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BILATERIAN SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION ON THE STUDY OF LITHUANIAN AND UKRAINIAN ETHNOGRAPHIC TEXTILE

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The article is devoted to the analysis the investigation of Lithuanian and Ukrainian ethnographic textiles within the framework of the bilaterian interdisciplinary R&D projects «Ornamentation of West Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Textile: Universal and Unique Parameters» (2018—2019) and «Unique Technologies of Ethnographic Textile: Experience of Preservation in Western Ukraine and Lithuania» (2022—2023), implemented by scientists of Kaunas University of Technology and the Ethnology Institute of the NAS of Ukraine. The main attention is paid to the tasks that scientists solved within the framework of the projects, the study stages and the prospects for using the results obtained in accordance with public demands formed as a result of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Ethnographic textiles were considered at several levels: as a source of information about the common historical past of Lithuania and Ukraine; as an origin of ancient textile techniques preservation; as a carrier of universal and unique ornamental schemes; and as evidence of practical experience that can be used in modern creative practice.

Lithuanian and Ukrainian scholars in 2017—2025 formed a joint archive of ethnographic textile based on the processed collections of 5 Lithuanian and 10 Ukrainian museums, wrote and published more than 20 scientific articles, 2 of which were in a publication indexed in the international database Web of Science, participated in 14 bilateral seminars, and presented research results at 25 conferences in Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Croatia, and Ukraine.

In addition to scientific results, the scientists actively popularized the results of their investigation in popular science articles, in particular, on the websites of Kaunas University of Technology, the Ethnology Institute of the NAS of Ukraine, and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; held meetings with scientists who were not involved in the projects, artisans, museum staff, and other interested persons; prepared and opened the final exhibition «Weave, sister, towels» in the Open Air Museum of Lithuania, which presented Lithuanian and Ukrainian folk towels from different ethnographic regions of both countries; participated in the documentary film creation about towels of Lithuanians and Ukrainians and activities within the framework of bilateral projects.

The cooperation of Lithuanian and Ukrainian scientists in the study of ethnographic textiles during 2017—2025 proved the effectiveness of international interdisciplinary projects in the field of studying traditional art, which contribute to expanding the geographical boundaries of research and popularizing the scientific achievements of scientists at home and abroad.

Keywords: Lithuania, Ukraine, research, ethnographic textiles, ornament, weaving, braiding.



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ДВОСТОРОННЯ НАУКОВА СПІВПРАЦЯ З ВИВЧЕННЯ ЛИТОВСЬКОГО ТА УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ЕТНОГРАФІЧНОГО ТЕКСТИЛЮ

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Етнографічний текстиль — це багатогранне мистецьке явище, цінне надбання культури європейських народів. Воно свідчить про тривалі взаємозв'язки між сусідніми етносами, про спільність історичного розвитку, про суспільно-політичні та особливості господарювання, а також віддзеркалює естетичні потреби людей, які користувалися тканими виробами. Саме тому *об'єктом* міжнародного міждисциплінарного дослідження литовських та українських вчених став етнографічний текстиль, його технічні та орнаментальні характеристики.

Мета статті: висвітлити особливості двосторонньої співпраці вчених Каунаського технологічного університету та Інституту народознавства НАН України у вивченні етнографічного текстилю, виділити основні етапи реалізації НДР, способи презентації отриманих результатів та перспективи їхнього практичного використання відповідно до суспільно-політичних запитів сьогодення. *Основними методами* в написанні статті стали структуризація, екстраполяція та інтерполяція, які також відіграли ключову роль у вивченні взаємозв'язків між українськими та литовськими текстильними виробами.

Дослідження етнографічного текстилю України та Литви вчені обох країн проводили в межах двох міжнародних міждисциплінарних науково-дослідних проєктів «Орнаментика етнографічного текстилю Західної України та Литви: універсальні й унікальні параметри» (2018—2019) та «Унікальні технології етнографічного текстилю: досвід збереження в Західній Україні та Литві» (2022—2023). В роботі науковців виділяємо декілька етапів, пов'язаних зі збором інформації, її опрацюванням, інтерпретацією, презентацією та пошуками шляхів практичного використання, одним з яких стало відкриття виставки литовських та українських рушників «Тчи, сестричко, рушники» в Музеї народного побуту Литви (2023). В межах дослідження вчені опрацювали пам'ятки у п'яти литовських та 10 українських музеях, понад 20 наукових статей, дві з яких — у виданні, індексованому в міжнародній базі даних Web of Science, взяли участь у 14 двосторонніх семінарах, презентували результати дослідження на 25 конференціях в Литві, Польщі, Латвії, Хорватії та Україні.

