

Neo-Paganism and New Religious Movements :: Class Six

Modern Baltic Paganism:

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Neo-Paganism and New Religious
Movements



Lithuanian *Romuva* Paganism

- This type of Paganism draws on old Lithuanian texts and myths, with old folk songs called *dainas* the most complete and important source of information.
- Lithuania was the last European kingdom to convert to Christianity in 1386, and much of the population remained Pagan, with result that folk culture of country retained many Pagan elements.
- *Romuva* is named for an ancient Pagan sanctuary in modern-day Kaliningrad
- Modern group first founded in Lithuania as a folklore organization in 1967, suppressed by Soviet government in 1970s and 1980s, became an openly religious association in 1989.
- The leaders of modern Romuva from its inception have been Jonas Trinkūnas and his wife Inija Trinkūnienė, both folk singers who also lead a pagan-oriented recording group called *Kulgrinda* (meaning “path”).
- Romuva groups are also found in the USA and Canada

Baltic States today



Baltic Region ~1200



Historical Overview of Lithuania

- Last country in Europe to become Christian (1386), hence, Lithuanians often called “the Last Pagans in Europe”
- In 13th to 14th centuries, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was one of the largest states in medieval Europe, through conquests or alliances with Belarus, Ukraine, and parts of Russia.
- In early 14th century, GDL was one of most diverse and tolerant states in Europe: Pagans, Christians, Jews and people of different nations co-existed.
- In 1387, joined with Poland to form the “Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” aka “The Republic of Two Nations,” one of the largest states in Europe until dissolution in 1795

Map of Baltic States in 14th Century showing German Crusader (Teutonic Knights) conquest of Latvia (Livonia).
Of the Baltic states and tribes, only Lithuania resists, forming union with Poland in 1386 which crushes the Germans in the Battle of Grünwald/Zalgiris in 1410.



Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 13th to 15th centuries, prior to union with Poland



Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 15th Century



Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 16th Century, one of the largest states in Europe



Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the “Republic of Two Nations,” in 17th century at height of power



Further facts about Lithuania

- Lithuania came under Russian rule from 1795- WW I, after which it was independent until WW II, when it was invaded and occupied by the USSR...then Nazi Germany...then the USSR again.
- During the Nazi period, Lithuania's sizable Jewish population was nearly wiped out.
- Under Soviet rule, thousands of Lithuanians were sent to their death in the Russian Gulags.
- Lithuania was the first Soviet Republic to declare independence, in 1990, setting off chain reaction and ending the USSR.
- Lithuania became a member of NATO and the European Union in 2004.

Baltic States today



Brief History of Riga, Latvia

- Prior to 11th century, Riga is village of Pagan Baltic Latvians on banks of Daugava (Dvina) where river meets Baltic Sea.
- From 12th century, German Christian Crusaders build up Riga as German-style castle and town. Native Latvians treated as inferior class.
- First record of Riga is from year 1200.
- In Middle Ages, Riga prospers as port city and East-West trading center, joins Hanseatic League of German trading cities.
- Prosperous Riga is conquered by Lithuania-Poland in 1581, Sweden in 1621, Russia in 1710.
- By 19th century, Riga is the 2nd largest city in the Russian Empire.

Later History of Riga & Latvia

- In 19th century, Riga is affected by new trend of nationalism, with rise of of Latvian Independence movement. New focus on Latvian folklore, mythology, culture.
- After WW I, Latvia becomes independent state 1918-1940.
- In 1940, USSR invades Latvia. Thousands of unenthusiastic Latvians are killed or deported to gulags.
- In 1941, Nazi Germany invades. Some Latvians greet Germans as liberators. Pro-Soviet Latvians are killed as are 70,000 Latvian Jews.
- In 1945, the Soviet army reconquers Latvia. Some Latvians greet Soviets as liberators. Pro-German Latvians are killed or deported to Gulags.
- In 1991, Latvia gains independence from USSR.

Baltic States today



St. Adalbert (956-997), Bishop of Prague who conducted missionary activity in Baltic Prussia.



- Adalbert was killed by native Balts for entering sacred Pagan groves.
- His fate illustrates how Baltic Pagans resisted Christianization for centuries.
- Eventually, Germanic Christian knights would invade and colonize area in the “Baltic Crusades,” lasting 1192-1410.
- Only Lithuania would resist and remain Pagan.

