1896)

> *They say, this well* [in the Kassinurme Hills] *has no bottom at all. In 1860-ies, when there was a very dry summer, and some wise people suggested that old wives should measure the deepness of the well – then the rain would surely start soon again. Old wives of Patjala and all ropes were collected from the village. An iron kettle was put on one end of the long rope, a stone was put into the kettle to put on weight. The rope sank unbelievably deep.*
>
> *They were not able to reach the bottom and the rope with the kettle was pulled out. Yet instead of the stone a bloody head of an ox was in the kettle. And there was a voice that said "Should you try to put in the kettle once again, I will pull you all down." After that the frightened wifes left measuring. Also old people say that oxes and cows sometimes have run into the spring and have never come back. In spring time people have seen water spirits sitting there and combing their head*. (Palamuse 1896 – used in the Wikipedia article about

the stronghold of Kassinurme: http://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kassinurme_linnus).

History of Kassinurme Hills

In the following the history of Kassinurme Hills should be outlined shortly. 5000–6000 years ago an ancient settlement was established and about 3000 years ago a wooden stronghold was built there, findings prove human activity until the beginning of the 13th century. There is almost no information about the time inbetween but in the second half of the 19th century, during the period of national awakening in Estonia, Kassinurme Hills became a place for folk gatherings, festivals and students' daytrips. In the first period of Estonian independence (1918–1940) various cultural events took place, like theatre plays or choir singing events. During the Soviet time the social life and organising of cultural events in the surrounding villages ceased, the Kassinurme Hills grew into bushes. Only in 1989 (together with new signs of national awakening before Estonia regained independence in 1991) new initiative came from a local NGO to clean up; a big swing and fire places were built, later a fragment of the wooden stronghold was erected. Parallelly, cultural events started taking place again, many of them connected with folk culture, for example theatre plays, celebrations of special days in the folk calendar (like Shrove Tuesday sledge-rides, St. George's Day, Midsummer Day), warrior role plays (e.g. the reconstruction of the famous Battle of the St. George's Night with hundreds of participants). The most elaborated event – a special festival named Mytofest with the idea to reconstruct ancient Estonia and its culture – is organised yearly,[1] attracting hundreds of visitors, yet it should be emphasised already beforehand (and this is also the observation of the festivals' two organisers whom I interviewed) that for the majority of participants of Mytofest the emphasis is rather on fun and imagination, not that much on authenticity.

These are the facts. But there is also a more poetic and interpretative kind of history that is more based on personal perceptions and cognitions of people.

History of Kassinurme Hills – Imagined

All popular sources (web pages, tourism prospects) stress that namely the holy grove or cult place of Kassinurme is thousands of years old, although there is no such archeological evidence. The web page of Forest Society of Jõgeva (the NGO that has been dealing with reconstructing the place since 1989) informs us as following:

> *According to the archeological investigations, a permanent settlement was established here 6000 years ago. Our ancient forefathers found on the territory of the holy grove an emanation place of Earth energy and started exercising cultic activities. In order to protect themselves from evil forces, a wooden stronghold was erected close to the holy grove.* [---] *This stronghold here has never been conquered due to its peripheral location.* (http://www.kassinurme.ee/kassinurme.html)

In this short description we can see several typical elements that are used to mythologise sacred places:

— the perception of long historical continuitation ("our ancient forefathers"); the nostalgy of ancient times;

— overturn of history: archeological excavations have indeed found remnants of ancient settlement that make it possible to assume that there could have been also a nearby cult place; yet in the description above the cult place is described as the starting point that preceded everything else; on the real landscape the wooden stronghold and the holy grove are separated from each other by ca. 200 meters, yet in everyday communication they are spoken of as one and the aura of an ancient cult place has been carried over to the Kassinurme Hills as a whole. Here the theory of "the social framework of collective memory" by sociologist and anthropologist Maurice Halbwachs could be pointed out that has been also elaborated in the works of the historian Peter Burke. Burke notes in accordance with Halbwachs that human groups determine what is worth of remembering and how it should be remembered. Individuals identify with such events and symbols that are significant for the group. Hence, they often "remember" well things that they have actually not experienced personally (Burke 2006: 53);

— the unconquered stronghold as symbol of the heroic strength and love for freedom of Estonians; such classical symbol-laden tropes like 'the ancient Estonians', 'battles for freedom', 'ancient cult and sacrificial place' that can be connected with Kassinurme provide a suitable background to turn Kassinurme Hills into a place of identification that is acceptable to many people;

— inspite of the desire to show a historical continuation, the information is interpreted in the framework of *new age* spirituality and esotericism: the text says that ancient people were aware of the emanation of Earth energy or an energy pillar, yet in the Estonian older folklore there is no sign of a tradition to create cult places according to the existence of energy pillars. Even the expression "energy pillar" has emerged only in the recent decades and the discourse of energy pillars has become popular just in the modern esoterical tradition. Reflections of this narrative of energy pillars can be found in the newspaper interview with a well-known Estonian actress, Ülle Lichtfeldt, who has participated in a theatre play in Kassinurme: "We played two years in Kassinurme that is one of the best-known locations of energy pillars in Europe" (newspaper "Põhjarannik" 6.2.2009).

Based on these "facts" or pre-knowledge, often personal empirical perception or recognition of the "right place" (i.e. the feeling that the place is indeed a sacred place) automatically arises. People who express this understanding seem not to feel the need to ask themselves how they have obtained this perception.

When we look at internet esoteric or role-players' forums and also on commentaries that are written to online newspaper articles about Kassinurme Hills, still two main categories of opinions about sacred places may be observed:

— people who find that the deciding element what makes a sacred place a sacred place is the personal feeling of sacredness connected to a given place, therefore it is not important if it is a place that has been used as a cult place in ancient times or has been just newly built. An example: "If many people perceive that it is a right place (and especially if they come to this opinion independently), in this case it is for me quite surely a more convincing

argument than many others" (roleplayers' forum on http://www.dragon.ee, July 2008).

— people who find that a sacred place must have a hundreds (or even thousands) of years long history of being used as a sacred place. An example: "The name 'sacred place' deserves a place that our forefathers chose as a sacred place and that has been used as such for centuries. In Kassinurme they just took recently a piece of land in a convenient place, called it a sacred grove and created suitable decorations. For me this is not enough to call it a sacred grove" (http://www.dragon.ee, July 2008).

There are people who go to holy groves for religious purposes even nowadays, yet a significant part of the contemporary perception of sacred places and the identity-building connected to it has just to do with entertainment and fun. The relationship with a holy grove is not any more the question of life and death because people don't believe any more that worshipping supernatural beings in a holy grove or other sacred place is necessary for granting their survival. Folklorist Roger Abrahams points out that in case of modern reconstructions of ritual experiences the use of the notion 'sacred' may not be necessarily reasonable altogether because of the tendency of profanisation (Abrahams 2003: 213). However, while choosing their favorite places, be it mainly for fun, identity-building or belief purposes, many people still seem to need the component of the unexplainable and mystical, at least an imaginary connection with the mythical past, the possibility to reconstruct a certain continuity of sacredness and a heroic mental narrative.

The Holy Grove – a Powerful Symbol of Estonian National Identity

A concept that has been loaded with many of the meanings mentioned above is the holy grove (about mythologizing and sacralizing of oak groves see also Heinapuu 2010). Although the area that is called the holy grove of Kassinurme constitutes only one part of the whole Kassinurme Hills, the whole place is often referred to as "the holy grove of Kassinurme" in conversations as well as on websites.

Since the national awakening in the second half of the 19th century there is the tendency to idealize holy groves – they are perceived as

an evidence of the existence of a well-developed pre-Christian culture of Estonians (the Christianisation of Estonia took place in the 13th Century). Drawing this connection leaves aside all changes in culture, folk belief and mentality during centuries that followed the Christianisation; it is perceived like a spatial shortcut: whenever we go to holy groves and act like forefathers, we are brought back to the heroic "pagan times". Yet the behaviour that most people practice in the holy groves (including the holy grove of Kassinurme) is mainly formally imitating: they leave "sacrificial" coins on the stones and bind lints and ribbons on trees and bushes. An alienation from the old nature religion can be seen in the fact, that there are also many plastic ribbons hanging on the trees. When I ask people why they bind such ribbons, the answer is: "Because this is the tradition", "This was the tradition of old Estonians" (visitors of Kassinurme Hills, 2012). Yet many are not aware why "old Estonians" did so, such binding has often no religious background. However, already the mere act of imitating the forefathers gives one the feeling of the continuously shared identity with the forefathers.

In addition, ancient looking pseudo-folkloric innovations as part of role plays are invented in the holy grove of Kassinurme, e.g. stagy sacrificing of virgins, group charms accompanied by a dance with burning torches, and other rituals. A former organiser of the role plays explains the reasons of such behaviour as following:

> *Kassinurme would do as a good place of roleplaying also without the holy grove, however, the holy grove is a good "selling argument"; as it is just there, it is handy to include rituals that are played there as part of the role play, there are, for example, rituals that are used for increasing magical skills. I personally don't think that they are ok, they just don't fit together with the holy grove.* (Man, 30 years old; 2012)

The opinion of an active role player confirms this explanation:

> **"The holy grove adds a mystical aura** *to the role play" (Man, 25 years old; 2012).*

However, such innovations may change the behaviour of some other visitors regarding the holy grove. The viewpoint of a local villager whom I interviewed was following: "Visitors who take the holy grove more seriously give up visiting it because there is always some kind of play and action going on there" (woman, 33 years old; 2012).

In some cases the conflict between competing interests may be expressed even sharper: on a summer day of 2010, I visited Kassinurme Hills with my husband and two little sons. We saw a group of people in ancient-looking costumes by the stronghold and one man from the group approached us, saying: "We have booked the compound for our event, therefore we would ask you to leave it as soon as possible. Didn't you see the notice on the entrance?" Later we saw indeed a paper on the entrance gate with the laconic text that the place was booked for the whole day. The group was re-enacting the life of ancient Estonians, without, however, paying attention to the circumstance that it was obviously not a tradition among our forefathers to "book" sacred places for their private events. Hence, a selective identification with the "ancient" traditions is used in constructing the modern sacred place experience.

The Reconstruction of the Battle of the St. George's Night

Another very powerful and meaningful concept for the Estonian identity-building is the Battle or Rebellion of the St. George's Night. Historically (to outline a simplified version), it was an organised uprising of Estonian peasants against German and Danish landlords that started on April 23rd, on the St. George's night in 1343 and took place mainly in Northern and Western Estonia. However, it has become the symbol of freedom of Estonians altogether (more on the narrative of the Great Battle for Freedom of Estonians and the respective mnemohistory see Tamm 2008: 505ff.). The symbol is also powerful because of its continuity – in the period of the national awakening in the second half of the 19th century several writers wrote their heroic interpretations of the events of St. George's Night, most important and popular of them being Eduard Bornhöhe's 'Tasuja' [The Avenger] (1880); talking about this uprising was not forbidden even in Soviet time because it was possible to interpret it as the rebellion of proletarian peasants against exploiters from upperclass. In Kassinurme Hills it can be already called a tradition to organise warrior role plays every year, aiming to reconstruct the Battle of the St. George's Night.

However, the majority of role players say that this battle is a rather playful reconstruction and its main purpose is fun. A former organiser of the roleplays comments: "The St. George's Battle roleplay is



Figure 3. Warrior roleplay in Kassinurme Hills.

pure play, participants don't aim to present historical truth." He also explains the criteria that are followed while chosing clothing and other equipment:

> *Some re-enactors* [a group that tries to reconstruct lifestyles of certain periods as authentically as possible] *also come here with their whole equipment but it is rather because of vainglory. By LARPs* [Live Action Role Players] *it is enough when they avoid speaking with cell phones and cover themselves with an old-looking cloth. At the same time the rules of LARP have changed in time. Regarding equipment there are inevitably compromises needed between safety, authentity and the finances of the player.* (Man, 30 years old; 2012)

Yet even a tradition that is mainly reconstructed for entertainment purposes has its authenticity demands in the eyes of many – e.g. in the majority of online commentaries to an article and photos in the newspaper "Postimees" (April 2012) about this event one could notice the verbal dictation by the readers that such a warrior role

play should only take place in a "right place" (and therefore in a place that has an at least hundreds of years old cultic history); a warrior should wear authentically looking leather and linen clothes, otherwise he is not a "right warrior" and it is not a "right battle". To some extent, the role players themselves also compete about who looks most "authentic". In a word, there is a claim to reconstruct as authentically as possible an event that has actually never happened in this place – as already said, the historical battles connected with the St. George's rebellion took place in North and Western Estonia and in majority of cases not in sacred places.

In the online commentaries one can often observe a so-called negative reconstruction – the commentators know exactly how things should not be, yet they do not mention, how they should be. Folklorist Kristin Kuutma notes about such models of identity building while referring to the cultural theorist Homi Bhabha: "The representation of the spiritual image of identification is always spatially and physically split – on the one hand, it grants the presence of something or someone that or who is actually not there and is at this point of the timespace not present. And on the other hand, an equal temporal shift occurs: it is the representation of the point of time that is always somewhere else, but that is being attempted to be repeated" (Kuutma 2008: 23; Bhabha 1993: 73). Hence, the self-cognition of people is based namely on elements that are not there or who they are not (Kuutma 2008: 23). However, by negative as well as positive reconstruction, places and people are perceived to be obliged to fit with the stereotypes that have been accepted by the repertoire of the social memory of a culture (cf. Burke 2006: 61). The appearance of the participants of the battle roleplays in Kassinurme Hills obviously did not fit with the common stereotypes of the holy grove and the battle for freedom of the St. George's Night, therefore the critical opinions of online commentators were rather expectable. Below are some examples of commentaries from the newspaper Postimees (April 2012):

> *"When I look at these ugly stained policemen helmets and these funny paper and cardboard shields, they would no way remind me of the St. George's Battle!"*

> *"A role play may easily become playing fools, like in the parliament… An ancient warrior with eye glasses and plastic bottles, a mobile phone vibrating under the clothes?"*
>
> *"Quite a strange bunch of hairy and feathery creatures. Well, I have nothing against it that young people rave a bit, but why to connect all this with the St. George's Battle? The real history should be still separated from hobbits and vampires!"*
>
> *"Cosmic warriors in the St. George's Battle? I guess I have to take a hangover cure!"*
>
> *"What does it all has to do with St. George's Night? Or what have these babbling and bear-drinking youngsters with swords from stain and cardboard to do with the ancient battle for freedom? This role play is really a joke... like this they should rather play at home"* (Postimees 2012)

It is interesting to point out that while many cultural researchers have attempted to interpret cultural reality through the analogies and rules of play (e.g. Geertz 2003: 37jj), the commentators in the case of Kassinurme have based their interpretations of and requirements to a playful event on (at least alleged) cultural and historical reality. Yet the demands of authenticity have also their limits. The main objections of commentators are against plastic clothes and weapons, yet arriving to the event in cars and having a parking lot full of cars immediately besides the "ancient" battle ground is perceived as acceptable.

A new aspect by modern sacred places and by Kassinurme Hills as well is the fact that nowadays people are free from the constraints of fixed religious traditions and sedentary lifestyle, they are much more mobile. Therefore they have (unlike in the past) much more choices about which places they want to connect their identity and expectations with. For example, participants of Kassinurme warrior plays come from all over Estonia and even from other Baltic states. The modern individual has the freedom of choice and the connection with a place is often not created "by birth" (i.e. through local traditions directly passed on by older members of a group) but mediated via mass media. At the same time, modern mass media enables us the use of identity-building elements from a very many-faceted religious, esoterical and historical knowledge from all over the world. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has coined the term de-

territorialisation for such cultural processes, meaning ethnic groups and traditions which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities (Appadurai 1991: 192). A parallel may be drawn with pilgrimage tourism – many people in Estonia and other industrial countries are – often through tourist advertising materials – aware of famous sacred places abroad (e.g. Jerusalem, mount Sinai in Egypt) and visit them, but may not have heard from or not be interested in small sacred places in the neighbouring village. I agree with authors (e.g. Gustafsson 2000: 164) who have noticed that role-playing events connected with certain historical places are often visited mainly by outsiders and not by locals who would actually have former ties with the place; moreover, to some locals, indigenous local identity is even better expressed by dissociating from the festival crowd or group event than by being part of it.

