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MULTICULTURAL HISTORY OF THE REGION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF KĒDAINIAI REGIONAL MUSEUM



The objective of this paper is to make a short review of influence of the multicultural history of the region and its using in the activities of Kėdainiai Regional Museum. Kėdainiai has a rich multicultural history and heritage, which are very often used by Kėdainiai Regional Museum and all of its six branches. The main attention is paying to educational and project activities.

Discovering Kėdainiai as a place of intersection of various nations and cultures, a peculiar Atlantis of a borderland, sometimes by playing or reminding, preservation and nurturance of historical memory of local society, sometimes by public art as invasion into public spaces of town.

Such activities of Kėdainiai Regional Museum help to get rid of provinciality and contribute to create the Lithuanian modern civilized nation, open to the world.

Keywords: multicultural history, Kėdainiai Regional Museum, educational activities, projects.

REĢIONA MULTIKULTURĀLĀ VĒSTURE ĶĒDAIŅU REĢIONĀLĀ MUZEJA AKTIVITĀTĒS

Šā raksta mērķis ir sniegt īsu pārskatu par multikulturālās vēstures ietekmi uz reģionu un tās izmantošanu Ķėdaiņu Reģionālā muzeja aktivitātēs. Ķėdaiņiem ir bagāta multikulturāla vēsture un kultūras mantojums, kas ļoti bieži tiek izmantoti Ķėdaiņu Reģionālā muzeja un tā sešu filiāļu darbībā. Galvenā uzmanība tiek pievērsta izglītojošu pasākumu un projekta aktivitātēm. Ķėdaiņi tiek iepazīti kā vieta, kur sastopas dažādas tautas un kultūras, tā ir kā savdabīga Atlantīdas pierobeža, kas dažreiz spēlējās vai atgādina, saglabā un uztur vietējās sabiedrības vēsturiskās atmiņas. Dažkārt tas notiek ar mākslas palīdzību, kas ir kā „iebrukums” pilsētas sabiedriskajās vietās.

Šādas Ķėdaiņu Reģionālā muzeja darbības palīdz atbrīvoties no provinciālisma un veicina Lietuvas kā modernas civilizētas valsts, kas ir atvērta pasaulei, attīstību.

Ķėdaiņi ir viena no pilsētām, kam ir bagātākā daudz kultūru vēsture un vēsturiskais mantojums Lietuvā. Ķėdaiņu Reģionālajā muzejā ir sešas nodaļas: galvenais muzejs, dibināts bijušajā karmelītu klosterī 18.–19. gs.; multikulturālais centrs, kas ir izveidots bijušajā nelielajā ziemas sinagogā (19. gs. celtne); hercogu Radzivilu mauzolejs, kas bija reformātu baznīca 18. gs.; koka skulptūru muzejs, ko Vitauts Ulevičus izveidoja Ķėdaiņu pašvaldības telpās; 1863. gada sacelšanās muzejs bijušajā barona Šilinga muižā Paberžē (18. gs.) un skotu Arnetu nams (18. gs.).

Liela uzmanība Ķėdaiņu Reģionālā muzeja darbā tiek pievērsta projektiem, kas

ir galvenais muzeja aktivitāšu finanšu avots.

Viena no svarīgākajām Ķēdaiņu Reģionālā muzeja darbībām šajā desmitgadē ir visu veidu vēsturisko atmiņu dokumentēšana un saglabāšana Ķēdaiņu reģionā. Vislielāko uzmanību muzejs pievērš izglītojošām un projekta aktivitātēm, kas ir balstītas multikulturālajā vēsturē. Pēc muzeja iniciatīvas tika izveidotas slavenu vēsturisko personību un holokausta upuru piemiņas plāksnes. Lielākā daļa projektu, kas tiek īstenoti ar muzeja līdzdalību, atklāj Ķēdaiņu reģiona multikulturālo raksturu.

Šis raksts ir tapis Latvijas–Lietuvas–Baltkrievijas pārrobežu sadarbības programmas projekta „Virtuālā pagātne – muzeju nākotne” (LLB-2-269) īstenošanas laikā.

Atslēgas vārdi: multikulturālā vēsture, Ķēdaiņu Reģionālais muzejs, izglītojošās aktivitātes, projekti.

Introduction

This article was written during implementation of the project *The Virtual Past is a Keystone for the Future of Museums* (LLB-2-269) of the Latvia–Lithuania–Belarus cross-border cooperation programme.