1236: The Battle of Saule



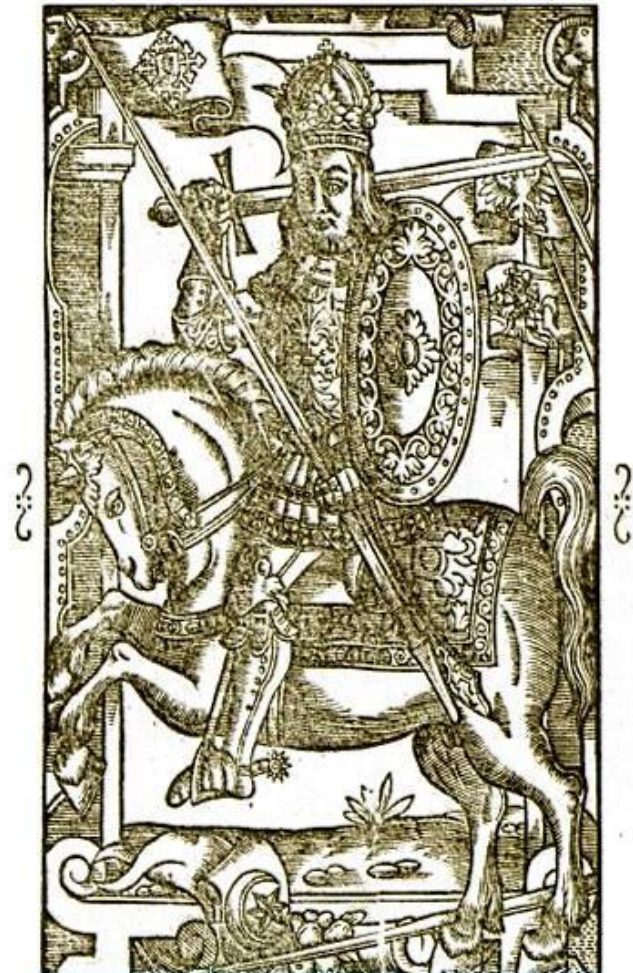
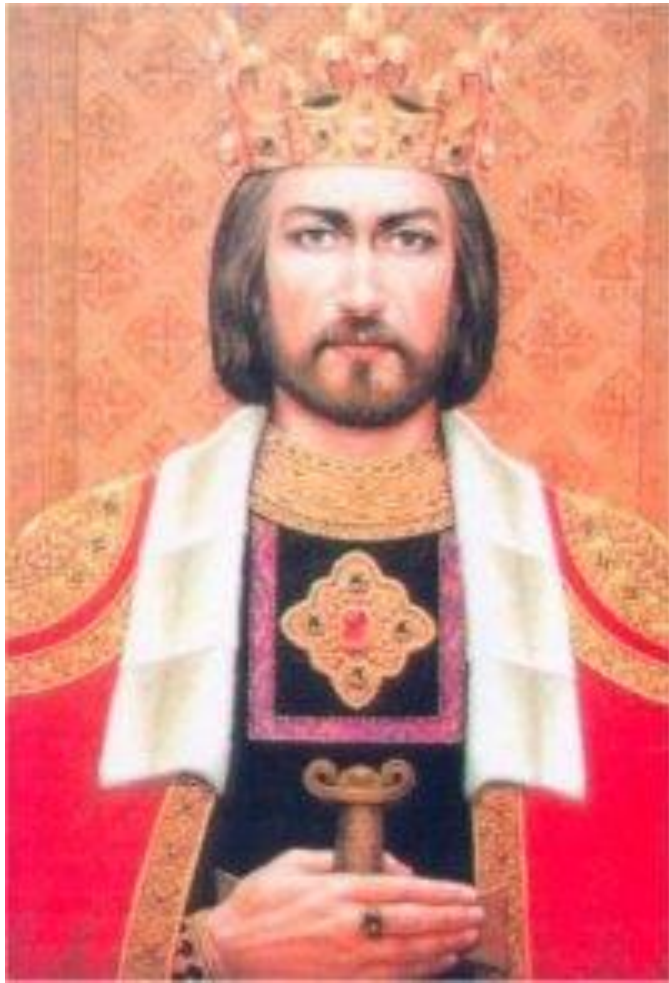
- In 1236, crusading German knights attempting to invade the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were crushed by Lithuanian forces in Saule, which would later become the Lithuanian city of Šiauliai.

National Museum of Lithuania in Vilnius, with statue of 13th century king, Mindaugas, who converted to Christianity and was murdered by his subjects, who refused to convert



King Mindaugas (~1203 -1263)

Due to his acceptance of Christianity, Mindaugas is beloved by modern Lithuanian Catholics; non-Christians appreciate his efforts to unify Lithuania



Monument to Mindaugas in front of the National Museum; Castle Hill in background



Reconstructed image of the first Cathedral, built by Mindaugas in mid-13th century, next to the oft-rebuilt Cathedral, as it is today



Grand Duke Gediminas:

remembered as a skillful and tolerant ruler

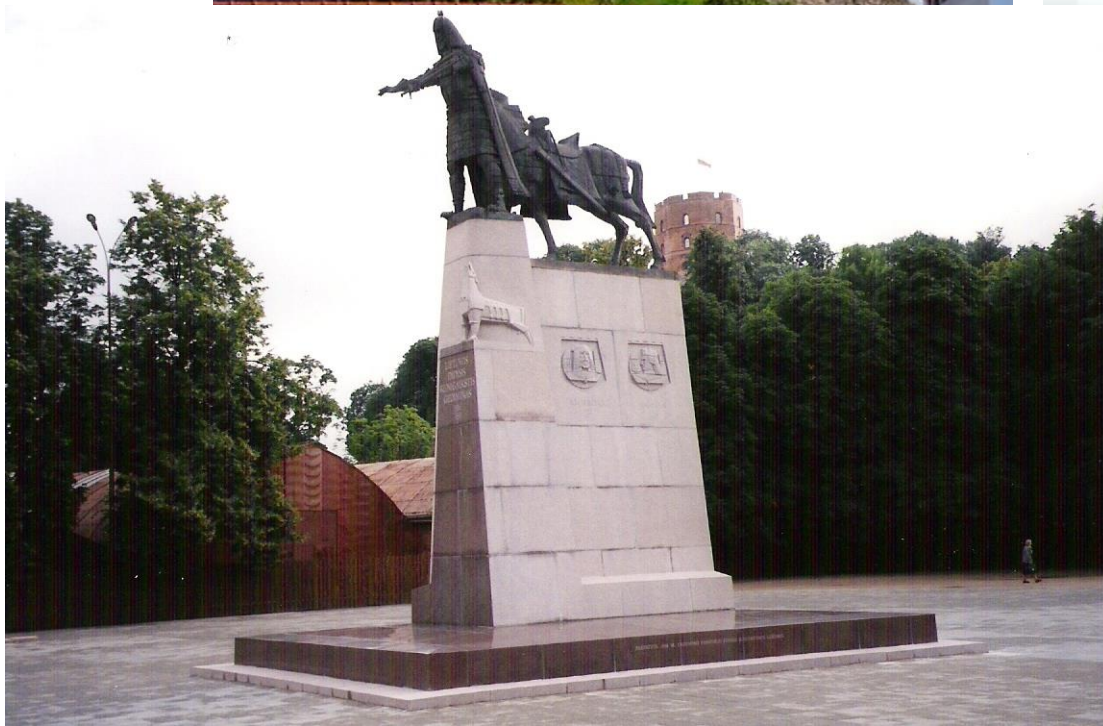


- Gediminas, born 1275, ruling 1315-1341, founded the city of Vilnius and its hilltop castle fortress based on his dream of an iron wolf howling on a hill
- He allowed Christians to settle in Lithuania, but remained Pagan
- He invited Germans and others to settle in Vilnius to help develop city
- Conquered Slavic-Russian lands to east but avoided war with Mongols