Conclusions

The primary function of sacred places like Kassinurme Hills in modern Europe is obviously not to fill some inevitable religious needs of people, yet – as it was shown also on the example of Kassinurme Hills –, still such places are needed as supporting tools of identity building. Mythological or supernatural background of such places is often just part of fun, yet it is still felt important in order to complete the place experience as a whole. However, the reconstruction by every party (in the case of Kassinurme Hills, by LARP-roleplayers, re-enactors, artists, local people, individual visitors, online commentators) is somewhat different and contains various authenticity demands. Emerging contradictions in these demands cause some groups and individuals stop visiting Kassinurme and find new sacred places that are more in accordance with their needs and expectations, yet some visitors may find their "right place" in Kassinurme namely because of the newly constructed meanings and images.

Acknowledgements

Research for this article was supported by the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES, European Regional Development Fund) and is related to research project IUT 22-5 (Estonian Research Council).

Notes

[1] A video about Mytofest 2013 can be found under: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7O9irNLsys (18.02.2017).

References

Abrahams, Roger D. 2003. Identity. *Eight words for the study of expressive culture*. Feintuch, Burt (ed.). Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 198–219.

Appadurai, Arjun 1991. Global ethnoscapes. Fox, Richard G. (ed.). Notes and queries for a transnational anthropology. *Recapturing anthropology. Working in the present*. New Mexico: School of American Research, pp. 191–210.

Augé, Marc 1995. *Non-places: Introduction to An Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London & New York: Verso

Bedynski, Wojciech & Mazur-Hanaj, Remigiusz (eds.) 2011. *The tree, the well and the stone: sacred places in the cultural space of Central-Eastern Europe*. Warsaw: In crudo.

Bendix, Regina 1997. *In Search of Authenticity. The Formation of Folklore Studies*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1993. Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative. *The Location of Culture.* London & New York: Routledge, pp. 57–93.

Burke, Peter 2006. *Kultuuride kohtumine. Esseid kultuuriajaloost* [Meeting of cultures. Essays about cultural history]. Tallinn: Varrak.

Geertz, Clifford 2003. *Omakandi tarkus. Esseid tõlgendavast antropoloogiast* [Local knowledge. Essays about interpretive anthropology]. Tallinn: Varrak.

Gregory, Derek & Urry, John 1985. *Social relations and spatial structures*. Gordonsville: Macmillan.

Gustafsson, Lotten 2000. Medieval selves and current communities: playing with identity at an intersection of rootedness and mobility. Pertti J. Anttonen (ed.). *Folklore, Heritage Politics and Ethnic Diversity: A Festschrift for Barbro Klein*. Stockholm: Mångkulturellt Centrum, pp. 158–176.

Heinapuu, Ott 2010. Taara tammikud: ideaalse pühapaiga tung tekstist maastikule [How a sacred landscape migrates from a vision into the environment]. *Acta Semiotica Estica,* 7, pp. 102–138.

Kuutma, Kristin 2008. Küsimusi identiteedist – teoreetilisi trajektoore kultuuriuuringus [Questions on identity – theoretical trajectories in cultural studies]. *Paar sammukest. XXVI Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi aastaraamat*. Tartu: EKM Teaduskirjastus, pp. 15–28.

Tamm, Marek 2008. History as cultural memory: Mnemohistory and the construction of the Estonian nation. *Journal of Baltic Studies,* 39 (4), pp. 499–516.

Changing Traditions

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.12

Bridge Over the Rainbow. Animal Burials and Animal Cemeteries in Post-Socialist Estonia

Marju Kõivupuu

Centre of Culture and Landsape, the School of Humanities, Tallinn University
marju.koivupuu@tlu.ee

Ritual burials for animals have been practiced both ancient advanced cultures (like Egypt) and prehistoric peoples. As a factor accompanying the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 19th century, cemeteries for pets began to appear in the vicinity of bigger cities, and pet culture as a whole formed a separate economic branch. In industrial society the topic of pets became so important that in 1978 Errol Morris produced his widely acclaimed documentary Gates of Heaven, which focused on the business of animal burials.
This article reviews the change in animal burial practices, focusing on the practices found in post-socialist Estonia, where the phenomenon is rather new because of various socio-cultural reasons. As a result of this newness, the phenomenon is causing opposing opinions in society.
Key words: Death culture; anthropomorphism; pet culture; pet cemeteries; popular religion.

Introduction

The best place to bury a good dog is in the heart of her master.
– Anonymous

Animals have their own culture, history and ethnology, and animals have been an important part of human culture for thousands of years (Premack & Premack 2002: 350–351). Animal history and culture as a subject of study in ethnology (i.e. the relationship of people and animals through the ages, values, qualities and meanings ascribed to animals) are human-mediated and constructed.

Every generation has had its own point of view of animals as creatures who do not have all that we have as humans, such as language, consciousness, intellect and morality. At the same time, we are reminded that people are animals – mammals, specifically – and the best way to determine what being human means is to compare us to other animals (Ingold 2002: 14–15). Because animals have been

an important part of human culture for thousands of years, animals can talk-adaptation, or rather the adaptation of human culture. This relates to animals that live among people: domesticated animals, pets, etc. Dominique Lestel indicates that even a hybrid of human and animal communities, where people live with pets and domestic animals, exists (Lestel 2002: 203).

Evidence about love towards pets is to be found in ancient history. However, historians and ethnologists are still arguing whether this love existed from the beginning or formed in the process of general development. According to some scientists, primitive peoples started domesticating animals for magical reasons; hunters were trying to redeem themselves for the prey that they killed.

The human-animal relationship has changed significantly compared to the past. Rational peasant culture has not known nor acknowledged pet culture. Although the agricultural animal (domestic animal) is thought to have a soul, its tiny soul has always been located lower on the spiritual hierarchy. Estonians have, for example, said that humans have souls but brutes have warm breath. Although children might have had and did have their "own" animals in the household, their fate was still decided by adults. Peasant culture did not accept a pet as something "just for myself", to paraphrase Astrid Lindgren's character Pelle in the novel *Seacrow Island* (Lindgren 1969, 1993, 2000).

The concept of the pet has become particularly strong. People living in postmodern and technocratic urban society are more or less estranged from both uncultivated as well as cultivated nature and the natural processes taking place there. Probably for this reason pet today is not so much an animal as a favourite: he is halfway to being human (Torp-Kõivupuu 2004; Mikkor 2000; Ilomäki 2002: 15–16) and a member of the family, which is reflected in people's changing attitudes towards pets. Pets have a special status in human society: they have a name and they live with people who often give them moral values and qualities (Patoluoto 1989: 107–108 [cited in Ilomäki 2002: 16]; Kaaristo 2006).

Lack of human relationships also plays a significant role in pet culture; a furry friend often replaces a friend and a companion or even family and children for a lonely person (see Kruus 2004).

However, pets do presuppose certain financial capacity: animal food, care products, medical help and their taking part in shows all require significant expense on the owner's account. Various researchers associate a decreased birth rate and the prevalence of the so-called small family model with the continued increased popularity of pet culture (see also Hyttinen 1996:139). Pet culture also improves contacts between humans in urban culture. People tend to interact more freely with an acquaintance or even a complete stranger walking a dog or a cat than with a person walking alone (Hyttinen 1996: 140).

> *A dog is a means for integration," contemplates Tiit Truumaa, the head of Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery. "For example, if a woman walks her dog in the park, you go and talk to her about the dog. And there the relationship starts. Russians come to the kennel union where most people are Estonians. And the big love they have for their dog forces them to speak Estonian* (Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 39).

The dominating factor in human-pet relationships in a postmodern and technocratic society seems to be anthropomorphism – psychological qualities of humans are attributed to animals and they are often even dressed as humans (Hyttinen 1996: 139, Kruus 2004).[1] In many cases this is due to practical necessity: the "fashion disease" of the 20th and 21st century has made it necessary, for people with allergies, to breed animals with short hair or those that are completely hairless which need clothes in a colder climate.

There are numerous websites where pet owners form virtual communities. At one time or another it is "in" to have a dog or a cat of this or that breed or even some other completely exotic friend. Different religious convictions and everyday understandings valid among pet owners and their intimates also play a role in choosing a pet. Even naming the pets is an anthropomorphist and humanistic act.

The pets of prominent persons have turned into media heroes. In the first days of January 2002, various media outlets, including print publications, featured the story about the tragic death of Bill Clinton's Labrador. The cat named Miisu, owned by of former Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts, who resided in the Stenbock building with the government, posed on the front pages of daily newspapers and turned into a key character in the political comedy

show *Pehmed ja karvased* (Soft and Furry), which featured on the Estonian national TV channel ETV. So pets fill many and often simultaneous roles in our life – they can be symbols of social status, guardians for the house or an apartment, friends or companions on walks (Hyttinen 1996: 140).

If and how many different (exotic) pet animals/birds there are in modern cities can only be guessed. In 1995 the students of Tallinn Lasnamäe Kuristiku Secondary School questioned the people living in the neighbouring apartment blocks. Based on that survey it became clear that there were 335 dogs per 500 families in the apartment buildings. For example, in Tallinn, Russian families tend to have large pedigreed dogs for their children to compensate for the lack of contact with the natural world. Based on the results of the same questionnaire, large dogs are owned to protect the home from burglaries. Another significant fact is the theory that raising expensive pedigreed dogs improves the owners' self-esteem and prestige in society (Nerman 1998: 402). Various statistical data about the number of pets and the expenses made on them in a district/city of one or another country are also impressive and worth consideration.[2]

A pet has also become a symbol of status. Representatives of various nationalities and social groups have different beliefs, convictions and attitudes when it comes to pets and the pet culture as a whole.[3]

The pet culture as a wider phenomenon will also be briefly reviewed: its underlying causes, relation to modern industrial society and the Christian cultural space and anthropomorphist appearances in modern pet culture. With the arrival of the internet age, pet cemeteries, along with the final resting places for humans, moved to virtual reality. When we Google the term *pet cemeteries* we find interesting information on real as well as virtual pet cemeteries.

The article mainly focuses on one aspect of the pet culture – the changes in animal burial customs over time and their relationship to the owner's ethnic background and religious affiliation. The focus is on practice in post-socialist Estonia where the phenomenon is rather new because of various social-cultural reasons, which cause opposing opinions. The author tries to answer, among other things, the question of whether the pet cemetery culture in modern society

testifies to the lack of human relationships, which causes the need to equalize a pet with a human being. Estonian pet owners have a superstitious warning – an excessive commitment to a pet decreases our potential to have offspring.

Pets, death and pet cemeteries – an historical overview

The friendship between animals and humans is so natural that we hardly ever think about how and when it began and for whom it was necessary. The relationship, which has in some cases reached the extent where masters basically guarantee human rights for their pets, has an interesting and very long history.

Pet cemeteries are not new to history. Throughout history, humans have demonstrated their love for and desire to bond with animals. They have shown animals the same respect in their passing as they do fellow humans by writing loving epitaphs and creating cemeteries and memorials specifically to remember beloved pets and animals (Pet cemeteries throughout the World 2006).

Archeologists (or archeozoologists, to be more precise) speak about animal funerals if an animal is buried in a separate grave or with a human. Animals were first buried during the Neolithic Age when agriculture was taking root. Most burials were for domestic animals (cows, horses, dogs) and, therefore, animal burials have been viewed as funeral objects or, in some cases, as sacrifices.

The carefully interred remains of a human and a cat were found buried with seashells, polished stones, and other decorative artefacts in a 9,500-year-old grave site on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus (Pickrell 2004). Ancient advanced cultures, including that of the Ancient Egyptians, have practised animal burials. Ancient Egyptians were known to mummify and bury cats – those animals were considered divine.[4] Cats are frequently represented in Egyptian mythology in the form of the feline goddesses Bastet, Sekhmet and other deities. Cat art and mummified remains are known from as far back as 4,000 years ago (Pickrell 2004).

Ancient Egyptians' practice of animal burial is the best known, thanks to the many elaborately mummified dogs, cats, monkeys and birds that have been recovered by archaeologists in recent times.

As early as 1000 BC, substantial parcels of land along the Nile were set aside expressly for the burial of animals, though it was equally acceptable to inter pets in the tombs of their owners. Then, as now, wealthy pet owners spared no expense for their animals' funerals. Among the most famous ancient dog lovers is Alexander the Great (356 BC – 323 BC), who owned a large mastiff-like hound named Peritas. Upon her death, the conqueror led a formal funeral procession to the grave, erected a large stone monument on the site and ordered nearby residents to celebrate her memory in annual festivities. A city by the name still exists in this location. (Thurston: http://www.petcem.com/historypetburials.html).

Pet cemeteries also existed in Greece in 300 BC because people there had dogs as pets. The richest people in Athens even had cheetahs or at least one singing bird at home. Horses were considered special animals at that time and luxury taxes applied for them. Archaeologists discovered two horses at the site of the ancient city of Ascalon located in the Gaza Strip controlled by Israel. In 1986 Laurence Stager's archaeological team discovered the ancient pet cemetery of Ascalon containing the remains of over 1000 dogs. This cemetery dates to the period of Persian rule (539–332 BC) in Palestine (Pet Memorials 2008).

Numerous animal burials have been found in the burial mounds of nobles dating from the Iron Age. For example, Lithuanian burial mounds contain many horse burials, while those of Livonians have more dogs. Ancient dog funerals were equal to human funerals. During the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age the dog and human formed a pair of predators. Dogs were domesticated during the Neolithic Age (Jonuks 2006). Because of dogs' exceptional roles, including as hunters, they were buried as early as the Mesolithic Age. In Estonia there have been findings of burnt animal bones from cremations dating from the end of the Viking Age: the dog was burnt with the human body and in most cases a grown dog was sacrificed to the deceased (Jonuks 2006).

The closest Stone Age dog burials are from Northern Latvia in the Mesolithic part of Zveinjeki Cemetery; dog burials have also been found in the Mesolithic cemeteries of Southern Sweden, Skateholm – there the dog was buried with the human or in a separate grave clearly linked to the buried humans (Nilsson Stutz 2003:

232, appendix 102). The dogs of Skateholm were regarded as very important animals. Similar to humans, contributions were placed in their grave or the body was covered with ochre (Larsson 2000: 91). In our region, dog burials were known in many places during the Viking Age and the late Iron Age. The first separate dog burials appeared in Scandinavia during the Roman Iron Age but became more widespread during the Vendel Period and achieved their peak during the Viking Period. It is noteworthy that Scandinavian dog burials were most widespread in Eastern Sweden, near Mälari, but they are also present in Skåne and Denmark, and to a lesser extent in Southwestern Finland (Makiewicz 2000). Dogs were often buried in the mounds of the Koiva Livonians, for example, in Krimulda (Tõnisson 1974: 54–64), whereby the discovered bones where most probably those of a large breed similar to a modern sheepdog (Tõnisson 1974: 56).

One of the first pet necropolises in the world is the pet cemetery decorated with glorious sculptures opened near Paris in 1889. Pet culture developed as a side product of the Industrial Revolution and the process of urbanization, and pet cemeteries were increasingly established near big cities (Hyttinen 1996, Wolf 1989, Wiedenmann 1993, Stark 1993). In industrial society the pet theme became so acute that in 1978 Errol Morris released the widely acclaimed documentary *Gates of Heaven*, which covered the topic of the burial business for pets. *Gates of Heaven* launched Morris' career and is now viewed as a classic. In 1981 Roger Ebert named it one of the ten best films of the year. The film's acclaim stems less from its coverage of pet cemeteries than how Morris builds on this base to explore issues such as morality and the afterlife. Although there are 19 known pet cemeteries in England, it emerged as news in 2010 that in one village it was allowed to bury pets side by side with their owners at a cemetery meant for humans. West Lindsey District Council gave permission for the scheme because the local churchyard of St John the Baptist is, like many others in Britain, fast running out of space. The site will remain agricultural and wildlife will be encouraged. It is intended that, over time, it will turn into a small wood and orchard. A spokesman explained: "We have never heard of a burial ground like this before. It seems like a new but rather strange trend – people not wanting to be separated from their pets in death, that is. There are 19 pet cemeteries in

England and Wales but so far none has been linked with human cemeteries" (Jarvis 2010).