The objective of this paper is to make a short review of influence of the multicultural history of the region and its using in the activities of Kėdainiai Regional Museum. In the beginning I am going to review main aspects of the multicultural history of Kėdainiai Region. Further I will give a particular examples of using multicultural history and heritage in the educational, project activities for preservation and nurturance of historical memory of the local society.

Kėdainiai is a very peculiar town of the central Lithuania, situated on both banks of the Nevėžis river – the historical border between Aukštaitija (Highlands or Lithuania) and Žemaitija (Samogitia). The town and its surroundings had been influenced by other nations, cultures and various religious from the ancient times. Even the name *Kėdainiai* that for the first time in written sources appears in *Livonia Chronicle* in 1372, was mentioned by a German Hermann von Wartberge, whose countrymen, having wandered from Livonia (the present Latvia), were desolating the central part of Lithuania at this time.

At that date, an ordinary settlement, situated in a fertile valley of the Nevėžis, Livonians, not knowing the heathen's Lithuanian language, mentioned as *Terra Gaydine* 'The Gaidine land' (Hermann de Wartberge 1863: 102). Later, a name of our town used to be written differently in various languages: *Kiejdany* in Polish (Regulation for Kėdainiai town.. 2002: 249), *Caioduni* in Latin (Privilege of Vladislaus Vasa.. 1648), *Keydon* in Scottish (Newes from Poland.. 1641), *Keidan* in Yiddish (Cassel 1930). In a cover page of a book in Lithuanian language, published in Kėdainiai in the 17th century, we find a name of the town *Kiedaynis* (Knyga nobažnystės.. 2004: 5). During the occupation of the tsar Russia the town was named *Кейданы* (Пташкинъ 1899), using Cyrillic alphabet. The present town's name was

established at the end of the 19th century and came into force in the 20th century as the Lithuanian language, when Lithuania gained independence, became an official language.

In the 15th century, because of comfortable geographical situation and wise administration by Dukes Radziwills (this, most famous family of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania lords had owned the town for about 300 years) the locality was named as *Oppidum Kieidany* or *Kėdainiai town*. In 1590, when Kėdainiai was granted Magdeburg rights, the town became a real town with self-government – *Civitas Caiodunensis* (Kėdainiai. Istorija 2006).

This, one of the four private towns of Lithuania, from the middle of the 16th and to the beginning of the 18th centuries, was the Protestant island in the Catholic Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the middle of the 17th century the town became prosperous and was the main economical, confessional and cultural centre, owned by the Dukes Radziwills. In the town there were six market squares, a port, ten guilds, gymnasium, that had to be reorganized into the Protestant academy, printing-house, pharmacy and some hospitals. Thanks to the Radziwills pragmatism and tolerance in the there lived six national (Lithuanians, Poles, Scots, Germans, Ruthenians (from 19th century – Russians) and Jews) and six confessional (Calvinists, Lutherans, Catholics, Antitrinitors, Orthodoxes and Jews) communities. A numerous Scottish community consisted of more than 300 members and, that had lived for 150 years, made Kėdainiai a peculiar place. The community was one of the biggest communities in the whole Baltic and Scandinavian region. The Germans Lutherans in Kėdainiai had their own self-government in Jonušava district. At that time Kėdainiai was a centre of the Reformed (or Calvinist) Church and Judaism in Samogitia and was the residence of the chief superintendents of Samogitia Reformed Church district as well as rabbinate of the Samogitian Jewish district *Medinat Samut*. Exclusively long period Kėdainiai was tolerant for the Arians' community – the most radical representatives of the Reformation. The Protestants' intellectuals of that time also concentrated in Kėdainiai. Since Lithuanians dominated in the town's community, there were always priests of the Reformed Church, that spoke in Lithuanian language. Poles, Germans and Scots collaborated in publishing of religious books in the Lithuanian language. That's why in historiography Kėdainiai sometimes is assessed as one of the most Lithuanian town of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Žirgulis 2008: 5).

Unfortunately, history did not permit all communities of Kėdainiai to survive because of the Counter-Reformation, wars etc. Today, apart the absolut major Lithuanian community, Kėdainiai has small communities of Poles and Russians.

That's why such rich and multicultural history of Kėdainiai region became a basis for the activity of our Museum. In 1999, when the project activity, communication and cooperation with various educational and academic institutions, Open Society Fund Lithuania and Fund for Educational Changes has started, I began to perceive, that an integral perception of the multicultural heritage and history is the essential thing. *And that there is no past without memory* (Žirgulis 1999a: 3; Koreivaitė

1999: 1–2; Žebrauskaitė 1999: 1–2).