Gediminas' Importance to Lithuanian Pagans

- If Mindaugas is the favorite ancient ruler of the Catholics, Gediminas is the favorite of the Pagans for remaining a Pagan despite pressure from Christian nations and Germanic Crusaders
- In letters with the Pope, he offered conversion as a possibility, which he never actually attempted to implement
- Inside Lithuania, he permitted both Catholic and Orthodox Christianity to coexist alongside traditional Paganism
- He is therefore known as an unusually tolerant leader of the European Middle Ages, a point of pride to Lithuanians
- His sons maintained similar policies

Gediminas castle and monument



Images of Gediminas



Two modern tributes to the Iron Wolf of Gediminas' dream, which inspired him to undertake the construction of Vilnius, according to legend



In city of Šiauliai, “Iron Fox” statue is local parody of Vilnius’ “Iron Wolf”



Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1386-1434)

Grand Duchy of Lithuania at its greatest extent in the 15th century, it was the largest state in Europe. It was a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state with great diversity in languages, religion, and cultural heritage. The complete name of the state was Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus' and Samogitia. Up to 80 percent of the population in Grand Duchy were the ancestors of the Ukrainian nation and 20 percent of other people.

Historical maps of Ukraine



Gediminas' Successors: Algirdas and Kęstutis





Gediminas' Successors: Algirdas and Kęstutis

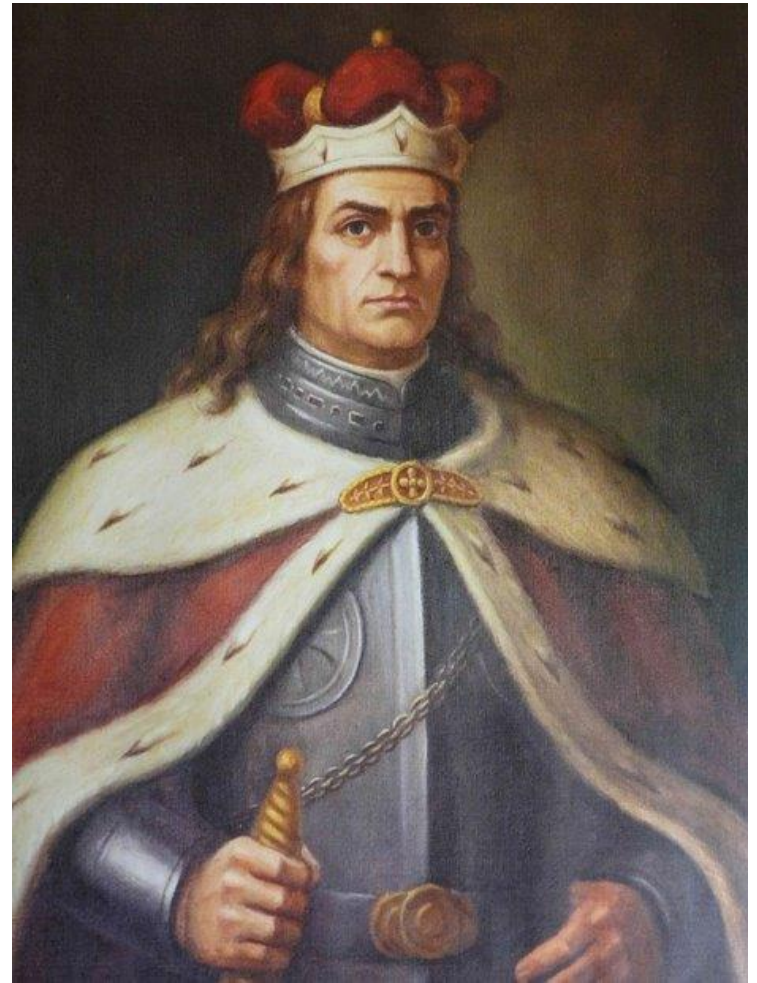


- Two of Gediminas' sons shared rule of the Grand Duchy. Algirdas ruled the Vilnius region as one duchy, Kęstutis, the region of Trakai.
- Algirdas conquered Russian-Ukrainian lands to the east, while Kęstutis protected western Lithuania from German Christian attack.
- Kęstutis raised the possibility of converting to Christianity to gain allies, such as Hungary, but he never did it.
- Algirdas married a Russian princess who was Orthodox Christian, again showing the same tolerance and diplomatic astuteness of his father.

Trakai Castle



King Jogaila (Władisław II Jagiello) of Poland and Vytautas the Great, Grand Duke of Lithuania





Lithuanian-Polish King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas



- The next generation also divided rule between them. Jogaila allied with Poland and became joint king of Poland/Lithuania by wedding the Polish princess Jadwiga and converting in 1386.
- The Polish-Lithuanian alliance defeated the Teutonic Knights in 1410.
- Jogaila ruled Poland from Kraków, while Vytautas ruled Lithuania.
- Despite his conversion, Jogaila gave his uncle Kęstutis a glorious Pagan funeral—even though he may have had him killed in a power struggle!
- Vytautas is called “The Great” for his success in expanding Lithuania to the east, alliances with Tatars and others
- He accepted Jews, Tatars and Karaites into Lithuania, adding to the diversity and tolerance of previous rulers.