With the emerging age of the Internet, pet cemeteries have moved to virtual reality along with final resting places for humans. If you Google the term "pet cemeteries", you find interesting information about real as well as virtual pet cemeteries in Great Britain (The Assocciation 2016), America (Road Side Cemetery 1996–2017, A bit of Heaven Pet Cemetry; Los Angeles Pet Memorial Park & Crematorium 2017). The International Association of Pet Cemeteries (IAOPCC) was founded in 1971 in West Chicago by Pat Blosser. Member pet cemeteries are expected to maintain the highest business and ethical standards. IAOPCC operates on a budget that is supported only by dues and other contributions from members. IAOPCC has no paid employees; all efforts are completely voluntary (IAOPCC 2017). The PDSA Pet Cemetery in Ilford (England) dates back to the 1920s and holds over 3,000 animals. In 2006 the cemetery was renovated, and where needed, headstones were restored or replaced. The garden provides quiet contemplation for all animal lovers. Hyde Park Pet Cemetery was established in 1880 at the back of Victoria Lodge. By 1893 there were 33 gravestones. The last burial was in 1967. Soldiers Dog Cemetery at Edinburgh Castle (Edinburgh, Scotland) is a small garden which has been used since the 1840s to bury the remains of officers' pet dogs as well as regimental mascots. America's oldest pet cemetery was founded in 1896. Dr Samuel Johnson, a veterinarian, offered his apple orchard to serve as a burial plot for a bereaved friend's dog. That single act of compassion marked the establishment of a beautiful hillside cemetery. Now a century later it is the resting place for over 70,000 pets. It also houses the War Dog Memorial, erected in 1923 for canines who served in the military. Los Angeles Pet Memorial Park, set in ten landscaped acres, is the final resting place for over 40,000 animals. The park was founded on 4 September, 1928. The Zoo Pet Cemetery is the most famous pet cemetery in Lisbon and is situated on a terraced hillside inside the zoo grounds for local people to bury their beloved pets. There are many tombstones here, mainly white marble, dedicated to pets. Central Park Pet Cemetery in Helsinki was opened in 1947. There are 3000 small graves of pet animals such as dogs and cats. Larger dogs and pets are cremated,

their remains placed in urns. A charming aspect of this cemetery is the free-standing lanterns on individual gravestones, which makes the cemetery pleasant for after-dark visits (Pet Cemeteries throughout the World 2006). Post-socialist countries' pet cemeteries were founded later, after the collapse of the Soviet regime. Pietni Park Drahan, a pet cemetery in Prague, was founded in 1998 in the Bohnice neighbourhood of Prague 8. It is part botanical garden and part pet cemetery, holding 2,000 graves, and is a beautiful, calm place created with no concrete nor asphalt. Each owner can choose a tree or ornamental bush to be planted on their pet's grave. Interred here, for example, are former presidents Vaclav Havel's schnauzer and Jiri Paroubek's basset hound. Moscow Pet Cemetery was opened 24 August 2007. In response to demand, Moscow city government and private investors opened a pet hotel, veterinary clinic, visitor centre and Moscow's first pet cemetery. The centre stands on two hectares of land with space for 30,000 pets. The pet cemetery has proved very popular with Russian pet owners and many have sought its service. Cats, dogs, horses, parrots and even hamsters have found their last resting place amongst its hand-carved tombstones. Latvia Pet Cemetery is a woodland cemetery and the final resting place where dogs, cats, rats, birds, rabbits and fish all lie next to each other in harmony. There is a striking large central monument of a pet's collar, which was placed in memory of all lost animals gone to "other hunting grounds" The entrance is an imposing artistic and distinctive archway. The first and oldest pet cemetery in Poland opened in 1991. It gave Polish pet owners the chance to give their pets a dignified and lasting burial place. It is in a beautiful woodland setting. Transport to the cemetery for the animal can be arranged (Pet Cemeteries throughout the World 2006).

Pet cemeteries in Estonia

Historically, (pet) animal burials are nothing new in Estonia. Here Viking Age mounds have been found to include dog burials (Jonuks 2006) and the marked graves of local Baltic German pets (dogs, horses) have become a part of Estonian culture and folklore (Torp-Kõivupuu 2004). However, pedigreed dogs and horses of local mansion owners were privileged. Many of them were buried more nicely than the poor local peasants. The Estonian Folklore Archives

contain texts that indicate that Baltic German barons and ladies buried their grand pets in mansion parks. Many of these pets have glorious pillars on their mounds which have, over time, enriched the local folktale tradition, describing the quirks of the mansion owners and influencing the local customs up to modern times:

> *The baron of Kiltsi Manor had a big white dog and it died and is buried to the garden of Kiltsi Castle. There is a large sharp rock on the grave in the mansion park even now. Some people wonder about the function of this pillar. It is nothing other than a grave for a dog.* RKM II 336, 368 (4) < Väike-Maarja parish, Nõmme village – M. Hiiemäe < S. Tammistu (1979).

Based on the oral notes of Ell Vahtramäe from the expedition of 2003 to Väike-Maarja Parish, the grave of the dog at Kiltsi Manor has also shaped the local customs – allegedly local students took flowers there in Soviet times and later after their graduation.



All photos taken at Jõelähtme pet cemetary, November 2011. Photos by M. Kõivupuu.



Grave pillars for pets that have survived to modern times are introduced today as significant local tourist attractions, and information as well as photos about them can be found on county websites. One of the best known dog graves in Estonia is located at the park of Koluvere (Kolovere) Castle (see Läänemaa: http://www./ekaart/Laanemaa.html). On this website it is possible to find an e-card with the image of a grave pillar erected for a dog which may be forwarded to other people.

The Kõpu Manor park has a stone with crosses under which is the grave for the dog of the local manor owner. Harku Manor was owned by Friederih Vilhelm von Weymarn from 1895 to 1907. He did not personally live in the manor. However, he did occasionally visit the general's madam there, and this madam had a riding horse called Ataman. When the horse died, it was buried in the manor park and a monument was erected on the grave, which included the phrase "holy mound". These words are visible even today. Later

folk tales attempted to link this site with the novel *Avenger* (first published in 1880) written by Eduard Bornhöhe, claiming that the Avenger's horse or even the golden sword was buried there (Rahno 1965). Also an obelisk located in Tallinn at Glehni Park marks the grave of the favourite horse of Nikolai von Glehn (Kõrv 2006). The engraved commemoration plate is now missing from the obelisk and therefore it is an "empty" artefact for a person who does not know cultural history.

In Estonia we can speak about modern pet culture, including the burial customs and cemetery culture, only from the 1990s. The first animal cemetery in Estonia was founded in 1995 at Jõelähtme as a private enterprise. Post-socialist countries as well as our northern neighbours followed the lead (Torp-Kõivupuu 2004).

I visited this cemetery for the first time at the end of 1990s. Its uniqueness felt strange and even somewhat estranging for me. I had never visited an animal cemetery before, and the general picture was too similar to regular Estonian so-called "forest cemeteries" for me. Maybe the estrangement was fortified by the fact that I had



not acknowledged that modern pet culture with all its Western and cosmopolitan developments (along with many other European and so-called other-worldly phenomena) was trying to find its place in post-socialist Estonian society. As a rather new and marginal phenomenon, the burial customs of animals and their cemetery culture had received the attention of the print (yellow) press (Olvet 1999, Suviste 2000, Kiiler 2002).

The idea for a pet cemetery was initiated in 1994 by a veterinarian of the former Kostivere Sovkhoz called Enno Kosk, who in turn got the idea when visiting a pet cemetery in Canada. Harju II Lions Club helped in founding Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery, and it is managed by a retired veterinarian named Tiit Truumaa. According to the manager of the cemetery, the force behind its founding was the ever increasing cruelty and carelessness in human society – years ago some people picking mushrooms found some unidentified human bodies that were wrapped in white sheets and drowned like kittens, rocks tied to their feet (also Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 39–40).





"If people are executed like animals, then animals should be buried like humans," said Truumaa. He believes that humans will become more humane by burying animals with dignity.

From that time burial places for pets have also been founded in other cities and towns. Valga Pet Cemetery was founded on town property in 2000 with initiative from the city government. It was first among the cemeteries fully financed by the city. The chief veterinarian of Valga Veterinary Office Jaan Luha said back then that if people were charged for this service then they would give up using the pet cemetery due to their financial limitations. Luha explained that there was a purely practical need for the cemetery: dead animals were dumped into garbage containers or in random places. Although Valga is a typical small town with many private cottages, people there do not always have the option to bury their pets – not all have cottages or private plots of land.[5] The Rakvere pet burial ground was founded a couple of years back to Kullaaru



by the initiative of the local government and Elfriede Sillapere, the head of the local dog shelter, who found it unacceptable that pets who were put to rest or died were dumped in the landfill, where they lay for several days before being pushed into the general garbage by a bulldozer (Torp-Kõivupuu 2004). This is due to the socio-political and cultural changes which accompanied the restoration of independence. Therefore, it is a relatively new and still seemingly strange phenomenon, although now there is a real need for pet cemeteries in Estonian society. According to current legislation, the corpses of cats, dogs, mice, rabbits and other household pets are not considered municipal waste and it is not permitted to dispose of them in or next to municipal waste containers, nor is it allowed to put them somewhere else.[6]

> *I have faced the burial problem twice. There should be a pet cemetery in Pärnu, which could look like a nice park. In my opinion, it could be an additional activity for an entrepre-*



neurial person. However, I would like to see a person who takes their pet to one of those waste disposal factories. I would like to see this person for a moment and then never see them again (Naaber 2006).

I ask from people here – if there is an accident with your cat or dog or the animal has died for some other reason, how do you organize everything? Have you buried the animal nicely by yourself, taken it to the pet cemetery or, like it is done too often, dumped it in the forest or garbage container? I am asking because, when my old mother buried her dog, who was like family for her, in her garden, planted flowers on the mound and lit a candle, most passersby laughed – they thought the old hag was crazy... What have you done with your deceased pets? (Kassisõprade foorum, 2628).

We have buried them nicely in the garden, under the plum trees. Usually we have used a stone to mark the spot. Me and my mother buried my childhood friend, the Labrador-like dog

Reti in his favourite place. It was winter and very cold outside. It seems somehow right to send pets to their last journey worthily. They lived and stayed with us. We had many experiences with them, talked to them, complained, were happy and many other things... They just are worthy of it. (Kassisõprade foorum, 2628).

In our summer house garden there are graves for a rabbit, hamster, dog and one tragically killed hornet (drowned in yoghurt) and I do not imagine walking with a dog (cat, rabbit) in a bag to cremate it somewhere or whatever. I agree with the fact that if someone does not have a garden there is going to be a problem with the burial and cemeteries are necessary (Kivi 2009).

A pet grows to become a family member. Always. Unfortunately, every animal, like every human being, has to die someday. Burying a pet is complicated because they can only be buried in special cemeteries. There isn't a pet cemetery in Pärnu. In real





> *life, however, pets have always been buried and are going to be buried in gardens and woods, regardless of the forbidding legislation. Few people go to Viljandi or Tallinn to put their pet to rest. In those cities there are official pet cemeteries and it is possible to order a commemoration ceremony* (Naaber 2006).

The pet cemetery planned in Kudjape on the island Saaremaa caused a fierce public discussion in 2009 because officials and heritage protection society thought that the pet cemetery was located too close to the human cemetery, which did not seem moral to them. Local people, however, though otherwise for the most part:



People want to be better even in death. A body is a body. In my opinion, burying animals close to their owners is a very nice idea. We will meet on the other side anyway (http://www.meiemaa.ee/index.php?content=artiklid&sub=1&artid=28423, 01.05.2010)

Cynical folk! How is it unethical? How is it not of culture? Where should they be buried if not in a separate burial ground? Is it ethical and cultural to leave an animal carcass lying around by a dumpster? (as I have no idea how an animal carcass should be categorized – it is not compost nor is it packaging...) Just wonderful how nice people have taken up the decision-making... heartless, I say (Kivi 2009).

Yes, but where should we bury the animals then? There are two or three pet cemeteries in Estonia and that is not normal.

> *And all city governments think that such places are not necessary. Real life, however, shows the exact opposite.* (Kivi 2009).

The compilers of the plan said that the plot meant for the pet cemetery was purposefully located close to the human cemetery because the plot was not suitable for anything else and the plan include a road to separate the pet cemetery from the human burial ground. After discussions among locals as well as in spoken and written media the plan was finally approved in its original form (Loel 2009, Kivi 2009).

The detailed plan of Võru city government has foreseen the founding of a pet cemetery, which would be located next to the human burial ground. According to the chief architect of the town, Ü. Eljand, the pet cemetery is a part of a cultural society where no one wants to throw their dead pet in the garbage and all people do not have a place for burying their pet (Tarbija24).

> *In the 1980s my daughter's friend's bird died. I think it was a canary. It died in the middle of the winter, so it was impossible to bury. The body of this birdy was kept in deep freeze for months and buried in Rahumäe Cemetery in the family's burial plot in the spring. I have also heard about pets being buried near windows, between bushes or under balconies. A couple of years ago my little friend's hamster died.* [---] *The animal was buried behind a large five-story building below its home window. The children, along with their friends, burned candles on the grave for days and put flowers there.* (Oral note to Marju Kõivupuu < woman, b 1955, May 2004).

Regardless of the existence official pet cemeteries, there are always independent pet cemeteries in bigger cities, like at Iru or Pikakari beach in Tallinn (Linnaleht 2007). Pets have also been buried at the edges of cemeteries which were transformed into parks during Soviet times. In rural areas of Estonia burying pets is not a significant problem at the moment. According to interviews, among the inhabitants of Järvamaa County it is not common to cremate or bury a pet in a special pet cemetery. Fifty-six of the people who were interviewed said they would bury their pet in their garden or the garden of a friend or in the forest. Only two pet owners would get their pet cremated and two others would bury the pet in a pet

cemetery. Fifteen pet owners did not know what they would do with their dead pets. It can be concluded that the topic is difficult and sad for the answerers. They would rather think about it when the day arrives (Vesik 2003).

> *We buried our dog in a quiet garden corner at our country house and ordered a headstone with the year of birth and death and name of the dog. It was, after all, our pet for a long 11 years.* (Kassisõprade foorum 2628).

We briefly note that some people (mainly from a rural background) breed animals for profit. Other people (most of who are from urban societies) need pets as a missing link with nature or as friends/companions to relieve loneliness (see also Kruus 2004). And representatives of different nations and social groups hold different beliefs, convictions and attitudes towards (pet) animals and raising them.

About the burial customs of pets

Burial has been and is a very powerful and emotional event in every era and in every culture, be it for a human being or for an animal. In agrarian and/or village societies the attitude towards death has been one of the natural understanding of the perishable nature of life, in which the community has participated and received support through open rituals or some other way. This in turn has pacified people with death and tied them to burial traditions (Hyttinen 1996; Torp-Kõivupuu 2003; Pentikäinen 1990). However, in 1977 Philippe Ariès wrote that in modern Western death culture there is no place for dying. It has been distanced from everyday life and turned into a taboo. In developed societies death is mainly associated with the medical system, hospitals and various legal procedures – a world distant from everyday routine (Ariès 1977). Therefore, the Western world has once again begun discussing the possibility of "good death" in modern society – the right of a person to leave the home and relatives (Hyttinen 1996: 139).

In modern Estonia, however, there are still disagreements between medical personnel, private enterprises providing burial home services and the family of the deceased. The family feels that their rights are violated regarding family members who have died at hospices (the family is not notified about the death quickly enough;

the family is not allowed to wash and clothe the deceased; a significant amount of money is charged for storage, etc.) (Päärt 2004: 9). The death of a pet does not seem to be as terrifying or tragic as the death of a human being. People may cry and feel sad when a pet dies, but sooner or later it is still possible to get a new four-legged friend (Hyttinen 1996: 139).

> *There have been quite many animals and birds in my life. We have buried them in the garden or the woods in the countryside. There have been no candles nor flowers. But it is not strange if someone wants to do it like that. Don't mind the laughing. I am especially sensitive and I have almost never participated in the funerals. My husband or friends have always taken care of the matter without me. I don't even know where exactly they buried the animals. I don't even want to think about that* 😟*. I focus on the living pets.* 🙂 (Kassisõprade foorum).

Most children living in the countryside have buried and still bury their small pets and birds in a corner of the garden and decorate the mounds with flowers or small self-made crosses. This could be seen as the mechanical need to reflect the adult world. And such burial game is the first contact with death for the child, which helps to create understanding about the continuous cycle of life. Russian folklorist Sergei Borisov has considered the organizing of (pet) animal funerals a characteristic cultural phenomenon of children and teenagers, a ritual burial game (Borisov 2005).

In 1996 Sonja Hyttinen wrote in her article *Muisto elää!* (Hyttinen 1996: 138): "Today, animal funerals are not frowned upon any more. Some even consider them more important than human burials." However, as pet culture as a whole has existed from the inception of human culture, so have the ritual burial customs for them. It is not a characteristic – or a quirk, if you prefer – of modern urban society.

