

This is a very special issue. After more than two decades of publishing, Letonica no. 43 is the journal's first digitally issued, English-only, and completely Open-Access volume. While scientific excellence has always been a guiding value of Letonica's publishing policy, this triple development—although still experimental—marks a new stage towards broadening the international reach of the journal, addressing wider audiences, and contributing to the latest ongoing scholarly discussions. The same orientation has also guided the choice of the theme of this special issue in the traditional sense of the term: the conjunction of two great fields in social and human sciences, namely, post-socialism and post-colonialism. In our view, post-socialism stands for a critical look at the socialist past of culture and knowledge production in ex-Socialist Bloc countries informed by new sources and theories. Post-colonialism is one of the most promising of those theories, exercising its theoretical apparatus in the post-socialism sphere in recent years. This is our tribute to a rapidly growing post-socialism/colonialism area of scientific inquiry in the Baltics and in the wider region touched by the Soviet colonial history.

The springboard for this undertaking was a combination of intellectual curiosity, overlapping research interests, and shared efforts to highlight new perspectives in the disciplinary history of Latvian folkloristics by scholars and students working in two ongoing research projects at the University of Latvia Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art (ILFA). *New Approaches to the History of Latvian Folkloristics* represents 13-months of teamwork funded by the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), while *ETNO-GRAPHICA* is a longer postdoctoral grant sponsored by the European Regional Development Fund (please see details on the cover). In their own right, both projects continue a decade of the Institute's dedication to mapping the twentieth-century disciplinary history of folkloristics in Latvia and beyond. But, more directly, we continue the research trajectory of *Latvian folkloristics* (1945–1985), another LCS-supported research project. The latter was concluded in 2020 with the international conference, “Socialist Folkloristics: A Disciplinary Heritage”, where some authors featured in this issue presented. We kindly invite you to watch the whole conference on our digital archive garamantas.lv *You Tube* channel.

The current issue opens with an article striking at the heart of the subject matter—it is an inquiry into the benefits and risks of applying post-colonial thinking to the post-socialist disciplinary history of folkloristics. Toms Ķencis examines various components of the post-colonial theory, especially its most recent strain—Baltic post-colonialism—in contrast with Sadhana Naithani's pioneering project of global colonial folkloristics of the British Empire. Ending with an open discussion on contradictions, the article holds nine theses upon which the research of disciplinary history in ex-Socialist Bloc could be built from a contemporary post-colonial perspective.

Pavlo Artymyshyn and Roman Holyk look at the history of socialist folkloristics and ethnography in Soviet Ukraine, which shares notable similarities with the Baltic states. However, a large part of Ukraine was under Soviet rule already in the 1920s, while the Baltic states enjoyed two decades of independence between the world wars. As that was a formative period of folkloristics as an academic discipline, further developments and disciplinary legacies

diverge too. Since the 1920s, Ukrainian folklorists had been tasked with researching and spreading new Soviet folklore, while the discipline was oriented towards preserving national peasant cultural heritage. This contradiction made the disciplinary endeavours confined between a sharp opposition of “one’s own” and “foreign” categories and texts.

The following two articles give intriguing insights into the everyday life of two research institutions. In the Soviet sciences, the discipline of ethnology operated under the label of ethnography. Anete Karlson and Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova explore the development of the discipline of ethnography in Soviet Latvia. Authors have analyzed the process of carrying out fieldwork expeditions, with a particular focus on fieldwork diaries, which were compulsory to the participants of fieldwork until 1960. The diaries represent a unique look at source materials showing the ideological pressure on the discipline as well as revealing the difficulties of the everyday reality of Soviet life—such practical problems as lack of transportation, inaccessibility of accommodation, shortage of decent meals—and also give insights into the wounded landscape of the countryside with traumatized social relations after the Soviet repressions, deportations, and forced immigration.

Rita Grīnvalde, in her contribution, explores the history of Latvian folkloristics in the Brezhnev era with a focus on the Institute of Language and Literature at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences, the host of Archives of Latvian Folklore and the leading research hub of the discipline. Following the method of workplace ethnography, the article is built upon a close examination of an internal do-it-yourself magazine, *Vārds un Darbs* (*Word and Work*), published by the employees of the Institute.

In addition to functioning as a lived experience as well as the object of an academic discipline, folklore pierces through different layers of the social fabric and triggers imagination in broad realms of society, including applied arts. The concluding article by Rita Legčļina-Broka explores folklore motifs in textile art during the period of Late Socialism. This was the time when a global folklore revival coincided with the flourishing of Latvian textile art. While exploring the examples of folk songs, fairy tales, mythological concepts and annual customs visualized in tapestries, the article pays special attention to Rūdolfs Heimrāts, who was the leader of Latvian textile art at that time and inspired much of this creative direction.