As my good friend Vytautas Toleikis wrote, such naive toehold into a rustic, ostensibly Lithuanian culture, topics of exile and the partisan war, can be irremissibly provincial, if we don't represent it in perspective of human rights and if we will not search for analogues in history of our neighbors.

It is essential to respect our own multicultural heritage, incorporate it into our own cultural orbit, not assimilating, but accepting it as own, not accepting as unpleasant situation or as something strange. This heritage is inwrought, often one way or another belongs not only to one nation. In addition, it is an integral part of the modern national identity, very closely related with historical memory (Toleikis 2003).

Kėdainiai Regional Museum and its educational activities

Presently, our Museum consists of six branches: a former monastery of the Carmelites of the 18th–19th century, a mausoleum of the Dukes Radziwills in the Reformed church of the 17th century, the Multicultural Centre established in a former small winter synagogue of the 19th century, a museum of wooden sculptures by wood carver Vitauts Ulevičius, a museum of the 1863 Uprising in a former manor of baron S. Szylling in Paberžė, the house of Arnets. It is a unique house of the Scottish merchants of the 17th century with authentic layout of rooms. A Centre of Traditional Crafts is starting its activity there (Žirgulis 2013: 15–16).

One of the main activities of our Museum is an educational activity. And a part of it covers the multicultural history of Kėdainiai region. The topics are following: *Secrets of the Nevėžis valley, Kėdainiai – a land of Mikalojus Daukša and Czesław Miłosz, One day in the medieval town, Kėdainiai urban culture, Anna Frank – history for today, Temples of the religious confessions, The Holocaust, Shtetl and traditions* (a guided tour around Kėdainiai old town revealing the specific of the Jewish life style in towns of Lithuania and a practical session in the Multicultural Centre explaining the most specific Jewish festal day – Sabbath), *Literature, music and symbols of national and confessional communities* (analysis of the Lutherans, Calvinists, Catholics and secular Jewish texts, related with Kėdainiai). Pupils are made aware of Russian and Polish texts, reflecting culture of manors in Kėdainiai region in the 19th – the beginning of the 20th centuries (Kėdainių krašto muziejaus edukacinė veikla 2007: 5–7; Pečiulytė, Adomaitienė 2012: 3–15).

Project activities

Kėdainiai from 17th century – a place of intersection of various nations and cultures, a borderland, a peculiar Atlantis, that needs to be discovered. Sometimes, we try to do it by playing.

Kėdainiai Regional Museum pays great attention to the project activity – the main source of financing. The biggest part of project we implement consists of projects revealing the multicultural heritage of Kėdainiai region.

In 2002, during implementation of an international project *Known, but not identified*, that revealed history of six national communities, we involved 11 schools of Kėdainiai and district and organized the final festival of the Old Town. In 2004–2005, during implementation of an international project *Cultural Heritage Interactive*, together with partners from Great Britain, Italy and Bulgaria, an internet game about cultural heritage was created (Žirgulis 2003; Žirgulis 2013: 17).

In 2008 we implemented a project *We create future by discovering past: dedemonisation of otherness*, backed by Anna Lindh of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Foundation (Egypt), and our Museum became a member of national network of Anna Lindh Foundation. During the project, we organized lectures about Jews of Lithuania contribution to the world culture, about influence of the Soviet traditions upon our daily life, concerts of Jewish and Roma folk music, environmental rehabilitation by the minaret. In addition, together with pupils and teachers of Kėdainiai Art School, we organized a workshop *The Jewish and Muslim architectural heritage in Kėdainiai*, as well as an interactive seminar *You can change also* together with Center for Equality Advancement (Vilnius; Malinauskiene 2008: 8; Žirgulis 2010).

In 2007–2013 a project *The Borderland Atlantis – the cultural route, intersecting states' borders* prepared by Lithuania, Poland and Russia in framework of European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument program of cross-border cooperation in which museum participate together with Borderland Fund from Sejny (Poland) and Kaliningrad Union of Writers (Russia). During this project an educational work with groups of young people takes place. Me and my colleague Audronė Pečiulytė together with pupils of Kėdainiai and Kėdainiai district studied history of Kėdainiai region, its multiculturalism, visited all most important heritage objects of Kėdainiai and Kėdainiai district, participated in three creative camps of youth artistical activity, that took place in Poland, Lithuania and Russia. During such meetings, a heritage of every region, cultural traditions and their specific were presented by local historians, archaeologists, musicians, craftsmen and artists. The final result of the project – a book – tour guide for regions of Sejny, Kėdainiai and Kaliningrad (i. e., localities related with Cz. Milosz, K. Donelaitis and J. Brodski) written by all participants (Žirgulis 2013:17–18; Aleinikovas 2013: 2; Kužmarskytė 2013: 7–8; Malinauskiene 2013: 16; <http://borderlandatlantis.net/news/>).