Burial customs for pets seem to be linked to the nationality and religion of the owners, and in general they copy the traditional burial customs of the corresponding ethnic group. Euthanasia is an inseparable part of pet death culture. Veterinarian and manager of the Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery Tiit Truumaa provides the service because he considers it humane: if life has become torture for the

animal, then it is more humane to end its misery with an injection (Suviste 2000; Pet Cemeteries throughout the World 2006).

The general picture of Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery is of a typical forest cemetery: small grave plots are surrounded mainly by fir trees, a willow alley leads to the cemetery and ashes grow in one corner of the cemetery. Decorative broadleaf and conifer trees have been planted on the plots by their owners. Grave stones have also been designed according to the financial capacity of the owners. More luxurious, costing up to 9000 EEK, according to Truumaa, are pillars made of black marble with the pet's picture, its name, dates of birth and death, and more rarely engraved epitaphs (*Loving you forever; We will not forget you*, etc.).

At the owner's request, grave stones for pets at Jõelähtme Cemetery can be ordered from the stonecutters of Liiva Cemetery in Tallinn. These stonecutters say that it is most difficult to engrave portraits of Persian cats because the former lack facial characteristics. At Jõelähtme it is also common to attach photos of the pet to the grave stones. Some pet graves are decorated by crude natural stones which have surfaced when digging the grave and the structures of which require some fantasy to recall the dead pet. Even a piece of granite with an image of snakes has been found. And the grave stone for a dog of a lonely elderly woman recalls a grieving woman at a certain angle. It is also possible to order a grave stone at Rakvere Pet Cemetery (Kiiler 2002).

It is significant that many pet graves are decorated with crosses or the sign of the cross has been engraved on the grave stone. For example, at Valga Pet Cemetery there is a black wooden cross on the grave of a dog, which seems to have been bought from a burial office meant for humans. However, Truumaa says that priests claim that some pets are even baptised, which allegedly permits the use Christian symbols (the sign of the cross in this case) on pet graves (Tiit Truumaa to Marju Kõivupuu 2001). The use of crosses and other Christian symbols at Estonian pet cemeteries is still widespread.

At Helsinki Pet Cemetery the most popular Christian symbol is supposed to be the image of an angel. The Star of David and the cross are not generally used in Finnish pet cemetery culture (Hyttinen 1996: 151). When visiting Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery during Easter

2004, I had to admit that the image of an angel is also increasing in popularity among Estonian pet owners. There was a note in the recommendations written for the users of Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery that it is not recommended to use a sign of a cross as a grave marker at Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery.

The general picture of the grave plots also offers information about the financial status, aesthetic taste, and beliefs of pet owners – the financially better-off ones can afford luxurious fences (cast border or a metal fence), decorative flowers for the grave and in some cases even a bench for sitting. In the case of owners with a more mediocre budget there are semi-natural decorative plants on the grave and a bland concrete slab or a wooden board, if even that, with the name of the pet and its years written by hand.

A pet owner can order a funeral ceremony from Truumaa if desired. There is a separate room for that purpose where a candle is lit next to the coffin placed on a table covered with black linen, and a short ceremony is held. Once he even played funeral tunes on his harmonica. It was possible to buy cardboard coffins onsite. Those were manufactured by a nearby small enterprise producing cardboard boxes and other packaging.

> *Hello! I am new to this forum and I have a problem. I am studying product design at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In cooperation with the paper factory of Räpina we have a project in which we have to generate new and interesting products for the company. I proposed the idea of coffins for pets. However, I cannot develop a definite design as one of the lecturers raised the question of the necessity of such products and their sales. So my question is: if pet stores or stores related to burials were to sell paper coffins with a cute appearance, would someone buy them? The Räpina factory recycles paper and produces paper, and the material is generally rather thick (not typical copy machine paper, but paper with the thickness of 0.5-1 mm, and it is possible to use supporting profile corners with the thickness of many millimetres). Please help me. The lecturer has never had any pets and therefore it is impossible for that person to have sufficient grasp of the field. However, the lecturer managed to convince the representative of the company that the idea is stupid. In addition, could you please provide*

> *information about good pet stores in Tallinn: which ones do you prefer, which have a good selection of products, their locations, etc.?* (Pisiloomade netipesa 2005).

However, this enterprise moved to Tallinn, and now many pets are buried "as God created them". Truumaa holds views quite similar to natural religion and he considers it right for the pet to be buried without a coffin or in a coffin as nature friendly as possible, which decomposes easily (see also Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 40).

Allegedly, owners have wanted to bury their pets in plastic bags and oak coffins. One woman had said that if her father and mother had oak coffins, then why shouldn't the dog, who is also a family member? Russian men in black t-shirts, golden chains and leather jackets have been seen burying their dogs rolled into a leather jacket (Olvet 1999).

People reportedly often come to pet funerals with many cars with relatives, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Truumaa says that Russians have the custom of organizing a picnic after the funeral ceremony near the cemetery during the summer:

> *Today they brought a pooch from Kohtla-Järve, shed a tear and a little rum was passed around. Like the custom is* (Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 38).

Estonians are characterized by individuality – after the ceremony the owner walks around alone, head down, avoiding interaction with others. The fresh graves are decorated like they are for humans, with flowers and wreaths, the amount and size of which depend on financial limitations. Although it is customary for some pet owners to add some food for their deceased companion to eat during the journey to the other side (Mikkor 2000: 153), Truumaa says that the clients of Jõelähtme Cemetery do not follow this practice. However, there are numerous traces of sacrificial customs on the mounds. There are leashes of cats and dogs, their favourite toys, feeding bowls and other emotionally dear minor objects which are somehow linked to the deceased pet. During holidays, especially during Christmas, candles are lit on the graves. Some have even brought a tiny Christmas tree to the grave and decorated it or decorated the branches of a fir tree growing next to the grave. Food is also brought to the graves – candies, gingerbread, bones, or the

favourite type of pet food, mostly around Christmas and New Year's. Orthodox Christians place coloured eggs during Easter onto the graves of the "small brothers". Allegedly, it is not uncommon for Russians to drink vodka and eat on the graves during church and calendar holidays. Food sacrifices are also brought to commemorate the dates of birth and death of pets. In addition, it is customary, but of course dependant on the season, to clean the graves, bring/plant flowers or commemorate the deceased pet in some other way on those dates.

When compared to human graves, pet graves are designed more creatively – the favourite objects of furry friends are not put inside the graves; they are left on the mound. So the grave marker is not necessarily a stone or a cross but maybe a bucket or a toy which the animal liked during its lifetime.

At Valga Cemetery there have not been any significant burial ceremonies for pets so far. In the case of burial in a mass grave there is a ditch dug by a tractor at the back of the cemetery. Stray animals and most domestic pets are buried there. Unfortunately, a half-finished mass grave is not an aesthetic experience, especially during the spring when the snow is melting. When the ditch fills up, the tractor covers it with earth, it is made even and that completes the whole ceremony (Marju Kõivupuu's interviews with Jaan Luht and Endel Rebane in 2002 and an expedition to the cemetery in spring 2004).

In 2004 a charity concert took place in Tallinn to gather money for purchasing a pet cremation oven and creating a commemoration wall – Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery located close to Tallinn is no longer able to fulfil the needs of all animal owners.

Truumaa has some religion-oriented stories about a few pets buried at the cemetery. According to Truuma, paying too much attention to a pet can be bad for human fertility. Allegedly, a Russian young couple had been living together for four or five years but they did not have any children. There was no medical explanation – the young people were healthy. They even considered adopting a child. But then the family's pet cat Oskar, who had so far received all the attention, died. And a couple of months after the cat's funeral the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a healthy child (also Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 40). Another dog owner erected a pyramid-

like black granite grave pillar saying that the pillar continues to radiate the positive energy of the deceased dog, which helps the master to maintain emotional balance and good health.

Conclusion

And over the river of eternity
I build a bridge for thee
Only for thee a bridge over the river of eternity...
(To Corli: Dog no. 4/2003:23)

The traditional beliefs of different peoples claim that the rainbow is a bridge that leads to the afterlife from the world of the living. The same saying is used by many pet owners today when they talk about their deceased four-legged friend.

Pet cemeteries and memorials can be found throughout the world. Many date back hundreds of years and some are more recent, but they are all a touching tribute to humans' bond with their unique and beloved pets and can be places for quiet contemplation. Some animal lovers enjoy visiting pet cemeteries, walking around the graves and reading the headstones with their poignant words. This can be very comforting and therapeutic. They say it gives them inner strength (*Pet Cemeteries throughout the World* 2006.)

Although the practical need for pet cemeteries in an urban cultural space is understood in modern Estonia, the pet cemetery culture still seems strange for many people because of the practice of holding extremely luxurious and nice pet funerals. The fact is that in post-socialist Estonia the quality of life for many people, including children, does not reach that of (pedigreed) pets and burials for not only marginalized people, but for working-class people as well, do not often receive as much attention as those for pedigreed dogs and cats. The aforementioned is probably the reason why the funeral customs part of the pet culture has received ironic attention from the press: the clients of pet cemeteries are depicted as strange people who only have passion towards animals (Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 38, 40). The equating of animals and humans through the burial ritual and grave cult was derogated in articles during the first years of pet cemetery culture (Lepassalu & Palli 2000). Members

of Harju county Lions Club also had to acknowledge a suspicious attitude towards supporting the pet cemetery: *During the opening it was doubted whether pets deserve that much respect. However, we cannot support everybody* (Lepassalu & Palli 2000: 41).

If in Europe and the United States the discussion topic is whether pets and humans can be buried in the same cemetery, then in Estonia the idea to plan a pet cemetery too close to a human cemetery still causes strong backlashes. The pet cemetery located at Jõelähtme has tripled its territory during its 15 years of activity, and there is not much space left for further expansion. Independent burial sites for animals have formed on wastelands and beaches in Tallinn, which shows that in cities the need for pet cemeteries exists.

People living in the countryside or in private houses (mostly Estonians) bury their pets in the yard or on their property:

> *Do you have a cemetery for your pets at home? If not, then where do you bury your deceased pets? We have a place under our birches where all the pets of our family have found their final resting place for decades.*
>
> *We have a real cemetery at our country house.*
>
> *Those buried there include the cats Blanche and Vanku, the dogs Tuti, Nelli and Ferdinand, 5 rats if I am not mistaken and countless number of birds and moles, which the animals have killed. I don't know, I would not bury my animal in the pet cemetery. However, if I could not bury them in the countryside, then I guess I would have no other choice.* (United cats. Foorum).

Based on the burial customs for pets it can be concluded that anthropomorphism is not new for a large part of society, including Estonian pet owners. Pets have been depicted as reflections of humans, like God once created man according to his own image. A person has to decide how to bury their pet – whether to dig a simple hole or send it to the land of rainbows with an orchestra, and mark the gravesite with a stone. The equation of animals with humans says a couple of words about the values and the inner world of the person, argues psychologist Voldemar Kolga, and raises a number of rhetorical questions: Is it good to see the animal as human? Is there no difference between an animal and a human? Has the dog

given permission for it to be dressed like a human, fed like a human and buried like a human (Kolga 2000: 41)?

As in other parts of the world, the burial customs and traditions for pets copy the burial customs of humans in Estonia. No significant new traditions or customs specific and only relating to pet cemetery culture have surfaced so far. If euphemistic expressions are used for a deceased person (left this world, went to walk the eternal path, left the earthly path, went to see how the potatoes grow on the other side, etc.), then pet owners have their own symbolic language for talking about deceased pets – this or that favourite doggy went beyond the rainbow or to the rainbow land. This figure of speech has probably been directly translated from usage in the Anglo-American cultural space but if we think about the ancient symbol of a rainbow as a bridge between the worlds of the living and the dead, which is common for many peoples, including Estonians, then the use of this figure of speech seems very appropriate.

Daily newspapers publish death notices and grieving messages when a person dies but there are certain magazines for pet owners (for example, the Estonian Kennel Union magazine *Koer* and the Tartu Sheepdog Breeders Union magazine *Uran),* which publish obituaries for dogs, death notices and condolences to owners upon losing their four-legged friends. As a new tradition, Cemetery Day was first held at Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery on May 8, 2004, which was preceded by cooperative work in the morning – cleaning the cemetery and its surroundings.

If we compare Estonian pet cemetery culture with that of our northern neighbours, the Finns, then we find numerous similar customs and traditions (Hyttinen 1996), but there are also differences. For example, in Estonia it is not customary to write the pet owner's name on the grave marker, but allegedly it is present on the grave markers of Helsinki Pet Cemetery, which is, according to Sonja Hyttinen, a mark of the especially strong spiritual bond between the human and the pet (Hyttinen 1996). Although the visiting, cleaning and decorating of pet graves on (church) holidays is common in both Estonia and Finland, it can be concluded once again that there are detailed differences in that field. Compared to Finns, it is not very popular among Estonians (i.e. Lutherans) to visit the cemetery during the Easter holidays and decorate the graves with

spring flowers and/or pussy willows. This custom is more often associated with Russian practice, which has its reflection in Estonian pet cemetery culture: Orthodox Christian pet owners take coloured eggs, candies, and pussy willows to the graves of their pets. This custom is certainly followed at Jõelähtme Pet Cemetery.

The main differences in pet cemetery and death culture seem to be based on the religious considerations of pet owners: Lutheran pet owners or people with a Lutheran background extend their traditions and customs to pet culture and the same goes for Orthodox Christians, nature believers and atheists. If in modern post-socialist and multicultural Estonian society, where religion is a historic phenomenon for many and the daily newspapers discuss whether religious education should be taught at schools, then, for example, the following was an important topic in Finland recently: "Do (pet) animals go to heaven or not?" (see Hyttinen 1996).

Unfortunately, there are no relevant socio-psychological and ethnological studies about the nationality, education level, religious beliefs, living conditions, income, pet species of pet owners to make deeper generalizations. Based on the rather scant data, I dare to say that the pet (cemetery) culture is more developed among the non-Estonian population in Estonia. Those people lack traditional village culture and their concentration is higher in (industrialized) towns.

The number of official pet cemeteries has increased in Estonia, implying that people also need the cemeteries in smaller, rural towns where the population mainly consists of Estonians. This is understandable because the life expectancy of pets is generally much shorter than that of their owners, and after its death the pet needs respectful handling. Psychologists recommend pets for families with children because the children have to learn and experience the eternal cycle of life and death from a very young age. For the proverb says: You only live once, and no one can escape death.

Acknowledgements

Financial support came from the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory) and Estonian Ministry of Education target-financed project SF0130033s07 *Landscape Practice and Heritage.*

Translated by Ester Eggert.

Notes

[1] In the Estonian climate it is necessary to dress some cold-sensitive breeds to protect them from rain and wind. People found that it was important for the pet to wear a reflector vest in the dark. Only five out of one hundred pet owners clothe their animals to protect the health of the pet; the rest did not consider it necessary. The participants were divided into two major groups according to their attitudes: those who thought well of or tolerated dressing pets and dressed their pets to protect their health; and those who did not favour the clothing and decoration of pets and considered it ridiculous and even torture for the animal. Külli-Kerttu Siplane, who wrote her master thesis about dressing animals and the clothing used, thought that dog clothes and jewellery have a market in Estonia, which is due to the changing dog culture.

[2] According to Focus magazine data, in 2004, the Germans had 22.2 million pets on their sofas and in their front yards. 2.7 billion euros is spent annually on food, housing and appliances for 6.9 million cats and 4.7 million dogs. As a token of gratitude, the dogs leave 40 tons of faeces on the streets of "the dog capital" Berlin every year (Koerad. 2004).

[3] I live in Tallinn in an apartment building with 80 flats. Most Russian-speaking families have at least one pet. Estonian families in the apartment building have fewer pets or none at all. As new inhabitants it was much easier to our family to blend in once our Russian neighbours discovered that we had cats. I have occasionally interviewed the non-Estonian students of Tallinn University about pets and according to them, Estonians are mostly rational, material and emotionless because they do not like pets. At the same time my relatives and friends from Southern Estonia cannot grasp the fact that I have cats in a city apartment because cats should stay outside; expenses for cats (food, litter, medical care) are classified under senseless spending.

[4] The most famous centre of the cat cult in Egypt was located in Bubastis in the delta of the Nile River. There was a red granite temple and a golden statue for the feline goddess Bast. Bubastis and other cult locations were dead cats were brought to be embalmed by priests. They were mostly placed in wooden receptacles covered with copper, bronze, silver, gold or colourful stones. The cat mummies were accompanied to the netherworld by a milk cup and embalmed mice. Many feline statues made from burnt clay, bronze, silver and even gold, which were given to temples to commemorate dead cats have survived to modern times. In Japan the cat is considered holy.

