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Foreword

In 2010, we marked the 100th anniversary of Professor Pranė Dundulienė (1910–1991), the renowned Lithuanian ethnologist. On that occasion, the conference “Ethnology: History, Present and Future” was organized in Vilnius and Švenčionys. Aiming to recognize the contribution of Pranė Dundulienė, participants at the conference analysed not only her works, but also their significance to the science of ethnology. These events prompted the introspective look in the present thematic issue of our journal: “Lithuanian Ethnology: Past, Present and Future”, encompassing the history of Lithuanian ethnology, the institutionalization and changing range of the science, as well as the prospects of ethnology in the European context.

The introductory article of this volume briefly surveys the road ethnology has traversed in Lithuania: the history of ethnology in the country, its institutionalization and its range, and suggests that the formation of the science of ethnology in Lithuania was “running behind”, compared to both the European context and that of the Baltic area. During the period of Soviet occupation, this delay posed additional challenges to Lithuanian ethnologists who were still in the process of founding a science, were preparing the first scholarly publication of a generalizing character, “Patterns of Lithuanian Ethnography” (1964), and were taking part in the preparation of atlases of the Baltic States and other international projects. After 1990, ethnology, in its own right, became a science independent of history. However, despite the new possibilities and achievements, in practice, it has remained the “little science” with big institutionalization problems, which, incidentally, have affected other countries as well. Thus, it is worth remembering Máirėad Nic Craith’s words that certain disciplines, such as history and literature, are easily defined, sustain their conceptual integrity in the perspective of time, and are institutionally privileged. The fate of interdisciplinary sciences is much more difficult.

How to deal with these problems? Ullrich Kockel’s paper offers a solution: give ethnology prominence as the applied regional science, and it will become “a certain conscience of science in a specific situation”. Vytis Čiubrinkas also distinguishes the significance of ethnology as applied science. He sees the prospects of ethnology in close cooperation with socio-cultural anthropology, continuing the work started. The correlation of the sciences in the stage of science formation is also analysed by Auksuolė Čepaitienė. The paper, taking into account her conference report, focuses on a little analysed period, covering the late 18th and the early 19th centuries.

Three more authors dwell on the problems related to the institutionalization of the science. Marleen Nõmmela explains the beginnings of the Estonian National Museum, as the leading centre of ethnology, and sketches the work of the famous ethnologist Ferdinand Linnus. The formation of the science in Poland followed another direction: the birth of the science is coupled with the establishment of the first department of ethnology at the university in Lviv (Ukraine). For more information on the above, and further development of Polish ethnology, readers can refer to W. Kuligowski's paper.

Irena Regina Merkienė unveils yet another little-known chapter in Lithuanian ethnology and analyses the first years of Soviet occupation, marked by the establishment of the Institute of Ethnology at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. The author draws our attention to the significance of the Institute in helping retain the scholarly potential of Lithuanian ethnology.

A few contributions, a little more distant from the theme of the issue, are also included in the journal. The paper by John Helsoot is related to winter calendar festivals, a topic thoroughly analysed by P. Dundulienė and other Lithuanian ethnologists (a few dissertations are dedicated to winter rituals). The paper, analyzing the problem of the ritual and social interaction, was prepared on the basis of a presentation at the Dundulienė conference. The topic of fieldwork, analyzed by anthropologist Vita Petrušauskaitė, is of great importance to ethnology, and meaningfully continues the tradition of enriching our journal with contributions of similar character.

Traditionally, we supplement our volume with reviews. The catalogue introducing Lithuanian studies in the collections of the Russian Museum of Ethnography in Saint Petersburg compiled by Olga Fišman, Birutė Kulnytė and Elvyda Lazauskaitė (*reviewed by Ž. Šaknys*) is closely interrelated with the topic that prevails in this issue: the history of ethnology. The journal also includes reviews of the collection of articles compiled by A. Čepaitienė (*reviewed by Rima Praspaliauskienė*), as well as the books by Jonas Mardosa (*reviewed by I. R. Merkienė*), U. Kockel (*reviewed by Neringa Klumbytė*), Aušra Zabielenė (*reviewed by Rimantas Sliužinskas*), Gaila Kirdienė (*reviewed by Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė*), and Martynas and Marija Purviniai (*reviewed by Skaidrė Urbonienė*). The conferences referred to in this issue of the journal have already become the history of ethnology and socio-cultural anthropology.

Sad news reached us as the publication was finalized. Jonas Balys, the ambassador of Lithuanian ethnology in the US, has died. We are determined to draw inspiration from his strength, unwearied diligence and dedication. Rita Repšienė briefly reviews Jonas Balys' work.