Співпраця литовських та українських вчених у дослідженні етнографічного текстилю протягом 2017—2025 рр. довела ефективність міжнародних міждисциплінарних проєктів у галузі вивчення традиційного мистецтва, які сприяють розширенню географічних меж досліджень та популяризації наукового доробку вчених на батьківщині та за кордоном.

Ключові слова: Литва, Україна, дослідження, етнографічний текстиль, орнамент, ткацтво, плетіння.

Introduction. The study of ethnographic textiles as an important component of the cultural heritage of Ukrainians and Lithuanians is of particular importance for the present. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 2014, has necessitated the search for sources of stability of society and the state, as well as factors that consolidate society during existential challenges. The textile cultural heritage of both states is one of such consolidating factors, as it is part of the cultural memory of both peoples. It testifies to stable interstate historical ties and development within a single European cultural space.

During 2017—2025, scientists from Kaunas University of Technology and the Ethnology Institute of the NAS of Ukraine conducted research on various aspects of traditional textiles of both countries within the framework of the bilaterian interdisciplinary R&D projects «Ornamentation of West Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Textile: Universal and Unique Parameters» (2018—2019)¹ (ill. 1) and «Unique Technologies of Ethnographic Textile: Experience of Preservation in Western Ukraine and Lithuania» (2022—2023)² (ill. 2).

¹ Lithuanian team members: project leader, doctor of technical sciences, associate professor Eglė Kumpikaitė; doctor in technical science, researcher Daiva Milašienė; doctor of technical sciences, lector Žaneta Rukuižienė; postdoctoral of scientific guidance Ginta Laureckienė; postdoctoral of scientific guidance Indrė Tautkutė-Stankuvienė (all from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Design Department of Materials Engineering of Kaunas University of Technology); ethnographer, senior officer Erika Nenartavičiūtė from Open Air Museum of Lithuania. Ukrainian team members: project leader, doctor in art studies, professor, leading scholar Olena Nykorak; Ph.D. in art studies, senior scholar and the head of department Ludmyla Herus; Ph.D. in art studies, senior scholar Olena Fedorchuk; Ph.D. in art studies, scholar Olena Kozakevych, Ph.D. in art studies, postdoctoral Oleh Bolyuk; junior scholar Tetiana Kutsyr (all from the Folk Art Department of Ethnology Institute of NAS of Ukraine).

² Lithuanian team members: project leader, doctor of technical sciences, associate professor Eglė Kumpikaitė; doctor in technical science, researcher Daiva Milašienė; doctor of technical sciences, engineer of the laboratory center Žaneta Rukuižienė; doctoral student Olga Belukhina (all from the Department of Production Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Design of Kaunas University of Technology); ethnographer, senior scholar Erika Nenartavičiūtė from the Open Air Museum of Lithuania. Ukrainian team members: project leader, doctor in art studies, professor, leading scholar Olena Nykorak; Ph.D. in art studies, senior scholar and the head of department Ludmyla Herus; Ph.D.

In the time, scientists published more than 20 articles in Ukrainian and foreign publications, the analysis of which was used to write the article. We distinguished some publications groups during this period. The main attention of scientists was focused on covering the work stages and the results obtained during meetings in Lithuania and Ukraine in the first of them [1—4]. The second group is quantitatively larger. It includes publications presenting a comparative analysis of similar groups of Lithuanian and Ukrainian textile items: bedspreads [5—7], towels [8—11], sashes [12—13], shirts [14], aprons [15]. Most attention in the articles is paid to the similarities and differences in the technical and artistic characteristics of the items and their ornamental decoration. In addition, the researchers paid attention to the traditions of both peoples associated with the use of ethnographic textiles, in particular, sashes [12] and towels. Folks from Lithuania and Ukraine often used towels in many rituals, so the customs of their use were devoted to a separate article [16].

In addition to published materials, the authors also used project documentation, data collected during project implementation, photos, and videos, etc.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the results of implemented projects, to distinguish the main stages of the research conducted, and to outline the directions of future activities.