In East Asia it is thought that cats bring good luck. In Islamic countries cats are considered clean and pure, and dogs impure. Orthodox Christians also think that cats are clean, but dogs are sinful. According to Bible tradition, a dog led the predators to the cave where the Virgin Mary hid with the infant Jesus.

[5] According to valid legislation, dead pets can be buried on an estate owned by the master of the pet, or if agreed in advance, also on property owned by someone else, at least 10 m from a dug well (http://www.maaleht.ee/news/uudised/eestiuudised/article.php?id=23965667, 09.05.2010).

[6] If an animal has died, it is not called Sassy, Hamish or Daisy in the legal language. It is animal waste. The latter are divided into low-risk and high-risk waste according to how dangerous their remains are for the health of humans and animals. (Series 2009; http://www.maaleht.ee/news/uudised/eestiuudised/article.php?id=23965667, 09.05. 2010).

Interviews, archives

Truumaa, Tiit 2001. Interview with Marju Kõivupuu. August.

Truumaa, Tiit 2002. Interview with Marju Kõivupuu. January.

Luht, Jaan 2002. Interview with Marju Kõivupuu. July.

Rebane, Endel 2002. Interview with Marju Kõivupuule. July.

Vahtramäe, Ell 2004. Oral reports to Marju Kõivupuu.

Vares, Viivika 2004. Interview with Marju Kõivupuu. May.

RKM – Manuscripts from Estonian Folklore Archives.

References

A Bit of Heaven Pet Cemetery 2016.
http://www.abitofheaven.com (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Ariès, Philippe 1977. *L'homme devant la mort.* Paris: Seuil.

Borissov Sergei B 2005. Pokhorony zhivotnykh kak fenomen detsko-podrstkovoi kul'turõ. *Foklor i postfoklor: struktura, tipologia, semiotika.*
http://www.ruthenia.ru/foklore/borisov4.htm (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Hyttinen, Sonja 1996. "Muisto elää!": Lemmikeläimen kuolema ja hautamuistomerkit Helsingin eläinten hautausmaalla. Kinnunen, Eeva-Liisa

& Koski, Kaarina & Penttilä, Riikka & Pietilä, Minttu (eds.). *Vitsistä videoon: Uusia kirjoituksia nykyperinteestä*. Tietolipas, 146. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, pp. 137–155.

IAOPCC 2017. *The International Association of Pet Cemeteries.* http://www.iaopc.com/pageDisplay.jsp?pageid=12620 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Ingold, Tim 2002. Humanity and animality. Ingold, Tim (ed.). *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Routledge world reference. London & New York: Routledge, pp 14–32.

Ilomäki, Henni 2002. Loomad rahva meeles ja rahvaluule keeles. Jaago, Tiiu & Kõiva, Mare (eds.) *Dialoog privaatse ja avaliku elu vahel: Inimese ja keskkonna suhete peegeldus pärimuses.* Elektrooniline konverents: Täiendkoolituskursus. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum & Tartu Ülikool, pp. 13–18. http://www.folklore.ee/rl/pubte/ee/cf/dialoog/teema1-2.pdf (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Jarvis, David 2010. Pet-lovers can be buried with their animals. *Express*. (01.24.2010) http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/153754/Pet-lovers-can-be-buried-with-their-animals (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Jobes, Gertrude 1962. *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols*. New York: Scarecrow Press.

Jonuks, Tõnno 2006. Koerad Eesti asukate viikingiaja maailmapildis. *Mäetagused,* 31, pp. 29–48. http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2005.31.jonuks

Kaaristo, Maarja 2006. Vägivald loomade vastu: inimene ja koduloom Lõuna-Eesti külas 19. sajandi teisel poolel vallakohtute protokollide näitel. *Mäetagused,* 31, pp. 49–62. http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2005.31.kaaristo

Kassisõprade foorum 2628. http://www.kass.ee/viewthread.php?tid=2628 (05.05. 2010) (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Kiiler, Gert 2002. Rakvere lemmikloomakalmistul puhkavad kõrvuti krants ja tõukoer. *Sakala* (16.08.2002). https://sakala.postimees.ee/2387409/rakvere-lemmikloomakalmistul-puhkavad-korvuti-krants-ja-toukoer (Accessed 31.08. 2017).

Kivi, Alver 2009. Saaremaa saab lemmikloomade kalmistu. *Meie maa.* (20.02.2009).

http://www.meiemaa.ee/index.php?content=artiklid&sub=1&artid=28423 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Koer 1998 (1); 2003 (4). Tallinn: Eesti Kennelliit.

Koerad 2004 = Suhe, mis aitab mõlemaid. *Postimees. Arter*. (07.02.2004) https://www.postimees.ee/1397331/suhe-mis-aitab-molemaid

Kõivupuu, Marju 2013. Ole sa loom või inimene... *Looming,* 6, pp. 868–871.

Kolga, Voldemar 2000. Inimeseloomad: Kommentaar [V. Lepassalu ja I. Palli artiklile "Olgu muld sulle kerge: Kadunukesed: Eestis maetakse mõningaid loomi nagu inimesi ja inimesi nagu loomi"]. *Luup,* 10 (119) (15.05.2000), p. 41.

Kõrv, Jaanus 2006. Nädala juubilar: NICOLAI von GLEHN 165. *Kesknädal.* http://www.kesknadal.ee/uudised?id=7433 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Kruus, Tiina 2004. Minu pere ja muud loomad. *Eesti Naine,* 4 (April), pp. 32–35. http://www.eestinaine.ee/40707 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Lepassalu, Virko & Palli, Ilmar 2000. Olgu muld sulle kerge.Eestis maetakse mõningaid loomi nagu inimesi ja inimesi nagu loomi. *Luup,* 10 (119) (15.05.2000), pp. 38–41.

Lestel, Dominique 2002. Human/animal communications, language and evolution. Torop, Peeter & Lotman, Mihhail & Kull, Kalevi (eds.). *Sign system studies = Труды по знаковым системам = Töid märgisüsteemide alalt,* 30 (1), pp. 201–212.

Lindgren, Astrid 1969, 1993, 2000. *Väike Tjorven, Pootsman ja Mooses.* Transl. Vladimir Beekman. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.

Linnaleht 2007.
http://www.linnaleht.ee/frontpage/tln_ek/2007-04-04-b.pdf (Accessed 31.09.2017).

Loorits, Oskar 1990. *Eesti rahvausundi maailmavaade*. Tallinn: Perioodika.

Los Angeles Pet Memorial Park & Crematorium 2017. S.O.P.H.I.E., Inc. https://www.calabasaspetcemetery.com (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Läänemaa. *Everyday.com e-kaart.* Teemagalerii. Eesti erinevad paigad. http://www./ekaart/Laanemaa.html (27.05.2004).

Mikkor, Marika 2000. Minu merisigade elust. *Mäetagused,* 15, pp. 152–158. https://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2000.15

Naaber, Grete 2006. Kui koer on tõeline pereliige. *Pärnu Postimees*. http://parnu.postimees.ee/2129761/kui-koer-on-toeline-pereliige (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Nerman, Robert 1998. *Lasnamäe ajalugu*. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus.

Olvet, Triin 1999. Loomakalmistu aitab hoida mälestust neljajalgsest sõbrast. *Postimees* (26.07.1999).

Pet Cemeteries throughout the World 2006. Pets4ever.org.uk. http://www.pets4ever.org.uk/content.asp?cpage=Cemeteries (Accessed 30.08.2017).

Pet Memorials 2008. Popular Pet Cemeteries in Europe 2008. *Peternity.com.* http://www.peternity.com/pet-memorial-article/pet-memorials-popular-pet-cemeteries-europe (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Pickrell, John 2004. Oldest Known Pet Cat? 9,500-Year-Old Burial Found on Cyprus. *National Geographic.* http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/04/0408_040408_oldestpetcat.html (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Pentikäinen, Juha 1990. *Suomalaisen lähtö: Kirjoituksia pohjoisesta kuolemankulttuurista*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia 350.Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

Pisiloomade netipesa 2005. Pisi.ee. http://www.pisi.ee/viewtopic.php?f=83&t=3392 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Premack, David & Premack, Ann James. Why animals have neither culture nor history. Ingold, Tim (ed.). *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 350–365.

Päärt, Villu 2004. Surnukuur küsis raha põrmu väljastamine eest. *Postimees* (15.04.2004).

Rahno, Paul 1965. *Harku.* Tallinn: Eesti Raamat.

Roadside Pet Cemetery 1996–2017. Roadside America.com. http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/30646 (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Stark, Tuula 1993. *Pet Cemetry: "We'll take the Rose Now Between Her Paws and thus We'll Open the Heaven's Doors."* Manuscript: University of Helsinki, Chair of Folklore.

Suviste, Maarius 2000. Kilpkonna peab matma nagu inimest. *Maaleht* (18.05.2000).

Tarbija 24. Võru võib saada loomakalmistu. (13.11.2007)
https://www.postimees.ee/1726259/voru-voib-saada-loomakalmistu

Torp-Kõivupuu, Marju 2003. *Surmakultuuri muutumine ajas: Ajaloolise Võrumaa matusekombestiku näitel*. Monograafia. TPÜ Toimetised. Humaniora, 22. Tallinn: Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool.

Torp-Kõivupuu, Marju 2004. Risti peale kirjutas: ühel papil oli peni... Eesti loomakalmistukultuurist. *Mäetagused,* 25, pp. 47–76.
http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/MT2003.25.loomakalmistud

The Association Of Private Pet Cemeteries And Crematoria 2016.
http://appcc.org.uk (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Uran: Tartu Saksa Lambakoerte Klubi ajakiri 2000 (2); 2002, (1; 3).

Varjupaigad
http://www.eau.ee/~astan/varjup.htm#varjup (15.05.2004) (Accessed 31.08. 2017).

United cats. Forum.
http://www.unitedcats.com/et/forum/255/4291/lahkunud-lemmikud (Accessed 31.08.2017).

Vesik, Liisa 2003. *Saak 2003: Ristirotid: Suhteid ühes yahoo.com suhtlusgrupis.* Presentation at "Akadeemilise Rahvaluule Seltsi kogumiskonverents", 30.10.2003.

Viljandimaa Turismiinfokeskus.
http://www.viljandimaa.ee/turismiinfo/?mod=9&sort=1&id=114&pknd= (27.05.2004).

Wiedenmann, Rainer E. 1993. Neuer Totemismus? Überlegungen zur Genese und Semantik moderner Tierbestattung. *Soziale Welt,* 44 (2), pp. 199–222.

Wolf, Michèle 1989. Tierfriedhöfe in Frankreich. *Zeitschrift für Semiotik,* 11 (2/3).
http://ling.kgw.tu-berlin.de/semiotik/deutsch/ZFS/ Zfs89_2.htm#wolf (Accessed 31.08.2017).

https://doi.org/10.7592/Sator.2017.18.13

Simple Hide-and-seek at its Core: Play Features and the Game of Geocaching

Mare Kalda

Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Musem;
Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies
kalda@folklore.ee

Since 2000, people all over the world have been engaged in geocaching, a game of hiding and seeking geocaches, in the course of which "treasure boxes" are hidden and sought using navigational techniques and information technology. Caches are placed in concealed locations in physical space, and the information that the participants jointly manage and renew is uploaded to the Internet, where communication takes place. The aim of this research is to juxtapose geocaching with the play features highlighted in classical ludology as well as present other possibilities of categorisation which have been applied in previous studies of this recreational activity. While discussing the playfulness of geocaching, the author points out the peculiarities of ludic traits of the hobby in order to diversify folkloristic knowledge with developments in the game genre on the one hand, and modification of the idea of treasure hunt on the other hand under the cultural conditions of the information era. The article focuses, above all, on geocaching in Estonia, yet also offers insights into the game on an international level.
Keywords: geocaching, pervasive game, locative game, enactment genres, play

So, what do we do when games become our most important cultural genre?
– Espen Aarseth

The invention of geocaching is among the many events with worldwide impact that occurred on the eve of the 21st century, so to say, or in the year 2000. After the first "treasure box" of the game was hidden in Portland, Oregon, and the fact was announced to news group for GPS users in May 2000, the game quickly gained popularity. Conventions for the game developed: someone hides a container with some objects, determines the geographical coordinates of the cache and makes a post about a new treasure on the website geocaching.com. Using the information posted, anybody can attempt

to find a cache and report findings on the previously mentioned website, jointly used by geocachers.[1]

This is how an individual act by one person (Dave Ulmer, an IT consultant from Portland, Oregon) developed into a hobby that brings together a great number of people. When geocaching.com was launched, the game included – according to an overview by Ken Jennings – 75 caches (until then, caches were simply listed on a website which was unable to handle user traffic as early as in the autumn of the first year of its use). From 300 caches in early 2001, the website quickly came to include 10,000 caches by the end of 2002, and in March 2010, the game included one million active caches (Jennings 2011: 237–239). By 15 July 2015, 2,670,796 active caches had been listed internationally. In the beginning of May, 2017 more than 2,800,000 geocaches are waiting to be found (see the first page of geocaching.com). The 21st-century treasure hunt represents a game of hide-and-seek in a novel form: navigation and positioning devices are used and a specially designed online environment is needed to view continuously updated information about the game and to share it with others. The activity springs from the need to play games and for stimulation, both characteristic of humans, and seems to correspond to the interests of time-conscious people, who playfully test IT-solutions outside their work tasks. The elementary idea of hide-and-seek, one of the hidden-object games in the traditional classification of games (Georges 1972: 177, 184; Kalmre 2005: 172), is renewed and adapted to the conditions of the information society. The hobby is highly democratic in essence – everyone who is interested can join in.

As the following is largely based on how geocaching evolved in Estonia, numerical data on its local development is also presented. The first local cache was hidden on February 10, 2001 by computer software professional Enn Veenpere, who created the original webpage for managing the regional version of the worldwide game he suggested be adapted here (Veenpere 2002; see also HE-aare 2001). His initiative proved successful, and *geopeitus* also began to have players in Estonia. Submitting new caches, constantly reporting the findings of already existing treasure boxes, and discussing the game in forums, the local geocaching community contributes actively to the development of both online and offline parts of the

geopeitus. In parallel, most Estonian hobbyists regularly log their playing actions on geocaching.com. The caches hidden in Estonia are also listed on the common international webpage. This means that the Estonian *geopeitus* constitutes a part of the worldwide game and *geopeitjad* ('geocachers'), along with the other 7 million people (according to the front page of geocaching.com), belong to the big community of participants.

An overview of the current state of geocaching in Estonia is given at http://www.geopeitus.ee/statistika, which provides statistical data. Diagrams show the dynamics of the game: data about logs, messages and new caches indicate how, until 2008, the game gradually escalated in popularity: a clearly noticeable rise in participation can be seen in the years 2009–2010. As of May 2017, there were 2,988 caches (831 of them archived, i.e., no longer extant). The number of more active participants amounted to nearly three hundred people. The *geopeitus* database comprises a plethora of photos (50,357 in May 2016). Over 25,726 posts have been made in different forums.

Exploration of Geocaching from Multiple Perspectives

Before the geocaching era, my relationship to the research object was mostly textual. I have conducted folkloristic research comparing treasure legends and personal experience stories. I have tried to trace the origin of traditional motives as well as reconstruct contexts around the old, supposedly "dead" archival pieces of folklore. I have used summertime fieldwork to interview people who knew traditional treasure lore, and hoped to grasp stories' meaning for narrators. Folkloristic routine did not include treasure hunting, unless the researched stories themselves were regarded as symbolic hidden treasures, while their collection and study equated with a treasure hunt. In April 2002, when my geocaching team found our first cache (the *Aastapäeva* cache), I became a geocacher. The hobby turned out to be preoccupying and gripping, as it enabled me to try something different.

At the same time, I perceived that this playful practice was worth investigating from the folklorist's viewpoint. There are already a few research examples of the folkloristic approach: an overview about how the elements of traditional folklore (especially local legends)

are integrated into games dates back to 2007 (see Kalda 2007). The game under discussion has also been addressed by Lynne McNeill, who acknowledges the folklore genre system avoids categorising geocaching as a game. She relates playful activity to the analytical idea of serial collaboration and portable places, and concludes: "All instances of serial collaboration entail both an object and a process, leaving the tradition generically stuck between material culture and custom (not to mention the emic category of 'game', which many participants use in their descriptions)" (McNeill 2007: 288). Going into the details of the ludic features of the activity was actually not her intention.