Monument to Vytautas the Great, in city of Kaunas, marking his victories over the Teutonic Knights and others



Map of Grand Duchy of Lithuania, showing territories acquired by various leaders, and size relative to modern European countries



Lithuanian Paganism: suppressed, but not forgotten in Lithuanian history

- By the generation of Jogaila and Vytautas, all the rulers of Lithuania were Christian, and Christianization of the country was underway
- However, conversion seemed half-hearted, and many Pagan customs remained alive, especially in rural areas
- The Polish half of the Polish-Lithuanian alliance became dominant, and the Lithuanian aristocracy became Polish-speaking and Catholic in religion
- Lithuanian language, and Lithuanian Pagan customs, was consigned to the lower classes and the countryside

The 19th Century “National Awakening”

- In the 19th century, Lithuania, like other parts of Europe, experienced a new fascination with old folk customs, tales, songs and legends, as part of a new sense of ethnic and national identity
- Indo-European language study revealed Lithuanian had ancient roots, kindred with Sanskrit
- The Indo-Baltic parallel was also found to include Hindu-Pagan parallels in terms of gods, beliefs, religious practices
- Artists, writers and politicians began to romanticize Lithuania’s Pagan past
- Summer solstice *Rasa* festival revived
- Ancient *Daina* folk songs gained new popularity & prestige

Example of Lithuanian-Sanskrit (Indo-European) correspondences

- In Sanskrit:
 - Devas adadat datas;
Devas dat dhanas.
- In Lithuanian:
 - Dievas dave dantis;
Dievas duous
duounos.
- In English:
 - God gave teeth, God
will give bread.

Ramuva/Romuva: Lithuanian Paganism revived secretly, then officially

- In the 1960s, folklore studies are permitted by Soviet authorities; Jonas Trinkūnas collects *daina* folk songs in rural areas
- Secretly, he gathers people to honor old gods and practice Pagan rituals like summer solstice; this is disguised as strictly folkloric activity, group named *Ramuva*
- 1970s, Trinkūnas' Pagan activities are discovered; he is punished, *Ramuva* suppressed
- In late 1980s, under Gorbachev's *Glasnost* policy, *Ramuva* revived; in 1991, Trinkūnas openly proclaims religious purpose, renamed *Romuva*, name of legendary medieval Baltic sanctuary

The Baltic Way, Singing Protests and Independence from the USSR

- Lithuania was first Soviet Socialist Republic to demand independence, in 1989. This led to “Baltic Way” protests across all 3 Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) 8/23/99, on 50th anniversary of Soviet-Nazi Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, which led to invasion of Baltic States in WW II.
- Two million Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians formed a human chain across the 600 km length of the three Baltic States, singing traditional folk songs banned under Soviet rule
- This “Singing Revolution,” inspired other republics to seek to leave the USSR, with end of USSR in 1991

“The Singing Revolution:” folk song protest across the Baltic States in August, 1989 (three months before Berlin Wall protests). Two million people formed a human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to sing forbidden traditional songs in protest of Soviet rule.



Acceptance and Consolidation of the Romuva Movement

- In the euphoria of the successful struggle for independence, **Romuva** gained exalted status as a symbol of traditional Lithuanian culture, and its numbers swelled
- Trinkūnas served in the Ministry of Ethnic Culture and received many awards for his folkloric activities
- Trinkūnas and wife Inija formed folk music group, **Kulgrinda**, to perform Pagan folk music, a musical extension of Romuva that helps promote the movement
- In summer of 1998, Trinkūnas calls together Pagan groups across Europe and beyond for “World Pagan Congress”, soon renamed WCER

Romuva ritual. Romuva leader Jonas Trinkūnas receiving Grand Duke Gediminas award from the President of Lithuania in 2013.



Jonas Trinkūnas (1939-2014), head of Lithuanian Pagan movement *Romuva*. Home in Vilnius, 2004.



Jonas' wife, folk singer and sociologist Inija Trinkunienė 2004.



Jonas Trinkunas and Tourist. 2004.



Relationship of Romuva to Lithuanian Society

- Many travel guides or articles about Lithuania call it a “Catholic nation” due to the predominance of the Catholic church.
- How then to explain the popularity and influence of Romuva, an explicitly Pagan movement?
- People relate to Romuva on many levels besides “religion” per se
- (1) It is respected, even among Christians, as a keeper of old Lithuanian traditions & identity; in this sense, Paganism is understood as patriotic!
- (2) Romuva runs summer “folklore camps” that are open to all, Christian, Pagan or other
- (3) Summer Solstice “Rasos” festival likewise open to all, not just Pagan, has Christian form too, “Jonines”

Relationship of Romuva to Lithuanian Society (2)

- As Lithuanian culture is quite saturated with folklore, Romuva's function as a preserver of folkloric traditions is highly respected
- Trinkūnas and his wife Inija, who has now succeeded him as leader of Romuva, are respected as folklore scholars, as is their folkloric musical group Kulgrinda, which performs internationally
- Many young people in their teens or twenties attend the folklore camps or join Kulgrinda or similar groups as a kind of folkloric "rite of passage"
- Kulgrinda serves as a very effective proponent of Lithuanian folklore and Paganism, and has been open to blending in other musical styles from rock to electronica

Beyond Romuva and Kulgrinda: The “Paganesque” in Lithuanian Culture

- For some, Romuva functions as a religion, and Kulgrinda’s songs are sacred music
- But not everyone relates to the two with such a strong degree of devotion
- For many Lithuanians, Paganism and its folkloric roots and cultural branches add a pleasing accent or atmosphere to life, not a “religion” per se
- Experienced in this way, Lithuanian Paganism is more decorative than devotional, less “Pagan” than “Paganesque,” a cultural element with religio-spiritual and folk-historical overtones, but not necessarily explicitly “religious”
- Paganism can thus be a gateway to spirituality or just a reassuring marker of past traditions—or both