The main methods used in writing the article were structuring, extrapolation, and interpolation, which also played a key role in studying the relationships between Ukrainian and Lithuanian ethnographic textile items.

To achieve the goal, we distinguished several stages in the scientists' work during the implementation of projects: accumulation of information about ethnographic textiles through the study of literature, museum items, acquaintance with museum collections; study of techniques for making ethnographic textiles in Lithuania and Ukraine in the workshops of modern folk artisans of both countries; study of the collected database, analysis of the main parameters of textiles of both countries (physical, technical, artistic); presentation of the results of the work (speeches at conferences, seminars, publication of scientific and popular science articles, creation of a documentary film about Lithuanian and Ukrainian ethnograph-

in art studies, scholar Olena Kozakevych, Ph.D. in art studies, scholar Tetiana Kutsyr (all from the Folk Art Department of Ethnology Institute of NAS of Ukraine).

ic textiles, preparation and opening of an exhibition of Lithuanian and Ukrainian ethnographic textiles); development of methodological advice on intensifying the introduction of ancient unique technologies in the modern fabrics production; search for ways to continue research and implement the results obtained in accordance with the socio-political challenges caused by the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Results. In March 2017, cooperation began between the Department of Production Engineering of Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Design of Kaunas University of Technology and the Folk Art Department of the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. These departments have a long history in the folk art study.

Main part. The Department of Production Engineering of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Design of Kaunas University of Technology actively uses the knowledge gained from the Lithuanian textiles study in its study program. Professors of the department contribute to the creation of a database of acquired knowledge, the reconstruction of traditional Lithuanian items, the design of modern products based on Lithuanian traditions, and their popularization thanks to modern technologies. They also use the specialized software «Audiniai» and «Ornamentika» for the analysis and design of fabrics and ornaments, which were created in Kaunas University of Technology [11, p. 27].

The Folk Art Department of the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine affirms the historical continuity of the national essence of the development of the traditional culture of Ukrainians, in particular through a comprehensive presentation of the inexhaustible spectrum of folk art achievements [17, p. 1007]. The activities of the Department are aimed at objectively outlining its place and role in Ukrainian culture and the world civilization space, preserving and popularizing ethnic artistic achievements, and activating the artistic process in Ukraine [17, p. 1017—1018].

The scientific projects was headed by leading researchers of folk textiles from both countries. On the Lithuanian side, associate professor, Doctor Egle Kumpikaitė became the leader. She has worked with ethnographic textiles since 2007, and has experience in technical expertise, weaving techniques and structure analysis of folk textiles, creation of folk textile reconstructions, preparing scientific monographs, books, handbooks, scientific and



Ill. 1. Members of R&D project «Ornamentation of West Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Textile: Universal and Unique Parameters». Kaunas University of Technology. 2019. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 2. Members of R&D project «Unique Technologies of Ethnographic Textile: Experience of Preservation in Western Ukraine and Lithuania». Kaunas University of Technology. 2022. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 3. Leaders of the Projects Dr. Olena Nykorak and Dr. Egle Kumpikaitė. Rumšiškės. 2023. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 4. In the Kaunas Library. 2023. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 5. Work at the Folk Art Department of the Ethnology Institute of the NAS of Ukraine. Lviv. 2018. Photo by Žaneta Rukužiienė



Ill. 6. Olena Nykorak at a Lithuanian floor loom. Vilkauskis. 2023. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr

popular publications in the field of ethnographic textiles and folk costume, organizing of exhibitions and scientific events. The Ukrainian scientists group was headed by Olena Nykorak (ill. 3), Doctor in Art Studies, Professor, Leading Researcher in the Folk Art Department, who since 1979 has been working on researching the theory and history of Ukrainian folk and professional decorative art in general and traditional weaving in particular [18, p. 1039].

At the first stage of the study, given the limited knowledge about Ukrainian textiles in Lithuania and Lithuanian textiles in Ukraine, the authors reviewed Ukrainian and Lithuanian specialized thematic literature (ill. 4). In the process of implementing the first joint project, the scholars focused their attention on the selection and study of the most characteristic for the ethnographic regions of Western Ukraine (Polissia, Volyn, Opillia, Boiko, Pokuttia, Hutsul, and Bukovyna Regions) and Lithuania (Aukshtaitija, Žemaitija, Dzūkija, Suvalkija, Lithuania Minor) household and ceremonial items. The team worked in six museums in Lithuania³ and ten museums in Ukraine⁴ (ill. 5), studying the technical and ornamental features of Ukrainian and Lithuanian bedspreads and towels, to a lesser extent — pillowcases, tablecloths, as well as clothing items — shirts, aprons, and accessories to the outfit — sashes, coifs, «reshines», knitted socks, mittens, etc.