Since the very beginning, geocaching has been a ubiquitous phenomenon which, during the last ten years, has been analysed from different angles by game researchers with varied backgrounds as well as by cultural geographers, digital communication experts and web designers. The things experienced bodily in the real world and the procedures carried out in a virtual environment at the same time do belong to actual geocaching, alternate and intertwine: in contemporary game categorisation, geocaching is a pervasive game (Montola & Stenros & Waern 2009: 31–33). Characteristically to such games, we can follow how city culture, mobile technology and network communication is interconnected with information from various sources and fields of activities to produce new play experiences (ibid.: 7).

Jason Farman characterises constant interplay between online and offline space, formulating how the "player's embodiment is developed simultaneously between the zones of perception and invisibility, between resistance and hegemony, between technology and the body" (2009: 3). Pirita Ihamäki also tends to emphasise the mixed-reality properties of geocaching: here the real and virtual environment merge; by means of information and communication technology, traditional game areas are transcended and as a result, a new expanded environment emerges in which the user's real surroundings become an essential component of the entire game (Ihamäki 2012: 141). Mixed reality is created by interactive maps on smartphones, the ability to visualise a path on the GPS screen, itinerary video from the car camera and sometimes electronic devices put into a caches. In a sense, the pervasive game approach and

the mixed reality perspective seem to describe one and the same phenomenon. Kenton O'Hara (2008: 1179–1182) makes several good points highlighting the motivations of people involved in the game, like giving a walk a sense of purpose, discovering new places, locating more caches, experiencing friendly competition and finding opportunities for social interaction.

In a paper focusing on the new playing research methodology, Espen Aarseth holds that in order to understand a game, "all we have to do is to play it well" (Aarseth 2003: 5, 7). Jaakko Stenros, Annika Waern and Markus Montola claim the same, emphasising the role of participatory observation that co-playing enables (Stenros & Waern & Montola 2012: 345–346). Indeed, participant observation is one type of research method typically used in studying virtual worlds. To the extent a researcher observes the activity of a community to which he/she belongs, it can be said that the study is conducted from the auto-ethnographic perspective. According to Leon Anderson, this means membership of the researcher in the research group and his/her personal experience is made visible in published writings and the investigated phenomenon is viewed in a wider social context (Anderson 2006: 373). To a certain extent, participation in the activity studied includes associating with the community studied, informing them of the research activity and presenting its results. While reflecting on geocaching, I have tried to adhere to those methodological principles. Because the information platform of geocaching is created through shared contribution and in online discussions and co-players debate over the many problems occurring over the course of the game, the study takes on features characteristic of shared authorship.

The truth is that the webpage for Estonian geocachers contains almost all game-related information and communication gathered over the years of playing as if by itself. Considering data acquisition methodology and looking from the point of view of folkloristic source criticism, we encounter an interesting situation: pieces of information are collected without collecting. There is no burning need for an additional search for "variants" of the phenomenon under study, because the whole action is constantly represented, displayed in a user-friendly manner. Arvo Krikmann, the internet-humour researcher, has noticed almost the same situation regarding

his study materials: users upload jokes to internet sites where these are collected and preserved at the same time, combining them into a virtual publication. He called this kind of data "natural archives" (Krikmann 2005: 75–76).

Cache logs posted online on geocaching.com and geopeitus.ee (elsewhere as well) after seeking, as well as topical forum discussions, can be regarded as valuable sources for cultural studies (folkloristics included). The same has been noted by Tom Boellstorff, who investigates the virtual world of Second Life. According to him, the activities and words of residents there are fully legitimate data about their common environment (Boellstorff 2008: 60–86). Trevor Blank also validates every kind of user-generated content on the vernacular web, arguing more generally that the authenticity of the data collected online is as valid as data collected in person (Blank 2009: 19). Internet ethnography proves to be a relevant method for describing the content of geopeitus.ee and geocaching.com as sources for geocaching studies in order to comprehend the activity and the knowledge produced therein. For example, the geopeitus.ee webpage provides answers to questions about what (Estonian) geocachers actually do while geocaching, what they experience, how the geocaching activities are prepared, what may cause positive or negative reaction, how intensively someone pursues his/her hobby, what kind of strategies are employed, which geocaches are preferred, how the new caches are accommodated to their surroundings, what the conventions are for writing log entries, how geocachers communicate, etc. Thus, virtual ethnography used in combination with opportunities for participative inquiry will be functional.

In characterising the modern socio-cultural situation, it is claimed that a casual revolution is taking place in the world (Juul 2009), games become the most important cultural genre (Aarseth 2003) and we perceive the ludification of contemporary culture (Frissen & de Mul & Raessens 2013). This has become possible because the nature of work and, as a result, the distinction between work and leisure have changed. Play is in no way restricted to childhood any more.

Under these conditions culturologists and ludologists have posed research questions like Espen Aarseth explicitly did: "How do we investigate, and why do we want to make games and gameplay our object of study?" (Aarseth 2003: 1). It has become customary

in interpretation to re-examine the concept of play and rediscuss the features of these activities, referring to the works by Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois, Gregory Bateson, and Erving Goffman. A folklorist as a representative of a specific area in cultural studies has to continue in the same vein, approaching play and games with analytical tools characteristic to his/her discipline. Therefore, the present study aims to review the position of games in the folkloric genre system using geocaching as an example of novel phenomena. Although different forms of folklore have been blurred since times of old, really new or seemingly new appearances will re-blur the genre system again.

Game researchers rhetorically and/or essentially differentiate between traditional games and videogames, or assign special significance to high-tech gadgets and gamers' online performance. One of my questions inspired by geocaching events is whether the technology changes the play on an essential level.[2] Indeed, geocaching cannot be geocaching without identifying one's location on the earth, or using online cache listings and accessing fellow geocachers' logs. However, can we take it just as a (not so simple) hide-and-seek game for things which is elaborated and modified, and played partly synchronously and partly non-synchronously by a very, very large group of participants? And does the "geocaching man" differ from the "playing man", *homo ludens*? Or is geocaching perhaps more closely associated with orienteering sports – outdoor recreation which combines navigation with maps to find various points in the landscape and provides competition? Yet orienteering is not about treasure hunting – anything but play in real life. At the same time, the topic of hidden treasure has implicitly belonged to traditional folklore, where it mixes facts, somebody's personal experiences and rumours on the one hand, and fantasy motifs and episodes of migratory legends on the other hand.

As of geocaching, a folklorist faces the activity that brings together words and deeds previously framed otherwise in out-of-game reality: the idea of treasure hunting, the category of play as special practice, versatile information-technology use, community-shaping and a sense of belonging into a hobby group as well as shared representation of the practice on the participative web and both online and offline interaction of participants, if not to talk about the places,

items and situations pulled into the game constantly. Inasmuch as we deal with the tradition-creating phenomenon and the group of people involved, the ongoing process can be interpreted as a kind of expressive behaviour approachable from the folkloristic perspective. This means careful gathering and inspection of data related to the investigable content, i.e. answering several what, how and for whom questions. So much attention to the research procedure is given because I have been criticised in choosing an unclear addressee for my interpretation: it's not about folklore, it's about leisure studies or research of information society. However, as was already said: inasmuch as a group of people (i.e. folk) is involved who repeatedly perform the specially focused form of action – in the present case, playing (geocaching) – a folklorist might join and highlight the process through a folklore lens.

Accordingly, at first I will observe, in brief, the categorisation of geocaching. Thereafter, based on works of classical ludology, the events taking place and components employed in geocaching are related to the features of play. Linking general characterisation with the example of the particular locative game would bring to the fore changes happening in performative genres.

A Game, Hobby, Entertainment, and/or Recreation?

I would not hesitate to classify geocaching (geopeitus) as play. However, the ubiquity of the activity seems to influence the way it is realised and framed by different people: thinking and talking about the thing, whether it is called a pastime, interpreted as an example of another hobby or characterised as a kind of practice. Again, at first sight, high-tech hide-and-seek really does not demonstrate a connection to the folklore-creating processes or folklore genres either. If the individual framework of interpretation will support considering the occurrence of play, it is easy to see the relation. At the same time, play as such can certainly be, and in fact is, a mode of entertainment and a hobby categorisable as a specific practice. It appears that we have a handful of partly overlapping, partly differing concepts referred to above which are relevant enough to describe play in general and geocaching in particular.

What a folklorist does at first is to find out where the phenomenon under study is situated in a previously functioning cultural genre system and whether the new or seemingly new process will change the situation. Accordingly, geocaching is categorised as play, the ludic features of which will deserve further consideration.

As early as in 1977, in connection with growing interest toward performative forms in folkloristics, Roger Abrahams elaborated the theory of enactment genres that considers performances, games, rituals, festivities and parties. According to him, "all enactments are drawn, to some degree, from everyday life and yet set apart from it" (1977: 94). His reasoning awakens attention and can be helpful for geocaching research because he posed the question about the relationship between real experiences and their counterparts in one or another type of enactment (ibid.: 88) – the issue has risen again in relation to the present-day ludification of culture. The researchers of locative and/or mixed-reality games as well as anthropologists observing life in digital worlds focus on how players (and/or virtual world residents) switch between play (a sort of enactment in Abrahams's sense) and non-play, between online versus offline actions, and at the same time pay attention to the character of experiences gained. The ubiquitous computing enables variable involvement in different kinds of enactment to a great extent, thus – as Michiel de Lange, the researcher of new media states – changing "the temporal segmentation between normalcy and being at play" (2009: 13–14). It appears as if physical world experiences were a part of game world experiences. At the same time, the experiences gained during "more highly focussed, framed and stylized" acts (see Abrahams 1977: 85) performed online and offline take effect in the physical world. The special sensation of being engaged arises not only during the actual seeking for geocaches or communicating online with fellow geocachers, as is expected, but at arbitrary moments in the course of daily events and under conditions not explicitly connected to the hobby. The ongoing nature of locative play makes Michiel de Lange ask whether Bliin – his relatively geocaching-like target of research – can be considered a game at all (see Lange 2009: 59).

The topic of categorisation is sometimes also discussed in the inner circle of hobbyists via forums. For example, in May 2005, there was a quite heated discussion on this issue on an international forum (see:

Is Geocaching A … sport). Some qualified the business as a sport, while others considered it to be a game and type of recreation. Various characteristics were posted to prove the validity of either one or the other option. Geocacher Glenn shared his Google search result, which elicited about sixty definitions or definition-like descriptions about what geocaching is or is not. The arguments regarding competition versus co-operation, compulsive involvement versus now and then geocaching, difficult-to-find versus easy-to-find caches, desire to get a high score versus to be cheerful whatever you gain were brought out by posters. The discussion was held despite the fact that in 2002, the acronym RASH (recreational activity/sport/hobby) (see RASH) was already discussed in a similar debate, in which some posters responded positively, while the rest heatedly opposed the acronym. Many contributors valuated the game just because of the fun it created. Interestingly, a couple of years ago the activity was explicitly defined as a game: "Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices." At the present time, according to geocaching.com, the characterisation of the activity looks somewhat different: "Geocaching is an outdoor adventure where players use free mobile app or a GPS devise to find cleverly hidden containers around the world."

Researchers with different backgrounds employ the same categories in order to describe the occurrence, using the notions "game" and "hobby", as well as the more general "activity". Lasse Gram-Hansen's approach emphasises the playfulness of geocaching most intentionally, demonstrating the persuasive perspective of the hobby for those who take pleasure in such a symbiosis of discovery and technology (Gram-Hansen 2009). Francis Hawley, who investigates geocaching as a sport, lists all mentioned aspects at a time: "Geocaching is a sport, a hobby, a pastime and a recreational activity, which requires, in order to find 'caches', data obtained by a computer, as well as maps and a GPS-receiver" and which in a few cases can even involve "features of planned deception and criminal-like behaviour" (Hawley 2010: 225, 227; 233–234). Heather Skinner, Gareth White and David Sarpong, experts of business management and marketing, in the marketing organisation's annual meeting report focusing mainly on the use of mobile technology in tourism, classify geocaching as a social practice. On the basis of the featured articles on the practice theory of the late 20th and early 21st cen-

turies, they discuss geocaching as a complex form of social activity, within which people, through the support of agreed upon rules, make joint efforts for common action; shape internal goods, which cannot be obtained in any other way than by participating in this practice (for example, energy spent on both hiding and seeking as well as experienced emotions); possess specific skills and expertise; and deal with the history of their undertaking (Sarpong & White & Skinner 2012: 2–3). Being, on the one hand, a social practice, they regard geocaching as a high-tech version of a treasure hunt, a sport and a pastime (ibid.: 1).

It appears that geocaching moves conceptually in the semantic field of a number of practices. One aspect is the use of appropriate notions in accordance with descriptive language chosen for cultural analysis of a new, ongoing phenomenon. At the same time, words employed for categorisation should reveal the essence of the activity under discussion. The category that is decided on to classify geocaching creates an effect on understanding what is actually going on. Linking the occurrence with several sorts of human deeds, for example, identifying geocaching as a high-tech game and treasure hunt, recreation and leisure time, sport and hiking, time waster and addiction, etc. as was referred to, we seemingly pull together meanings of different realms of actuality to reach intelligibility. Thus, for the sake of intelligibility, the novel form of behaviour will be adapted to existing categories which, enriched by new content, also begin to change.

Where is the Playground of Geocaching?

The next part of the paper is dedicated to the juxtaposition of play features defined by Johan Huizinga with those occurring in geocaching. Particular aspects, characteristics and routines can be detected in geocaching which distinguish it from other games and make the hobby special. The factors to be highlighted are boundaries between play and non-play as well as between play and ordinary life, including geocaching mood and mystery, the players' subordinatedness to the rules and, simultaneously, manifestation of free will.



Figure 1. The hobby leads us to places we might never visit otherwise. In location of the "Batjuška 4". Photo by Mare Kalda (2016).

Among the formal features of the activity, Johan Huizinga (2003 [1938]: 18–19) accentuated the spatial limits of play also common to ritual:

> *All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the consecrated spot cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i.e., forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart.*[4]

But where is the playground geocaching is carried out? Do we, by hiding and seeking containers outdoors and reporting online via

cache listings create a temporary world within the ordinary world to participate in the shared hobby? For example, Minhao Zeng from the University of Alberta, discussing the high degree of connectedness of geocaching to the material world in comparison with other locative media applications, regards websites as merely a repertoire of treasure information and a forum for exchanging caching experiences, while real playgrounds for geocachers are offline, in the real world (2011: 115). In a sense, the online environment of geocaching.com also functions as a place that must be visited for the sake of the game, although this site (as well as geopeitus.ee and other similar sites) certainly does not serve as an online world in the same way as, for example, the Sims or Second Life do. Nevertheless, it can be perceived just about as well as the well-appointed virtual home by the people who participate in the game. It holds true especially for the Estonian website, which in comparison with the information platform common to the whole international geocaching community, provides a place for more intimate communication and longer stories related to the game. It is both customary to log on to share experiences after a caching tour as well as necessary to log on before caching to gather relevant information for the next search.

While geocaching, increasingly more locations on physical land become seemingly recolonised gradually, which results in changing an otherwise irrelevant space into related places of interest for the playing community. The question is whether to interpret the locations for hiding caches as signs of distinguishable play space or just as concealed places in the ordinary world, not necessarily a special playing field marked off beforehand for game-related actions. At any rate, we can see an example of the playful use of real places, somewhat different from how traditional games are played, that the game pieces are meant to stay in one place in geocaching. While in traditional games game pieces are usually gathered up or left aside after the game is over, geocaching continues seemingly without cease thanks to always available containers to be searched for. Thus, the hobby seemingly redefines the otherwise non-game reality, which somehow recalls a digital map, enriched by the new data layer(s).

For pursuing their hobby, geocachers are eager to take advantage of mobile computing that enables – guided by the GPS signal on



Figure 2. An example of a cache hidden in Läänemaa county, Estonia. Photo by Mare Kalda (2016).

the screen of smartphone – the location of a particular cache to be found, and during the process of seeking, retrieve additional data online. Thus, we can process geocaching information as well as be connected with fellow hobbyists whenever and wherever we want: either immediately during the search or in between other tasks not connected to geocaching at all.

Under these conditions the whole world becomes a playground for geocaching – an idea already articulated by researchers and players themselves. According to investigators of contemporary gaming culture Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros and Annika Waern (2009), the spatial expansion into the real world characterises all pervasive games, geocaching included. The others debate the formation of hybrid space, which comes into being by blending the physical and the digital. Thus, the focus lies not so much in defining the

geocaching playground but in the novel spatial layer generated by the games merging physical and digital components. Michiel de Lange brilliantly makes the situation intelligible: hybridity is not a mix of digital and physical nor virtual and real but "a specific composite in which the distinct elements are still visible and their differences are important and meaningful to make it into a play-like activity" (de Lange 2009: 63). His interpretation of Bliin also holds true with regard to geocaching: "enjoyable exploring of our surroundings while we are on the move, feeling of perceiving at least two different realms at the same time, fun derived from doing something out of the ordinary in previously impossible way" (op. cit.: 64). He argues, however, that boundaries still exist when play goes on in hybrid space in spite of the obvious expansion of spatial, temporal and social limits occurring in locative games.