The Crafty Side of Baltic Paganism

- The connection to ethnic folklore and folk crafts inspires many Pagans to make, or collect folk art objects from jewelry to tapestries to medieval-style clothes to swords, which a lot of Pagan guys seem to like.
- The belts/sashes below woven by Inese Krumina of Latvian Pagan group *Vilki*, using traditional Latvian designs



Latvian Paganism

- Latvia has a culture and history similar to Lithuania, and parallel Pagan traditions that have given rise to modern Pagan movements
- These include Dievturi and Vilki, as noted in my articles
- I came to know Inese Krumina, a Latvian Pagan priestess in 2002, and have been friends since
- She started in Dievturi, formed a new group Vilki (wolves), that also recorded traditional Latvian songs with Pagan elements, later left Vilki, now an independent teacher and healer
- She is a weaver of traditional Latvian textiles with Pagan symbolic patterns of great antiquity, pre-literacy in Latvia

Pagan-Inspired or “Paganeseque” Latvian Music and Culture

- As in Lithuania, Paganism has found strong expression among folk musicians, many of whom have moved beyond recreating old styles to create new forms of “Neo-folk” music
- Two of the most important are Ilgi and Skyforger
- Ilgi is a “post-folkloric” band (in their phrase) that is led by Ilga Reizniece, classically-trained violinist and composer; they have made CDs of summer and winter solstice songs, traditional wedding songs, also originals
- Skyforger is a heavy-metal band that uses folk and historical elements

Stelmuze, ancient oak tree sacred to Pagans, *Stelmužės ažuolas*.



Kernavė, site of prehistoric settlements and medieval fortresses of Lithuanian rulers. Sacred to Pagans and Christians alike, Rasos/Jonines annual summer solstice festival held on these hills.



Summer solstice **Rasos** festival at Kernavė, view of traditional gateway decorated with folk symbols

(my own photos from June, 1998, during World Pagan Congress).



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdU3-ru7sKs>

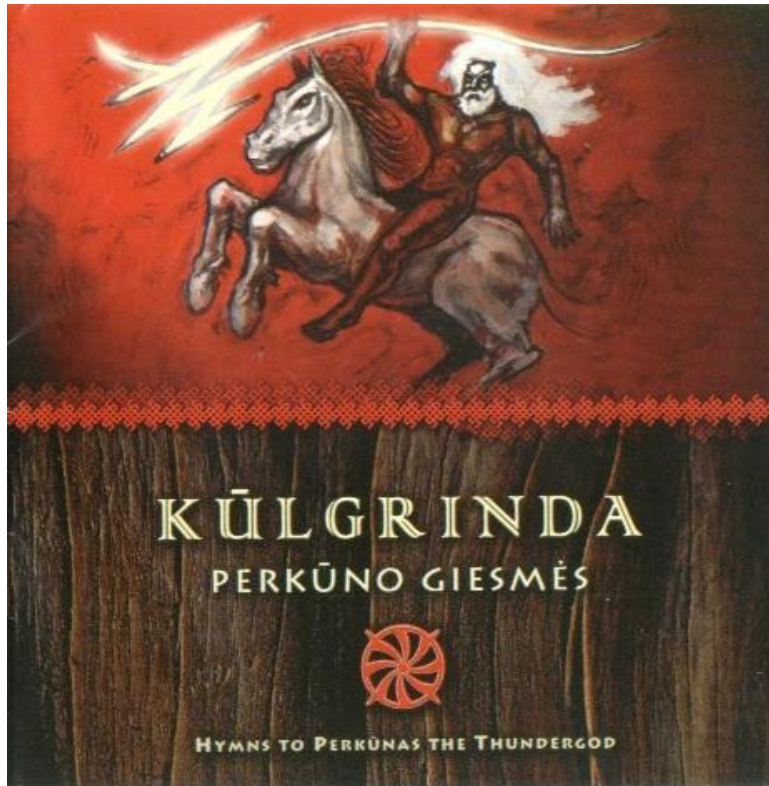
Pagan ritual in Lithuania



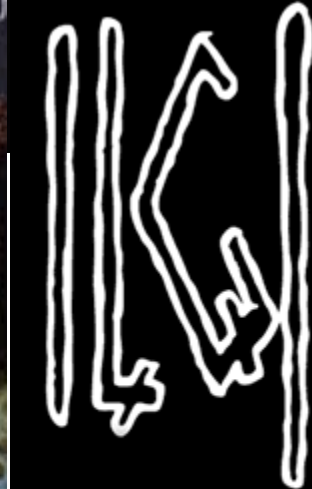
**Kūlgrinda: Lithuanian folk music band,
Paganesque extension of Pagan religious
group Romuva.**

In center: Jonas Trinkūnas and wife Inija





Ilgi: Latvian folk music group led by Ilga Reizniece (violin)



SKYFORGER



SKYFORGER

♦ LATVIAN PAGAN METAL ♦

SKYFORGER



THUNDERFORGE * PERKONKALVE



SKYFORGER

Tadas Šidiskis, another Romuva leader in Lithuania



Young Lithuanian woman with flower wreath at Rasa summer solstice festival, June 2008











Dancing around the sun-wheel





Lithuanian Pagans also celebrate the winter solstice. December, 2008.



**American Members of Lithuanian Pagan group Romuva
outside Chicago, summer solstice, 2002.**



Janis and Inese Krumina, leaders of male and female sections of Latvian Pagan group called *Vilki* (Wolves). (Here, they struggle to maintain human form.) Outside Riga, Latvia, 2002.



Janis pauses to pray at sacred oak tree. March, 2002.



Laughter after I asked Inese if the vicious dog was the leader of *Vilki* (Wolves). 2002.