Reminding, preservation and nurturance of historical memory. Public art as invasion into public spaces of town.

Attention to all national and confessional communities of Kėdainiai region

Multiculturalism of Kėdainiai town and region is a frequent activity in the Museum scientific researches and publication during the recent decades (Žirgulis 1999b: 343–349; Žirgulis 2002:130–140; Žirgulis 2005a:179–188; Žirgulis 2005b: 225–247; Žirgulis 2006: 234–245; Юкнявичюс 2009: 157–170). In 2006 in collaboration with

our colleague, archaeologist of our Museum Algirdas Juknevičius and a professor of History Department of Vilnius University Dr. Alfredas Bumblauskas, we prepared and released a CD *Kėdainiai. History*, in which the main attention was paid to researches of the town identity and all national and confessional communities, their history, role and influence to the town's development (Kėdainiai. Istorija 2006; Stankevičė 2006: 13; Valantonytė 2006: 1–2; Zokaitytė 2006: 1–4).

History of the Jewish community and the Holocaust

Commemoration of the historical memory and preservation in the whole Kėdainiai region, but not only in premises of the Museum is one of the most important activity of Kėdainiai Regional Museum during the last decade. Because of great tragedy, the history of the Jewish community and the Holocaust deserves a great deal of attention in our activity. On our initiative the following memorial plaques were unveiled: in 1997, for Vilna Gaon Elijahu, who studied in Kėdainiai, and in 2006, on all Kėdainiai synagogues – for commemoration the 65th anniversary of the Holocaust, when local Nazis collaborators murdered Kėdainiai Jewish community (Žirgulis 2013: 16).

In 2011, commemorating the 70th anniversary of deportation and the Holocaust, we, together with Museum of Tukums (Latvia), implemented a project *Letters for the future generations* in the framework of *Action 4 The living Memory of the Europe for citizens* program. During the project we collected a lot archival material, photographs, documents, video records, eyewitness accounts. This material is available at a computer terminal, dedicated to Kėdainiai history during the tragic period of the Soviet and Nazi occupations (1940–1953 till the death of a dictator J. Stalin) and in a book and a CD *Kėdainiai region in a shadow of the swastika and the red star*, telling about the Soviet deportation, repressions and the Holocaust initiated and implemented by the Nazis (Tamašauskienė 2011b: 1, 3; Kėdainių kraštas..2011; Fiodorova 2012: 3; Smirnova 2012: 2; Žirgulis 2013: 16–17).

Using finances of the project, we installed two memorials by an artist F. Paulauskas – public art objects in public spaces of the town, dedicated to Kėdainiai, Šėta and Žeimiai Jewish communities, that had been murdered in Daukšiai village, on August 28, 1941. The first memorial *Shoah. Ich bin Keidaner* is installed near Kėdainiai synagogues complex. The memorial consists of the Christianity symbol – an eye of Providence – and the symbol of Judaism – the burning bush made of metal. The eyeball is filled up with 2076 empty cartridge-cases, and this number represents the number of Jews, that had been murdered in Daukšiai village 70 years ago. The second memorial *The Wall of Memory* is installed at the Jews murder site. In the memorial there are 1000 known family names of Jews, murdered in that site, cut out in the metal plates. Using finances of the project, we also installed roadsights, showing the site of the Holocaust The memorial, is the second in Lithuania, with inscribed family names of the Holocaust victims (Dovydaitytė 2011a: 1, 3; Lukošiuūtė 2011: 3; Žebrauskaitė 2011: 1–2; Zokaitytė 2011a: 8–9; Dovydaitytė 2011b: 4; Valantonytė

2011: 1–2; Dovydaitytė 2011c: 3; Zokaitytė 2011: 10).

In 2012, in the Multicultural Centre we prepared an exposition, dedicated to victims of the Holocaust *Fellow citizens, we had lost*, where, in addition to photographs, documents and items, visitors can see about 1200 family names, grouped into families, of Jews, who perished during the Holocaust (Raicevičienė 2012: 5; Zokaitytė 2012: 10; Dothan, Zabludoff 2012).