Ordinary or Extraordinary Action?

As was already said, beyond the playground problem is one about the differentiation between play and non-play. According to classical ludology, "a game is not ordinary or real life but rather stepping out of it into the sphere of temporary activity, which has its own acting direction" (Huizinga 2003: 17). In the 1970s, Roger Abrahams, describing the theory of enactment, characterised all performative genres, games included, as being unreal yet more real at the same time – everyday motifs and scenes are brought into a new perspective that results in seeming detachment from ordinarity (Abrahams 1977: 80–81, 84). In contrast, Richard Schechner, the performance studies theorist, maintains the idea of continuity instead of separateness, and suggests thinking of play not as the interruption of ordinary life but as "the underlying, always there continuum of experience" (1993: 42).

Inasmuch as geocaching is a game, the universal qualities of the game matter for its explanation or, at least, deserve closer investigation. In what sense is the hobby set apart from everyday life is therefore the question that makes sense to ask as well as whether the experience of involvement into geocaching bears resemblance to similar experience gained from being active, for example, in any virtual world. Virtuality in the form of fantasies and dreams, games, fiction, art and rituals has actually always been part of the human

experience. Digital virtuality just creates the feeling of more active participation in it, or using the words said by gamers cited in the paper by Jaron Harambam, Stef Aupers and Dick Houtman (2011: 306): within virtual game worlds they can do at least as much as in real life and often even more.

Huizinga's idea of stepping out into a temporary activity while playing doesn't actually mean rigid detachment from reality. At the same time, acting in digital virtuality has increasingly become part of our mundane reality. For example, looking from the viewpoint of a hard-core gamer, playing video game is part of ordinary life, not a stylised behaviour in exultation. Even if the impression of being somewhere else occurs, the locative play seemingly directs the players back or closer toward the mundane reality. Furthermore, different games are stepping out into the special activity somewhat differently – role playing demands more focused behaviour from the people engaged in it. Pervasive games tend to blur the otherwise perceivable border between real life and play; the game invades everyday life, and everyday life invades the game, as Jaakko Stenros, Annika Waern and Markus Montola (2012: 341) affirm.

We can follow yet another interesting situation: geocachers will view the world through the game prism, and the experiences gained while geocaching will become a significant part of their life experience. Being engaged in the game due to its bodiliness and performativity potentially also influences the being in the ordinary world. Interestingly, the contacts and clashes between the game situations and the "outside" world are constantly experienced by the hobbyists as well as discussed and represented afterwards using all communicative means of geocaching, including face-to-face talk in different contexts, forum conversations and log entries in the cache listings.

The example below illustrates specifically how the hobby intersects with everyday affairs. A seeker of the Vandi cache tells about the search in July 2009:

> *I put a pot with potatoes on the cooker and switched on the computer. What? someone has hidden a cache in Tartu? In order to confirm the legend that if anyone places a cache in Tartu, the first-to-find would be Aints or Lassie, I set out. When I arrived, I found a geomuggle there who thought he*

> *was fishing. I thought differently and soon he was forced to leave for better fishing places. There was all kind of rubbish on the bridge from yesterday's bridge-opening event. And, one by one, citizens will come here to see and take pictures of the new bridge for at least a couple of months. I got back home, and the potatoes were ready. It was a nice morning FTF.* (see Vandi 2009)

The question of manipulation with objects in geocaching can have specific interpretative value because of the symbolic or reversed reference to the actual conditions of hiding wealth. In the former context the hiding locations are created for playing purposes; in the latter case it is done under particular circumstances – in fear of war (political) or as a deposit (economic motif). In this regard, contrary to the idea of blurring the boundary between play and non-play, we face the obvious difference between the categories mentioned above. The similarity of two hiding procedures lays in the fact that in both cases there are artefacts deliberately placed into concealment. Real treasures are supposed to have real material value, while geocaches may seem worthless as well as senseless for the out-of-game reality. At the same time, the caches are still concrete items which at first sight might be regarded as objects of desire passionately searched for. Though there are trackable items specially rated in the game and people who collect the trinkets they get while pursuing their hobby, the thing itself is not nearly as valued as is finding it; rather we can see a strange ambiguity in this regard. Usually the seekers don't trade at all; they just make an entry in the logbook by adding the coded message TNLN (to be read as "Took Nothing, Left Nothing"). On one hand, participants don't give special status to hidden objects, which preserves their usuality. On the other hand, hide-and-seek is certainly another kind of action compared with searching for something without purpose for play. Play can be a special action using ordinary things, or vice versa: ordinary action with extraordinary objects.

As early as in the 1960s semiotician Yuri Lotman presented the highly relevant train of thought concerning the double-faced essence of play: "Play is the simultaneous realization of practical and conventional behaviour…. The ability to play means mastering such twofold behaviour" (Lotman 2011 [1967]: 254). Recently, in

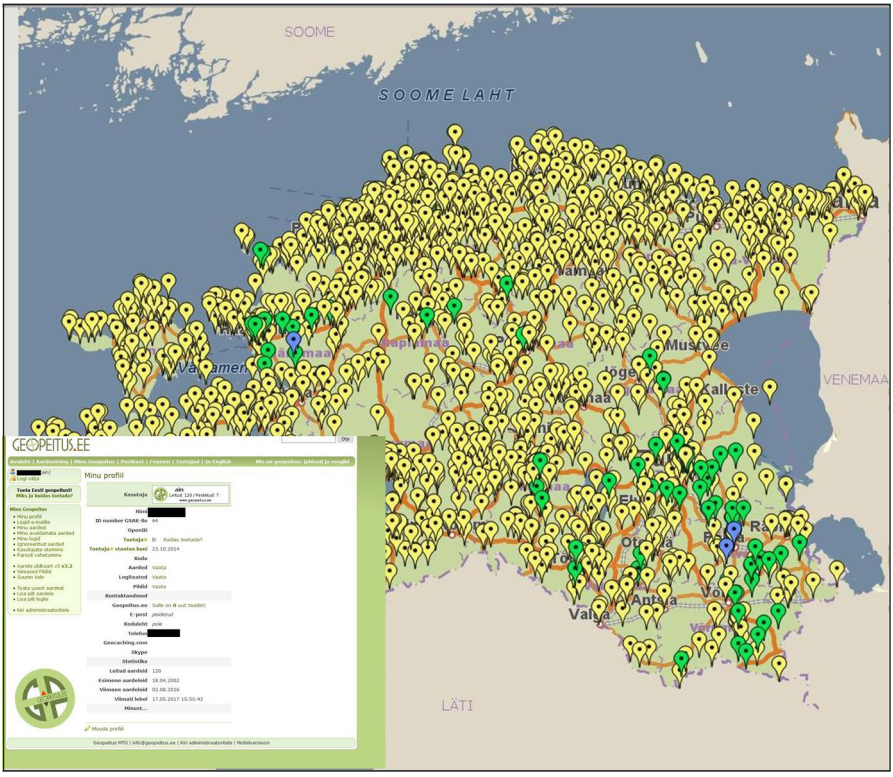


Figure 3. A personal "treasure map" generated by the program, and the profile of a geocacher. The profile can be seen by fellow hobbyists while logged in. A screenshot of geopeitus.ee on May 2, 2017.

2013 Valerie Frissen et al. reached an almost similar conclusion, discussing how a player simultaneously moves in the ordinary world and in the play world while being aware of the simultaneousness of both worlds (Frissen & de Mul & Raessens 2013: 81). Thus, the play as the activity in spite of, or rather due to, its own acting direction should fit well into non-play, depending of course on the nature of the particular game currently played. It appears that locative games like geocaching are played greatly in a non-play-like way, slightly modifying otherwise practical behaviour. In this regard,

many usual, in other contexts non-play activities are carried out while geocaching: we have to explore several places, to drive and hike, to gather (and sometimes process) various information from all conceivable sources online and offline, to count and measure, to study pieces of history or botany (etc.), to take pictures and follow certain phenomena, to explore cities or the wild landscape and to develop a personal strategy and tactics or time management skills. Turned into play, the abovementioned aspects serve the interests of an attractive hobby, and, as a result, people can enjoy the experience of doing everyday businesses and play at the same time. Computing technology with its options and benefits helps to enrich both behavioural realms pulled into geocaching and create the feeling of engagement into an integral mode of being through it.

In reflecting on the essence of play, theorists and/or gamers have addressed the distinction between work and play as another contrast to deal with. In the 21st century play is not treated as something unproductive, done for fun, or pure waste by default, even more: in certain contexts it just doesn't make sense to regard work as serious and play as unserious (see Malaby 2007: 208). All the geocaching-related tasks, except perhaps the seeking act itself, prove to be very work-like. As stated, more than creating a special realm out of everyday routines, play enables the augmentation and expansion of the experience gained by people involved. Of course, we cannot omit the similarity factor characteristic to play – in that sense, geocaching is like work, a simulation of data processing and their employment for the exploration of surroundings.

But does the hobby relate to the real job of participants and if yes, in what way? After all several, if not all, aspects of the game are represented in geocaching discussion forums and sometimes casually in cache listings, where the allocation of time to the hobby and the necessary tasks and activities is revealed. Discussing the issue, I can draw on the remarks of geocachers as well as on some community studies in which the relationship between play and work in hobbyists' time schedules was investigated. Although today the distinction between work and leisure is blurred (see, for example, Malaby 2009) and playfulness intrudes into occupational activities, we might assume that geocaching is a leisure time undertaking. Geocachers tend to have good skills in time management and can



Figure 4. There are several types of geocaches in the game. An example of presentation of a puzzle cache information in the cache listing. A screenshot of the Geotänava cache on May 2, 2017.

exploit these abilities in order to excel both in work duties and in their hobby.[5] The timing of the geocaching activities of German-speaking geocachers was investigated by Daniel Telaar in his *Diplomarbeit* (Telaar 2007: 63–64, 80). Nearly 90% of respondents preferred weekends for caching, but despite that, approximately 70% of interviewees confirmed sometimes having also participated in this activity on other days of the week (7.8% never were). A proper geocacher, to a greater or lesser extent, pursues his/her hobby on

vacation time and tends to spend free moments to locate nearby caches while on business trips (ibid.: 64). Of course, we have no data for how much time someone spends online communicating in discussion forums, preparing for the next find or every now and then keeping up with events. As a considerable number of gamers are engaged in information technology in a wider sense, they face opportunities (and temptations, see Hawley 2010: 235) to flexibly join their profession and geocaching.

However, in light of these factors, we have to consider the potential opposition between the ordinarity of work and the distinctiveness of geocaching, which would support the Huizinga's idea about apartness of play from everyday routines. This assertion is based on participants' reflections posted in discussion forums, for example, in a forum thread entitled "Why Do You Geocache?" (see http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/index.php?showtopic=230444). A person under the username Lornix lists on January 28, 2010 his motives, among which we can find the opportunity "to forget the high-stress job if even for a couple of hours" – the assertion is supported later by a couple of other users and repeated in other contexts by other geocachers.

A Kind of Secret Society?

According to Huizinga, social groupings formed during the game will surround themselves with secrecy and begin to stress their difference from the rest of the world by certain means (Huizinga 2003 [1938]: 22). Since information necessary for playing is available on the public website(s), there might be no mystery around the hobby. Geocaching is everything but a secret society, which could accept invited and controlled members with special rituals. Nonetheless, the category of secrecy arises and is employed in hobbyists' self-reflection in order to explain what people are engaged in. Dana and Paul Gillin, being interested persons by themselves, refer to the words expressed in a forum by a user: "It's also kind of a secret society, operating under the noses of the general public" (Gillin & Gillin 2010: 3). Computer scientist Risto Sarvas, one of the first analysts of geocaching, emphasises perception of a common secret – "treasures" are actually obtainable by almost everyone who wants to do so, yet those who know the secret belong to the

community of geocachers (2002: 10; see also Neustaedter & Tang & Judge 2010: 1758). Thus, the knowing of what is actually going on distinguishes the playing community from the non-playing persons, called geomuggles in group terms (compare *mugu* in Estonian).

One thing is to keep the actions secret from passers-by. In the era of geocaching, people are used to working in crowded places without attracting undue attention.[6] Strategies for how to be discreet during the search are repeatedly discussed in forum posts as well as cache logs, where some related stories illustrating the case are provided. Let's have a look, for example, at the cache hidden in the small town of Viljandi in Estonia. Twenty logs among more than 200 entries on the webpage of *Üllatus* ('Surprise') include hints to problems muggles met near the location of the geocache. The tiny square was often said to be too crowded for proper seeking and the geocaching teams had spent a lot of time just waiting for other people to leave. A geocacher under the username Silja wrote in July 2012:

> *A muggle living in the same street came to have a look at what people were doing under the same tree all the time. As it was raining, we could say we were seeking shelter from the rain, and showed the children where gnomes could hide in the summer.* (see Üllatus)

Silja's story reveals that communication in casual interactions sometimes arise between geocachers and non-geocachers. The interaction with the non-playing audience does not necessarily mean lying or inventing quick explanations to conceal the real motives of an outing. It can happen that geocaching needs to be introduced to a local habitant, especially for non-urban caches, where under certain conditions honesty ought to be the best choice. As a result, the former muggle, perhaps without becoming an active geocacher himself or herself, could take the role of a voluntary guide for the next comer. This kind of geocaching tour "guided" by a local knower is described by Miki (see Sakala) who tells in his log how he and his fellow geocachers were wandering around without results until a local lady, tired of the dog's barking came and suggested that they find the sought-for box from under the stone. A special kind of interaction is revealed in the next example in which the activity couldn't have been kept secret. The geocacher Valap shares his

experience gained by hiding his next geocache in Pärnu, Estonia, in November 2012:

> *While I was hiding a cache* [---]*, I was caught in act by an unregistered user – the Estonian police. A vigilant citizen had informed them that a middle-aged man was trying to commit suicide on one of the bridges in Pärnu. My behaviour must have left such an impression on the bystander. However, due to the fact that the cache was rated 1.0 for terrain and 2.0 for difficulty, it would have been quite difficult or even impossible to inflict any self-harm – deliberate or otherwise – at the given location. Fortunately, the beautiful policewoman (I wonder since when do we have models working for the police force?) knew about geocaching as such. Moreover, once she had even participated in the search process of the cache of "Pärnu pier" (which I still have not found). I confessed honestly that I did not have any self-destructive plans. Quite the contrary. As I am especially interested in reading the logs about finding this particular cache, I would not do it in the near future either. After my documents had been checked, we departed as friends. The police refused to leave an FTF (First to Find) in the logbook. So, if you are seeking this cache, you can wave to the blue-and-white car passing by – these are friends. Well, this is how we live here in Pärnu.* (see Teolt tabatud)

Though the request of not attracting undue attention is not explicitly formulated in the description of the hobby, geocachers follow it by default and such a warning is given in the rules of the local Estonian *geopeitus*. When the container has been placed in a crowded area, the cache owner adds a "muggle alert" to the cache's description for fellow seekers to keep in mind. Sometimes it is recommended to play the shoelace trick in which the geocacher stoops, pretending to tie their shoelace in order to get the cache out and put it back again – the method that works when it is necessary to crouch down to take something that has been placed low on the ground. Over the years this trick has become a formulaic concept in the practice of geocaching. Geocachers with kids employ another mode of pretence, since children supposedly help to cover the real intentions of what is actually going on. For example, the geocacher Karamellielli remarked in December, 2009: "Luckily I had enough children,

trollers and other people with me, so we made a nice barricade near the cache and had no troubles with muggles at all. TFTC!" (see Old Thomas/Vana Toomas).

One reason to avoid too much publicity is simply to protect the game facilities from getting lost or plundered. Unfortunately, some containers get vandalised by destructively minded occasional finders. A cache from the start-up of the game included, among little toys and trinkets, some currency valid at that time. Money was taken and someone had scrawled into the logbook a very out-of-game-sounding request to put in more money next time. On the other hand, in certain cases casual finders will join or even play along: we can find supportive and interested entries in log books written by non-geocachers in the same way the true geocachers do.

A mystery also matters inside the game: to solve mysteries is really challenging for people involved. For an individual gamer, every particular geocache will remain an unsolved riddle until it is found, i.e. we can speak about kinds of secret tasks given to members of the community. Paradoxically, we are in on a secret anyone could uncover, and in spite of that, it still creates a feeling of mystery.

