

# KONFERENCIJŲ APŽVALGOS



## The 2nd National Conference of Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions *Interdisciplinary Studies of Religions in Lithuania: Problems and Tendencies*

In the middle of autumn, on October 26, 2012, the 2nd National conference in memoriam to Gintaras Beresnevičius was held at the Senate Hall of Vilnius University.

After the opening session and the first discussion session assoc. prof. dr. Stanislovas Juknevičius from Lithuanian Culture Research Institute analysed four main functions of religions in his speech. As he mentioned, the importance and role of therapy, morality, worldview and ontology in the lives of individual people depend first of all on the collective complex to which they belong as well as on the specific unconscious powers their egos are subjected to.

Another presenter Ieva Rutė from Vilnius University discussed the way religious studies should be performed, analysing one of the most critical approaches to Religious studies, given by Russell McCutcheon. Using textual analysis, she tried to show which transformations in the field of Religious studies are mainly criticized and why, what problems he offers to rise, and what methods he offers to use.

The coffee break was followed by six the second session, Hermeneutics and Textualism of Religions (chair S. Juknevičius) and six presentations, the first of which made by prof. dr. Naglis Kardelis from Vilnius University overviewed some philological and philosophical aspects of Gods, Theophanies and Divine Wisdom in the Homeric Hymns.

Assoc. prof. dr. Agnė Budriūnaitė representing Vytautas Magnus University discussed *The Non-Religious Non-Experience: Absolute Oneness in Plotinus and Zhuangzi*.

The main topic of the presentation made by Algimantas Litvinas (Vilnius University) was to which extent the chapters on the main duties of a Muslim really deal with the Law and what portion of them is devoted to the mystical understanding of the Law, as well as to what extent Hujviri the Sufi may be deemed to be an archetypal Muslim schola.

Assoc. prof. dr. Aušra Pažėraitė from Vilnius University in her presentation provided detailed analysis of the Ps 47 (46) based on researches of historians reconstructing the history of Ancient Israel and formation of the Bible, proposing an argument for hypothesis, according to which no nation that has produced the Bible, but the Bible – “the nation”.

Dr. Dainius Razauskas from the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore revealed the relations between Lithuanians and their God.

The last presentation before the lunch break was made by Maritana Larbi from Vilnius University who reported on German scientist's A. Neuwirth research project, which was held in Berlin – Corpus Coranicum, and was aimed at collecting and catalogueing prevailing resources revealing the origin of Quaran's religios

historical context as well as represent literary analysis of these resources.

III session. Historical Transformations and Comparative Studies of Religions (chair A. Pažeraitė)

Assoc. prof. dr. Andrius Sprindžiūnas from Mykolas Römeris University started the IIIrd session with his presentation on postmodern reception of sacrilege in Europe.

His presentation was followed by Vilnius University representative prof. dr. Audrius Beinorius who compared Buddhist and Hindu Cosmological Prophecies of Decline and provided fragments from early Buddhist and Hindu Sanskrit sources related to the coming of a new age and appearance of the future Saviour (Hindu Kalki Avatara and Buddha Maitreya).

His colleague from the same university Vladimir Korobov reviewed Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese Statehood in the Beginning of the 21st Century while Gintaras Degėsys explicated on the analysis of Sub Saharan traditional sculptures, invoking concrete examples of Black Africa's sculptures, positions of Western africanists, thoughts of African peoples and linguistic moments.

Dr. Rasa Pranskevičiūtė from Vytautas Magnus University brought the members of the conference to the analysis of the peculiarities and expressions of nature-based spirituality movements in a post-Soviet society, discussing New Age spirituality Anastasia movement, messianic and new revelation Vissarion movement and contemporary paganism (native faith) Romuva movement.

Assoc. prof. dr. Donatas Brandišauskas (Vilnius University) continued the Post-Soviet topic – his presentation, based on two years fieldwork research in rural areas

of Buriatia and Zabaikal region, introduced how one Orochen-Evenki family strives to continue their practices of subsistence in the post-Soviet environment in Zabaikale.

Anthropology was the main topic of another presenter of the conference – Ingo W. Schröder, Vytautas Magnus University, University of Marburg, who presented some reflections on the role of Catholicism in the complex political field of Lithuania (and the postsocialist elsewhere).

After a short break the conference continued the topic of religion in Lithuania – Ina Samuilova from Vytautas Magnus University discussed the peculiarities of the process of religious socialization in contemporary Lithuania, which turned out to be the following – internalization of religious values, knowledge and traditions is more practical in family whereas this process of internalization is more theoretical in educational institutions.

At the end of the conference there were three presentations discussing Eastern religions made: Diana Ažušilytė from Vilnius University discussed another social group in Lithuania – Buddhist communities, performing sociological analysis of this religion; Kristina Garalytė from Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius University discussed the Social Power Relations in Contemporary Hinduism and Assoc. prof. dr. Milda Ališauskienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius University, discussed Contemporary Hinduism and Religious Field of Lithuania.

The conference was closed with a discussion “Interdisciplinary Studies of Religions in Lithuania: What Are the Perspectives?”, participated by M. Ališauskienė, D. Brandišauskas, N. Kardelis, Š. Liekis, A. Pažeraitė.

AISTĖ ČERNIAUSKĖ