Inese leading summer solstice ritual, Latvia 2008



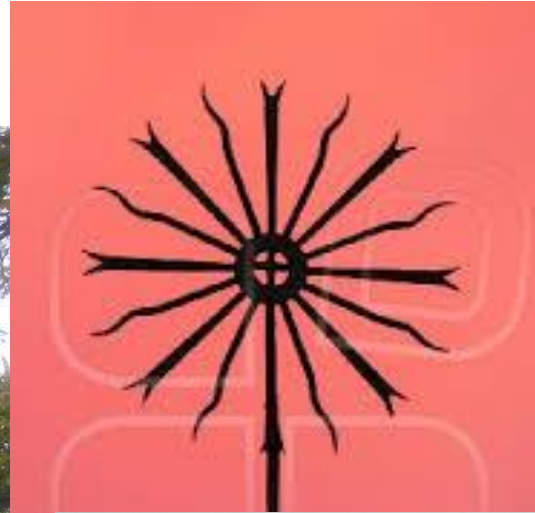




Clothes, jewelry, candles, instruments all created by these Latvian Pagans



Lithuanian crosses with Pagan motifs (sun, moon, snakes)



The Musical Side of Paganism

The revival of Paganism as a religion has gone hand-in-hand with a revival of Scandinavian and Baltic folk music, sometimes called *Neofolk Music*.

In Lithuania, *Kulgrinda* is an outgrowth of the Romuva Pagan movement. They perform traditional Lithuanian folk songs with religious meaning.

In Latvia, the band *Ilgi* performs traditional and new folk music, often with mythological elements.

In Sweden, the band *Hedningarna* (The Heathens) does much the same.

The Latvian Pagan movement *Vilki* (Wolves) has released CDs of men's and women's folk songs.

Kulgrinda, folk-music ensemble
grown out of Romuva movement,
led by Jonas and Inija Trinkunas.



Cover of Kulgrinda CD, *Rite of Fire*, 2004. The swastika-like symbol is traditional Lithuanian, not Nazi.



Latvian band *Ilgi*. The woman is the boss:
Ilga Rezneice. <http://www.ilgi.lv/index.php>



Ilgis CD, *Seji Veju* "Sow the Wind."

Note the instrument: a traditional Latvian *kokles*, like a zither.



Ilgis Cd, *Speleju Dancoju*. “I Played and I Danced.”
Musical version of poems by a leading Latvian
poet.



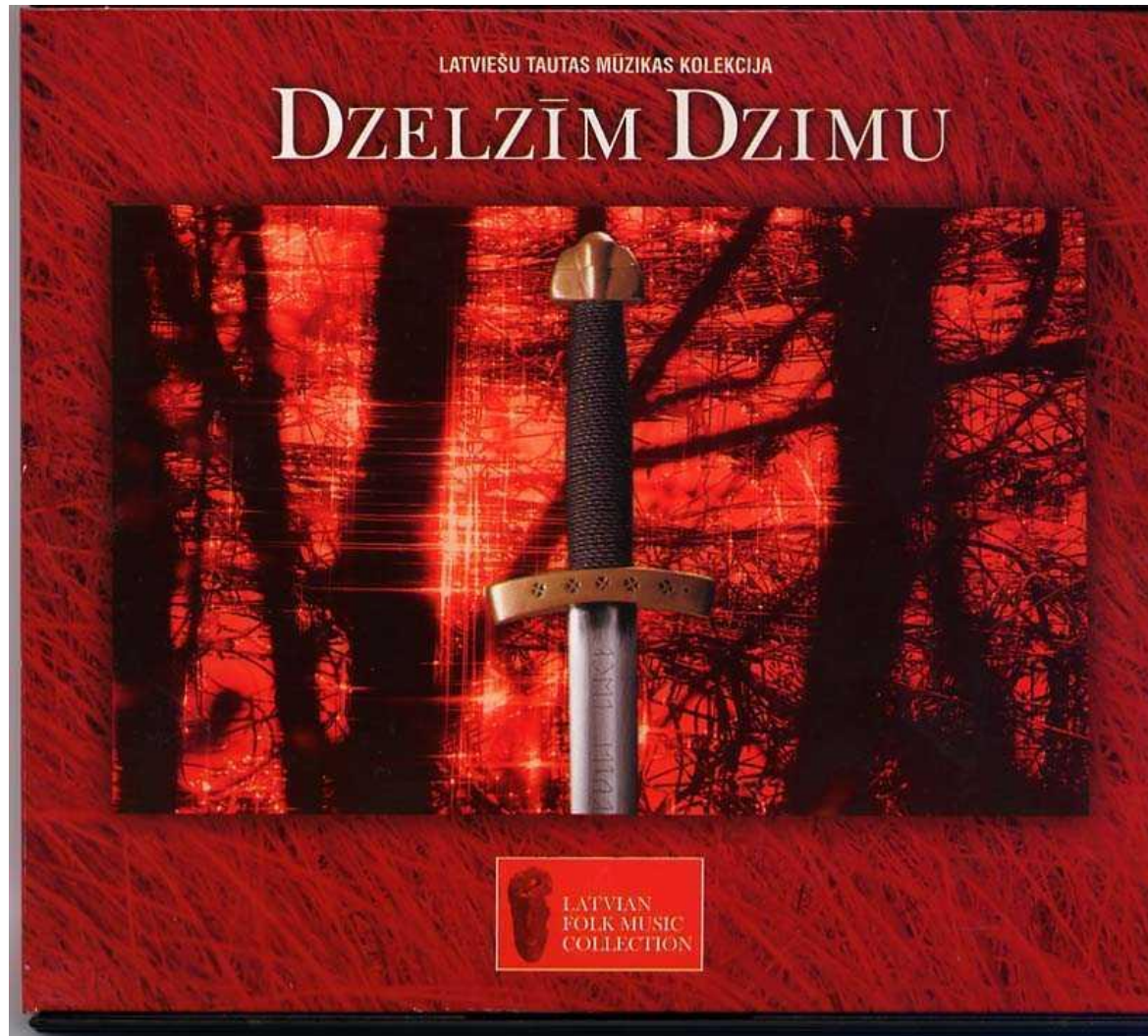
Latvian Pagan movement *Vilki* (Wolves) also has a musical group. Here is a photo from a CD.