The result of empirical studies by Lithuanian and Ukrainian scholars of the R&D project was the Archive of Photographs of Ethnographic Textiles from Museum Collections of Lithuania and Ukraine, which the scientists actively used in the subsequent stages of their work.

Priority for the next project «Unique Technologies of Ethnographic Textile: Experience of Preservation in

³ Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Kretinga Museum, History Museum of Lithuania Minor, National Museum of Lithuania, Lithuanian Museum of Art, and National M.K. Čiurlionis Museum of Art.

⁴ Museum of Ethnography and Crafts of Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Klementii Sheptytskyi Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life, Andrey Sheptytskyi National Museum in Lviv, Ethnic Park Ladomyriia, National Museum of Hutsulshchyna & Pokuttia Folk Art, Kosiv Museum of Folk Art and Local Lore of the Hutsul Region, Ivano-Frankivsk Regional History Museum, Museums of Folk Architecture and Local Lore of Precarpathia, Volyn Regional History Museum, Ethnography Museum of Volhyn and Polissia Regions at Lesya Ukrainka National University

Western Ukraine and Lithuania» (2022—2023) was primarily the methodological continuation and deepening of the work carried out in 2017—2019 with the achievement of a new, qualitatively higher level, scientific results, generalizations of interdisciplinary research: art history, ethnology and technology. The project was aimed at solving scientific tasks, among which the most important were the identification of the most characteristic ancient universal and unique technologies for the manufacture of textile making in Ukraine and Lithuania and the study of common and distinctive features of technological parameters (raw materials and their processing, tools, techniques and manufacturing methods) of woven and sprang items typical of both countries.

The scientists participated in trainings on the production of Lithuanian sashes using traditional weaving techniques, in particular, weaving with cards, on a comb, on hand looms using the warp-picking technique, as well as sprang techniques, which is considered the oldest of the techniques for making textile items, in particular, braiding, which is included in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Lithuania. The scientists paid special attention to the method of manufacturing and decorating traditional aprons of Suvalkija, the colorful motifs of which were performed using the plain weave selection technique (ill. 6). In their decor, the lily motif was often used in various mirror-symmetrical and asymmetrical configurations [15, p. 1340—3141].

Due to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022), Lithuanian scientists were unable to visit Ukraine to study ancient weaving techniques in the workshops of local artisans. Ukrainian colleagues organized a remote study of the weaving technique of lizhnyks, as one of the most original in Ukraine (ill. 7). The technique remains in use among modern artisans of the Yavoriv center of the Hutsul region. In the same format, scientists studied the traditional Ukrainian technique of weaving sashes by floor loom, where the pattern is formed by crossing the weft threads with the threads of the warp.

The study and comparative analysis of Lithuanian and Ukrainian items made it possible to identify common and distinctive features in the decor of ethnographic textiles of Lithuania and Ukraine in terms of technological, typological, and artistic and stylistic parameters. In particular, it was found that most of the identified similarities are due to the commonality of weaving techniques.



Ill. 7. Egle Kumpikaitė near the lizhnyk and Ukrainian floor loom. Kosiv. 2019. Photo by Žaneta Rukuižienė



Ill. 8. Participants of the first joint working seminar. Lviv. 2018. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 9. In scientific seminar «Common and Unique Weaving Techniques for Making Traditional Clothing Components in Ukraine and Lithuania». Kaunas University of Technology. September 27, 2023. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr



Ill. 10. Participants in the opening the exhibition «Weave, Sister, Towels» at the Open Air Museum of Lithuania. June 6, 2023. Photo by Tetiana Kutsyr

In parallel with gathering information about ethnographic textiles, forming an Archive, and working with folk artisans, scholars held working and scientific seminars, spoke at conferences, and published their results in scientific articles [5—16]. The first scientific seminar in the frame of R&D project «Ornamentation of West Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Textile: Universal and Unique Parameters» took place at the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Lviv in 2018 (ill. 8). The participants clarified the goal and project objectives, planned joint work, and also listened to reports from Lithuanian colleagues about Kaunas University of Technology and the Open Air Museum of Lithuania.