The attention by the community to the secrecy in deeds and words around the shared hobby indicates that the play feature under discussion really does work with regard to geocaching and influences the hobby group's identity. The data processing aspect of geocaching is mostly carried out in the digital environment and enables, in a sense, strategic planning to be developed. Yet the secret-keeping side of the game is a tactical skill: depending on the context, everyone can play their own way, choosing the right moment and actions for a real search.

Players' Mindset and the Geocaching Mood

A peculiar feature of play highlighted by Huizinga constitutes the players' mindset that, of course, relates to the factors discussed above. Even if we agree that the special play world is actually not set up for geocaching and play cannot be differentiated from ordinarity, participants confess to being in the geocaching mood. It's certainly something to perceive rather than express verbally, but like all aspects of the game revealed by players, a few hints

are given. For example, the seekers of the hard-to-find *Giprodornii* cache in North Estonia report in January, 2014:

> *In a good geocaching mood, suitably dressed, decided to score and take the next cache. No problems with finding, however – unexpected phobia occurred when near, so we were in a hurry to log the find. :) We did it this way: the biggest geocacher among us went up. Probably not the smartest choice, although the surroundings were scrubbed clean by the former finders and our geocaching clothing did not get dirty at all. Nice climbing, Thank you! TNLN!* (see Giprodornii)

In a sense, the play mood is quite easy to get into due to the play drive we have naturally (see Frissen & de Mul & Raessens 2013: 78 and references), or because of our readiness to behave playfully in certain situations. The question is if the geocacher's state of mind resembles the state of mind which arises while playing any other game. Unlike other reflections about the game often commented about on the webpages of the hobby, this side of the phenomenon tends to remain somewhat hidden and will need additional inquiry. Of course, what has been said about games in general works for geocaching as well. The game designer and researcher Gonzalo Frasca holds that a particular state of mind is actually a factor to turn the otherwise non-play activity into a playful one (Frasca 2007: 51). Accordingly, actions performed by the participants for pursuing their hobby also generate a geocaching mood, the special feeling of engagement that inspires people to carry on with the play. The shared nature of the hobby also helps maintain the proper geocaching attitude: people want to act like others in the community. They feel obliged to share their experiences and thoughts connected to the common action, and at the same time wish to be familiar with the deeds and thoughts of fellow hobbyists. By hiding new caches and seeking old ones, participants can mutually create various opportunities for each other to obtain geocaching experiences and feelings that arouse emotions and in that way enhance their mood.

Let's have a look, for example, at the statement by [vaimar] related via the webpage of *We will not meet on closed-off roads any more*-cache:

> *I love geocaching because of caches like that, and because of location and story of the cache. If* [irokas] *will create your mood* [i.e. irokas has prepared the cache hide]*, you have to be ready for a fanny adventure, or racking your brains or both.* (see Suletud teedel ---)

Thus, the feeling of engagement and pleasure create the geocacher's mindset more generally. At the same time, participating in caching, people fall (and sometimes do not) into a heightened mood every time again. According to logs, not being in the be proper mood could result in *Did Not Find*. This happens when the seemingly out-of-game circumstances (phone call coming from the non-geocaching world, tired participants, bad weather conditions, etc.) intrude into the hobby-related actions. But the truth is that people tend to relate almost all kinds of details and matters with the actions they are involved in, making them playful and/or rhetorically marking part of the game. In that sense, any weather will be good geocaching weather (even the rainiest), humans and creatures met during the search will function as treasure guardians from the perspective of the geocachers and experiences gained while hiding and seeking caches are considered geocaching experiences. Such interpretations work due to the geocaching mindset people have. Discussing the matter, I am not going to identify the mood with the mindset because you may not be in a geocaching mood but still have a geocaching mindset. Therefore, being in an inappropriate mood is not necessarily an explanation for *Did Not Find*. At the same time, a negative result could influence the way hobbyists view the particular situation. An unsuccessful search is also a part of the game and is acknowledged by players as a specific aspect of the geocaching experience.

The topic of the geocaching mindset actualises in-game reflection and influences the gaming behaviour, sometimes intruding into the non-geocaching lives of hobbyists. For example, people even recall having geocaching dreams. On the one hand, this phenomenon reflects very personal mental experiences regarded as relevant but not too intimate to be shared within gaming community. On the other hand, the stories geocachers tell about their dreams also have a place in hobby group folklore (see, for example, http://www.geocaching.com/blog/2015/03/5-geocaching-dreams-and-how-to-

interpret-them/, or Estonian forum discussion including the funny list of features referring to geocaching addiction, http://www.geopeitus.ee/foorum/read.php?1,8028,page=1).

In Conclusion

The playground of geocaching extends all over the world, and the chosen sites are "marked" by special treasure boxes with their virtual representations in the virtual universe. In geocaching, the actions can be distinguished little or relatively little from ordinary life; game stages are dispersed between non-game activities, although they can be performed as serial missions. The framework of the game, which suggests an idea of activeness projecting from other activities, can still be deduced – it is marked by the preparation for the immediate search by way of a virtual platform (downloading of data, finding the coordinates for the location, solving riddles) and this is pointed out in the physical world by the actions carried out for the sake of geocaching. The participants realise that they are engaged consciously and voluntarily with something that they create and maintain with joint effort and they appreciate it. Perceiving and experiencing the environment happens individually and may be different for different people. There is also a high degree of freedom in how the situations and settings are recognised, named, interpreted and valued by those who become involved in them. According to Roger Abrahams, we may refer to the level of participation in events in our lives in terms of the relative presence of rituals, performances, games or festivities without classifying every case as a performance, a game or a festivity (Abrahams 1977: 108). Consequently, geocaching can be regarded as a kind of metagame, as within its framework several facets of the play manifest themselves – both performative and representational elements. At the same time, it incorporates the features of previously known traditional games, the motifs of cultural expressions and episodes from popular culture. Geocaching enables shared contributions and rivalry, provides peaceful entertainment, requires hard work to solve riddles and involves risk, or means just secure walking. Practicing the hobby, geocachers acquire physical and mental experiences by which they enrich their sense of being in the world. At the same time, geocaching and other games like it tend to blur



Figure 5. The final steps of the cache search (the MASS cache in Läänemaa, Estonia, archived for now). Photo by Ain Kalda (2004).

the definitions of play and gaming, and change the ways in which human activities are categorised and understood. Named processes influence the thoughts people think and the deeds they do.

Notes

[1] The webpage geocaching.com run by Groundspeak, Inc., functions as an online information centre for the whole geocacher community. It provides the history of geocaching, explains the rules and instructions of the game and contains cache listings where hobbyists log their visits and share the game-related experiences. Forums structured by various topics, in which participants actively discuss the game and even tell stories, can be found at http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/.

[2] For example, the media theorists and game researchers Joos Raessens and Valerie Frissen together with philosopher Jos de Mul emphasise the difference between old and new phenomena by "playing" with the concept Homo ludens 1.0, considering playfulness in a historical perspective versus Homo ludens 2.0, which describes the playful dimension of information and communication technologies (Frissen & de Mul & Raessens 2013: 75–76).

[3] To be correct, his characterisation of Bliin should be read partly conversely in order to fit geocaching's description: if by Bliin "the digital space is augmented by movements in the physical world, and real world information and experiences are … made accessible via the web interface … running on the mobile phone" (de Lange 2009: 61), in geocaching the physical world is augmented by actions performed in the digital space.

[4] The passage has been repeatedly quoted and elaborated in game studies. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmermann (2004) conditionally expanded the notion of the magic circle to embrace all playgrounds. This induced a plethora of imprecise references, as if Huizinga had claimed that play happens in a magic circle strictly separated from the ordinary world. Montola, Stenros and Waern (2009: 7–8) as well as Cristopher Moore (2011: 373, 377) point out that Huizinga's book has been read superficially or even misinterpreted.

[5] Francis Hawley still openly assumes from the content of caching logs and the frequency of finds during weekdays, how "many of cachers use work time, equipment, and vehicles, for the furtherance of their pastime" (Hawley 2010: 235).

[6] Several inventive examples from geocaching around the world are provided by Gillin & Gillin (see 2010: 86–87).

Acknowledgement

The article was supported by institutional research grant IUT22-5 from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research and by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies).

References

Abrahams, Roger 1977. Toward an Enactment-Centered Theory of Folklore. William Bascom (ed.). *Frontiers of Folklore*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 79–120.

Aarseth, Espen 2003. *Playing research: Methodological approaches to game analysis*. Paper presented at the 5th Digital Arts & Culture Conference, Melbourne, Australia.
http://www.cs.uu.nl/docs/vakken/vw/literature/02.GameApproaches2.pdf (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Anderson, Leon 2006. Analytic Autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (4), pp. 373–395,
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0891241605280449.

Blank, Trevor 2009. Toward a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Folklore and the Internet. *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World*. USU Press Publications, 35. Logan: Utah University Press, pp. 1–20.

Boellstorff, Tom 2008. *Coming of Age in Second Life. An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human.* Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

De Lange, Michiel 2009. From always on to always there: Locative media as Playful Technologies. A. de Souza e Silva and D. M. Sutko (eds.). *Digital cityscapes: merging digital and urban playspaces*. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 55–70.

Farman, Jason 2009. *Locative Life: Geocaching, Mobile Gaming, and Embodiment*. Proceedings of the Digital Arts and Culture Conference, University of California, Irvine 2009 [Online].
http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/507938rr (Accessed on Apr 5, 2010).

Frasca, Gonzalo 2007. *Play the Message. Play, Game and Videogame Rhetoric*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Copenhagen: IT University of Copenhagen.
http://www.powerfulrobot.com/Frasca_Play_the_Message_PhD.pdf (Accessed on June 14, 2015).

Frissen, Valerie & de Mul, Jos & Raessens, Joost 2013. Homo ludens 2.0: Play, Media and Identity. Judith Thissen, Robert Zwijnenberg and Kitty Zijlmans (eds.). *Contemporary Culture. New Directions in Art and Humanities Research.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 75–92.
http://www.demul.nl/nl/publicaties/publicaties-per-categorie/boekbijdragen/item/1635-homo-ludens-2-0-play,-media-and-identity

Georges, Robert 1972. Recreations and Games. *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 173–190.

Gillin, Dana & Gillin, Paul 2010. *The Joy of Geocaching: How to Find Health, Happiness and Creative Energy Through a Worldwide Treasure Hunt*. Linden Publishing.

Gram-Hansen, Lasse 2009. Geocaching in a Persuasive Perspective. *Persuasive'09. Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Persuasive Technology, April 26–29, Claremont, California*. ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, 350, pp. 1–8.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1541948.1541993

Harambam, Jaron & Aupers, Stef & Houtman, Dick 2011. Game over? Negotiating modern capitalism in virtual game worlds. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14 (3), pp. 299–319.

Hawley, Francis Frederik 2010. Agon and Ecstasy: Transgression, Transformation, and Transcendence in Competitive Geocaching. *Deviant Behavior*, 31 (3), pp. 225–250.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639620902855024.

Huizinga, Johan 2003 [1938]. *Mängiv inimene. Kultuuri mänguelemendi määratlemise katse* [Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture]. Tallinn: Varrak.

Ihamäki, Pirita Johanna 2012. Geocaching: Interactive Communication Channels Around the Game. *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture*, 6 (1), pp. 133–152.

Jennings, Ken 2011. *Maphead: charting the wide, weird world of geography wonks*. New York: Scribner Book Company.

Juul, Jesper 2009. *Casual revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kalda, Mare 2007. Muistendid uues kontekstis – geopeituses [Integration of Legends into Geocaching]. Mare Kõiva (comp.). *Paar sammukest XXIII. Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi aastaraamat*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi teaduskirjastus, pp. 93–116.
http://www.folklore.ee/rl/pubte/ee/araamat/2007/4marekalda.pdf
(Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Kalmre, Eda 2005. Laste- ja noortepärimus [Children and Youth Lore]. Merili Metsvahi & Ülo Valk (comps.). *Regivärsist netinaljadeni. Sissejuhatus rahvaluulesse*. Tallinn: Koolibri, pp. 163–179.

Krikmann, Arvo 2005. Naljandid ja anekdoodid [Anecdotes and Jokes]. Merili Metsavahi & Ülo Valk (comps.). *Regivärsist netinaljadeni: Sissejuhatus rahvaluulesse*. Tallinn: Koolibri, pp. 63–77.

Lotman, Juri 2011 [1967]. The place of art among other modelling systems. *Sign Systems Studies*, 39 (2–4), pp. 249–270.

Malaby, Thomas 2007. Beyond Play. A New Approach to Games. *Games and Culture*, 2 (2), pp. 95–113.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1555412007299434.

McNeill, Lynne 2007. Portable Places: Serial Collaboration and the Creation of a New Sense of Place. *Western Folklore*, 66 (3/4), pp. 281–300.

Montola, Markus & Stenros, Jaakko & Waern, Annika 2009. *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design*. Amsterdam: Morgan Kaufmann.

Moore, Christopher 2011. The Magic Circle and the Mobility of Play. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 17 (4), pp. 373–387.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1354856511414350.

Neustaedter, Carman & Tang, Anthony & Judge, Tejinder 2010. The Role of Community and Groupware in Geocache Creation and Maintenance. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 10–15 April 2010, Atlanta, Georgia*. New York, pp. 1757–1766.
http://hcitang.org/papers/2010-chi2010-geocaching.pdf
http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1753326.1753590

O'Hara, Kenton 2008. Understanding Geocaching Practices and Motivations. *Proceedings of the 26th Annual SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, April 5–10, 2008, Florence, Italy*, pp. 1177–1186.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1357054.1357239

Salen, Katie & Zimmerman, Eric 2004. *Rules of Play. Game Design Fundamentals*. London: MIT Press.

Sarpong, David & White, Gareth & Skinner, Heather 2012. Harnessing the Technology Wave for Tourism: drawing on the community of practice of Human Search Engines. *Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference, July 2012: 'Marketing: Catch the Technology Wave'. University of Southampton's School of Management*, [1–6].
http://marketing.conference-services.net/resources/327/2958/pdf/AM2012_0129_paper.pdf (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Stenros, Jaakko & Waern Annika & Montola, Markus 2012. Studying the Elusive Experience in Pervasive Games. *Simulation & Gaming*, 43 (3), pp. 339–355.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1046878111422532

Zeng, Minhao 2011. Examining Geocaching Practices through a Mobility Lens. Twelfth Annual Convention, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, June 23–26, 2011. *Proceedings of the Media Ecology Association*, 12, pp. 113–122.
http://media-ecology.org/publications/MEA_proceedings/v12/3_examining.pdf

Telaar, Daniel 2007. *Geocaching: Eine kontextuelle Untersuchung der deutschsprahigen Geocaching-Community*. Diplomarbeit im Studiengang Geographie, Münster: Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Institut für Geographie.
http://www.geocache.ch/daten/DA-Geocaching-2007-Telaar.pdf (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Veenpere, Enn 2002. Aasta geopeitust Eestis [A Year of Geocaching in Estonia]. *Arvutimaailm,* 1, pp. 41–43.
http://vana.geopeitus.ee/lisad/geopeitus.html (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

References to the webpages of geocaches and discussion forums introduced above (year denotes the year of hiding)

Aastapäeva 2002. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/44 (Accessed on May 27, 2016.)

Batjuška 4 2010. https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC2EAEV_batjuska-4 (Accessed on May 2, 2017).

Geotänava 2017. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/4332 from geopeitus.ee (Accessed on May 2, 2017).

Giprodornii 2013. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/2608 (Accessed on July 14, 2016).

HE-aare 2001. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/1 (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Is Geocaching A … sport? 2005. http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/index.php?showtopic=97773&st=0&p=1473997&fromsearch=1&#entry1473997 (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

MASS 2004. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/228 (Accessed on May 2, 2017).

"RASH" = The official "Geocaching Activity" acronym is now "RASH" 2002. http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/inex.php?showtopic=56489 (Accessed on May 27, 2013).

Sakala 2003. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/129 (Accessed on July 13, 2016).

Suletud teedel… 2013. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/2729 (Accessed on May 27, 2016).

Teolt tabatud 2005. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/329 (Accessed on May 27, 2016).

Vandi 2009. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/1131 (Accessed on May 27, 2016).

Vana Toomas 2009. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/1194 and http://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC1YN9H_old-thomas-vana-toomas (Accessed on March 16, 2016).

Üllatus 2005. http://www.geopeitus.ee/aare/342 (Accessed on May 27, 2016).