Viru kopa "Vilki" radusies 80. gados. Pārdzīvojusi ne tikai atbalstu, bet arī uzbrukumus, tā joprojām spītīgi turas kopā, pašlaik deviņu "vilku" sastāvā. "Vilki" ir vienīgā folkloras grupa Latvijā, kuras repertuāru veido karavīru dziesmas no vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsdienām. No pusotra miljona tautas dziesmu kara dainu ir 7000. Lielu daļu no tām "Vilki" izdziedājuši daudzviet Latvijā un arī ārpus tās robežām.

Dziesmas albumam "Dzelzīm dzimu..." ir atlasītas no Andreja Jurjāna un Emīļa Melngaiļa savāktajiem latviešu tautas mūzikas materiāliem. Ieklausoties dziesmu tekstos var secināt, ka daļa no tām sacerēta vēl pirms Latvijas piespiežu pievienošanas kristīgajām zemēm un nonākusi līdz mūsdienām ar mitisku noskaņu. Tomēr vadoties no dziesmu tekstiem ir iespējams diezgan precīzi noteikt kādā laikā, kādā karaspēkā un ar ko ir cīnījies latviešu karavīrs.

Vilki's male division plays traditional Latvian war songs from the 10th -13th century, when Latvian Pagans fought against Christian Crusaders. Here is a Vilki CD.



Vilki's female branch *Vilcenes* plays traditional women's songs.



Vilcenes CD: *Karavīra līgaviņa* (Bride of the Warrior).



Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, **President of Latvia 1999-2006**, is also a scholar of Latvian folklore and folk music. Here is a CD of traditional songs she selected....and sang.



VAIRAS DZIESMAS

- From the record company:
“Latvian folksongs selected and sung by the former Latvian president and folklore researcher Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga. This is a very personal selection of folk songs that have been sung by V. Vīķe-Freiberga’s mother and on special occasions. The songs have been arranged by the reknown Latvian musician and ethno-musicologist Valdis Muktupāvels. “
- <http://www.lauska.lv/pages/english/products.php>

Pagan-oriented Festival, *Menuo Juodaragis* (Horn of the Black Moon)

independent post-folklore, alternative music and contemporary Baltic culture
FESTIVAL

XVI

MENUO JUODARAGIS

2013.08.23-25

Great Island of Zarasas lake
Zarasai : Lithuania

ROME :: CHANCES :: FIRE+ICE
:: FOLKNERY :: OTAVA YO
SILENT STREAM OF GODLESS ELEGY
:: ILČI :: SKYFORGER :: AULI
GRODI :: DZELZS VILKS :: ĒNU KALEIDOSKOPS
STandART :: GREEN NOVICE :: BĒDU VĒSTNESIS :: MIGĻAS ASNI
Aistē Smilgevičiūtē ir SKYLE :: SIELA :: OBTEST :: DŌNIS :: SPANXTI :: PIEVOS
:: Domanca RAZAUSKAS :: KŪLGRINDA :: LIEPAITĒS :: UGNIAVIJAS
CIRNĻ CIĒSMĒS :: VIĻDUJĀ :: SEN SVAJA :: MARGA MUZIKA :: GILĒ :: ČILTYTA
SKELDOS :: BRUZGYNĀI :: VELIŲ NAMAI :: VĒJOPĀTIS :: KŪJELĪAI :: LAUKIS :: MIDULA
Justina Mūleškaitė :: GĀRSINĒ IZOLIĀCIJA :: SRAIGĒS EFEKTAS

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• Latvian ethos & Baltic brotherhood today • wide programme of knowledge, films, games, workshops, kids • ... & easy access!

- The XVI edition of **Menuo Juodaragis** is blowing horns again, summoning to the burning altar under Great Oak at Zarasai lake island, Northern Lithuania. Traditionally MJR will celebrate the last days of Summer – **August 23-25, 2013**. And this year the festival will be very Baltic in essence, sharing the ancient mythologies, history and most original contemporary arts. Three days and nights of spellbinding neo-folk, post-folk, ethnic and alternative music, ancient crafts, lectures, films, eco-art and lots of friendly partying – its your best chance to know what Baltic really means! Be welcome!

XVIII nepriklausomas savitos
kos ir šiuolaikinės baltų kultūros festivalis
MENUO JUODARAGIS vyks paskutinį 2015-ųjų
os savaitgalį Didžiojoje Zaraso ežero saloje.
platesnis, gražesnis ir brandesnis renginys
čia trims magiškomis dienoms muzikos,
ty, paskaitų, ekomenio, ugnies, vandens,
ždžių ir turiningų pramogų į mylimą Salą.

XVIII dalyviai skelbiami NETRUKUS.

TUS bus galima įsigyti nuo pirmųjų balandžio mėnesio dienų
(patikslinta) per festivalio interneto svetainę, per nacionalinius
ų platinimo partnerius ir krautuvėję "Ragainė" Vilniuje.

2015

18th edition of yearly independent post-folk alternative music and
emporary Baltic culture festival **MENUO JUODARAGIS** - calling all
s to beloved Zarasai island again on the last weekend of Summer. You
ome for three magic days of inflaming original music, ancient crafts,
land-art, workshops, lectures, great friends and beautiful Nature.



2015.8.28-30

MJR XVIII line-up and programme participants will start revealing soon.

TICKETS would be available to order online from the first days of April (exact date to be announced soon).

Two Faces of Paganism: Ethnic vs. Spiritual Dimensions

- For some Pagans, the most important thing is **preserving and continuing ethnic identity and ethnic folk culture**, of which religion is just one part.
- This side of Paganism is most concerned with accurate reconstruction of folklore, ties in with ethnic nationalism and is sometimes associated with racist attitudes.
- For some Pagans, ethnic folk traditions and folk culture are only the **gateway to deeper spiritual experience**, which transcends racial-tribal-ethnic differences.
- This more purely spiritual side of Paganism is more open to ideas of universal spirituality across the earth, and embraces multiculturalism.