The seminar «Western Ukrainian Ethnographic Textiles in the Scientific Study of the Lviv Art Critics School» was held in June 2018 in the Open Air Museum of Lithuania. Ukrainian scientists told Lithuanian listeners about the Ethnology Institute of the NAS of Ukraine research work (L. Herus), Western Ukrainian fabrics ornamentation (O. Nykorak), embroidery in the Western Ukrainian folk clothing (T. Kutsyr), features of knitted and lace items` technical ornament (O. Kozarevych), bead decorations in Ukrainian folk clothing

(O. Fedorchuk), and ornaments of woodcarving forms for printed fabrics (O. Boliuk).

One of the final stages of the project «Unique Technologies of Ethnographic Textile: Experience of Preservation in Western Ukraine and Lithuania» in 2023 was the open scientific seminar «Common and Unique Weaving Techniques for Making Traditional Clothing Components in Ukraine and Lithuania» at Kaunas University of Technology. Scholars from both countries shared the most significant results of their study with the audience there, including Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania (ill. 9).

After completing the scientific projects, the scientists continued processing the received materials, resulting in two articles published in a journal indexed in the Web of Science. In the first of them «Analysis of Western Ukrainian and Lithuanian Folk Towels» (2023) the team of authors presented a comparative study of Lithuanian and Ukrainian towels, in the second «Comparable Analysis of the Ornamentation of Folk Bedspreads of the Western Part of Ukraine and Lithuania» (2024) — bedspreads, supplemented with photographs taken during the study of museum collections in Lithuania and Ukraine, as well as schemes of woven patterns developed in the «Ornamentika» program.

In addition to scientific activities, the results of the projects were presented to the public at the exhibition of Lithuanian and Ukrainian traditional towels «Weave, sister, towels» at the Open Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės, which was opened on June 6, 2023 (ill. 10). It received significant public resonance, as it responded to the public's request for familiarity with Ukrainian culture in Lithuania, clearly demonstrated the long-standing cultural and scientific ties between the two states, and helped consolidate active local communities and Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homeland. Information about the exhibition was presented in many leading Lithuanian publications, in particular in «Kauno diena» [19].

The exhibition showcased a documentary film that bears the same name. Egle Kumpikaitė, Daiva Milašienė, Erika Nenartavičiūtė, Olena Nykorak, Ludmyla Herus, and Tetiana Kutcyr actively participated in it. The film was directed by Tadas Mikštavičius, who showed the stages of creation, the features of Lithuanian and Ukrainian woven towels, their significance in customs, as well as the work of Lithuanian and Ukrainian scientists from Kaunas University of Technology and the Institute of Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine on the study of these items.

Conclusion. Long-term cooperation between Lithuanian and Ukrainian scientists, the results of which were presented in the public national and global humanitarian space, provides the basis for a scientifically objective interpretation of the national specificity of Lithuanian and Ukrainian ethnographic textiles, the search for ways to popularize them, as well as the creation of modern competitive textile items based on ancient samples.

Continuing study into ethnographic textiles is important for Ukraine, as it contributes to maintaining the resilience of a society capable of resisting an aggressor during war, and also has potential significance for Lithuania, as it allows testing theoretical ideas related to the significance of textile cultural heritage for society during military confrontation and threats to its existence in practice. The influence of traditional art, in particular ethnographic textiles, on the awareness of ethnic identity, its consolidating influence, and its significance for preserving the collective memory of the people requires further study. Scientists from Kaunas University of Technology and the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine plan to consider the process-

es of ethnographic textiles development in Lithuania and Ukraine from the perspective of European integration, and the study of textile heritage in the context of the national symbols identify will contribute to strengthening the social resilience of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania, and may also help their integration into the social life of another country of forced residence.

In the long term, the results of international interdisciplinary projects implemented and planned for implementation by Lithuanian and Ukrainian scholars will contribute to the execution the «Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage», one of the points of which is the scientific study and popularization of intangible cultural heritage objects, strengthening cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania, visualization of national identity through textile practices, potentially contributing to increasing public awareness of both states about textile cultural heritage, and increasing the resilience of society to threats.

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