# 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG FOLKLORISTS
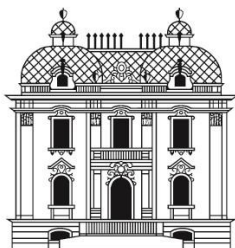


# THE INFORMANT IN FOLKLORE STUDIES

## JUNE 5-7, 2014 Vilnius, Lithuania

### CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

**The conference is supported by:**

LIETUVIŲ LITERATŪROS IR
TAUTOSAKOS INSTITUTAS

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# PARALLELS BETWEEN THE FOLKLORE COLLECTING METHODS OF THE 19th AND 21st CENTURY

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This paper is based on the observation that regarding the methods of collecting folklore i-tems folklorists from the 19th century were just as uncertain as the latest electronic folklore researchers are. The 'Budapest School of Narrative Research' is known for setting the per-sonality of the informant and the social context of folklore performance into the focus of scholarly interest since no earlier than the 1940s. Therfore the former collectors neglected studying data about informants and the surrounding in which an item of the oral literature was delivered. It is clear that exploring new research fields always raises questions about subjects and methods. Meeting the expectations of the Budapest School is quite a difficult task for today's folklorists. Altough being aware that contextual aspects of folklore also has to be taken into account during fieldwork in digital environment, there is hardly any (real and verifiable) information available about the actual social situation of the informants. Contextual information, if any, do not go beyond the name of the informant and his place - just like the folklore products recorded in the 19th century. Interesting contradiction that we have to face the lack of data about informants even in the case of so utterly personality-oriented social media like Facebook (also known as 'Ego' media). So what about the con-textual information in digital environment mainly on the Internet? How to go deeper into the meaning of modern folklore without detailed information about informants? How should we reinterpret the expectations of Budapest School?