And so...

- **Modern Baltic Paganism** therefore has many dimensions and is truly **multi-faceted**.
- Some relate to it as ethnic folk traditions: even Christians can do so..
- Some relate to it as music: even your i-Pod/Pad/Phone can.
- Some relate to it as an expression of national and ethnic identity: many Latvians and Lithuanians do so.
- Some relate to it as a spiritual path, and find deep meaning in its gods, myths, rituals, songs.

Romuva hosting World Congress of Ethnic Religions, June, 1998



Fire ritual. Prayers, songs and offerings around fire.
June 1998. Romuva members plus others,
during World Congress of Ethnic Religions.



Romuva summer solstice *Rasa* festival. Kernave, Lithuania, 1998



Latvian woman preparing traditional wreath
at *Rasa* summer solstice in Lithuania, 1998.



Jonas Trinkunas leader of Romuva, and wife Inija perform fire ritual



Official Symbols of World Congress of Ethnic Religions, est. 1998 in Vilnius, Lithuania

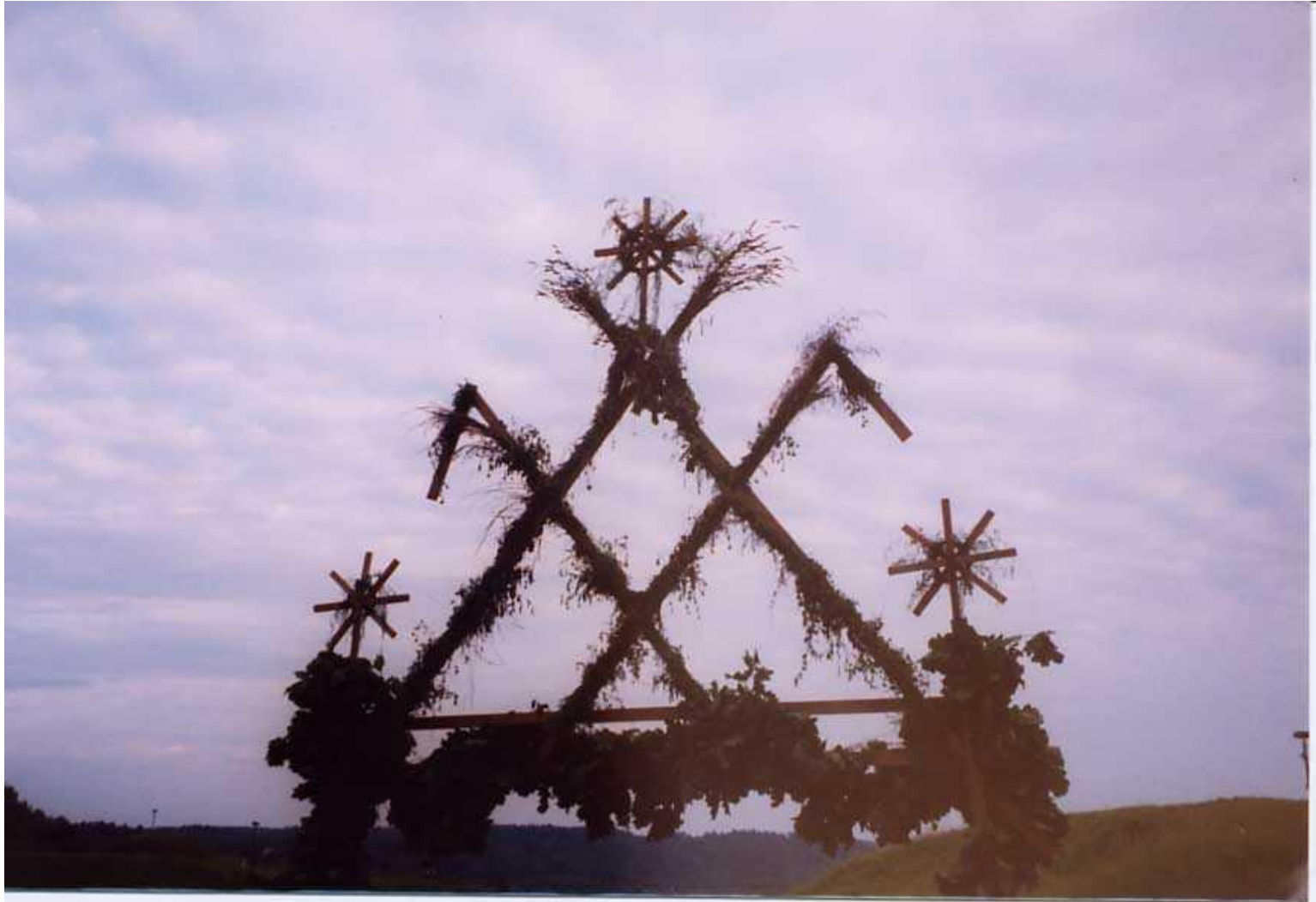
WORLD CONGRESS OF ETHNIC RELIGIONS



Jonas and Inija Trinkunas, March 2009, home in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Rasa Summer Solstice Festival in Lithuania, June 1998.
Symbolic structure in traditional design.
Wheel-shapes refer to the sun.



Early painting of three Lithuanian deities: **Dievas**, highest god; **Perkunas**, thunder god; **Velnias**, god of the dead.



Vilnius's main cathedral: originally a Pagan temple, destroyed/rebuilt by both Pagans and Christians. Romuva has petitioned to be allowed to perform rituals in the basement, where Pagan altars have been found by archaeologists. The Catholic church has refused the request.



Romuva Winter Solstice, Vilnius, 2008



Arriving



Building the fire



Blowing the horn



Drumming



Singing



All together now.