Every year on August 28th we pay tribute to memory of perished fellow citizens, visit and light candles in the site of the mass murders. This year, for the first in history, we did it together with descendants of Kėdainiai Jews in Tel Aviv (Israel; Malinauskienė 2014: 1–2). Personally, I am feeling obliged to do it a fact, that in my family there were four generations of the Soviet deportees... And despite the fact, that my family was deported during the first and most terrible time in 1941 and lived in deportation 16 years. They came back, I was born... I strive to pay tribute to memory of my fellow citizens Jews also, because that the absolute majority of them never came back from mass gravesites. Therefore, if it is not us, who will light candles on their graves?

Cz. Miłosz – as a brand of Kėdainiai, attempt to penetrate into tune of the Lithuanian and Polish spirit

In 1980, during the Nobel Literature Prize ceremony Cz. Miłosz said: *It is good to be born in a small country, where Nature was on a human scale, where various languages and religions cohabited for centuries. I have in mind Lithuania, a country of myths and of poetry. My family already in the Sixteenth Century spoke Polish, just as many families in Finland spoke Swedish and in Ireland – English; so I am a Polish, not a Lithuanian, poet. But the landscapes and perhaps the spirits of Lithuania have never abandoned me* (Miłosz 1980). And I really know, he was telling about his native land Šeteniai, situated about 15 km from Kėdainiai, by the same Nevėžis river, where I use to swim from my childhood and whose valley opens up through windows of my home, where I often walk, watch the river's waters and can see at a distance the tower of the baroque church of Apytalaukis, that remembers wedding of Cz. Miłosz parents. And I also know, that no one had spoke more beautiful about my native land. Therefore, it doesn't matter at all, in what language the most famous person in world praises my native land. A man, descended from Kėdainiai, and whose name makes everybody to be all ears. And every educated person, wherever he or she lives, knows, what he is talking about. Therefore, I am sure it would be inexcusably stupid not to try that Cz. Miłosz would become an integral part of Kėdainiai region culture. So, in 2011, celebrating the 10th anniversary of Kėdainiai Honored citizen and the 100th anniversary of a Nobel Literature Prize winner Cz. Miłosz (1911–2004), we implemented a project *The Year of Cz. Miłosz: the searches of the multicultural identity of Kėdainiai region*. During the project, we organized a cycle of cultural events, during which an exhibition ... *I have always been turned back to the River...*, prepared by the Museum, was

exposed in all elderships of Kėdainiai district (Tamašauskienė 2011a: 2). Besides, in Kėdainiai old town, in a street named by the poet's family name, by the Nevėžis river, we made an installation *Miloszophone* (author – Feliksas Paulauskas) – *KĖDĖ KĖDainiuose* – a chair in Kėdainiai (it is a wordplay, because words *Kėdainiai* and *Chair-kėdė* in Lithuanian has the same root; Žirgulis 2013: 16). The meaning of the installation is, that the poet would love to sit on this rocking-chair and watch his native and beloved River. Now, his spirit has this possibility. And because poetry has nothing to do with this material world, by turning a wheel, mounted on the Miloszophone, you can produce only noise, that also can be a poetry by its content. By the way, the Milosz street as yet is the lonely street in Lithuania, dedicated to the poet, as well as a monument – another public art object and invasion into the public space, that caused ambiguous reactions because of its aesthetical expression. After all, many Lithuanians think, that objects in public spaces must be very clear, especially licked up and sterile... More than a decade ago, the famous artist Emir Kusturica wondered, that in Vilnius there is a monument for Frank Zappa, who had no relations with Lithuania, but not a monument for Cz. Milosz... And now, we have such monument in Kėdainiai... Maybe because, we don't afraid to be somewhat strange and don't want to be primitive...

In 2014 we organized the first festival of Cz. Milosz, during which we organized a scientific conference, various concerts and a discussion. We are going to organize this festival in future, and this way to strengthen the multicultural identity and a brand (Žebrauskaitė 2014: 3).

Heritage of Dukes Radziwills – what connects with Belarus, Ukraine and Poland

In 2013 we implemented a project of cultural tourism, supported by Ministry of Culture of Republic of Lithuania *The International Route of the Dukes Radziwills*. The activities of the project were carried out in Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. The project involved museums, directly related with the Dukes Radziwills and their heritage, academic, scientific researches and educational institutions implementing projects of cultural tourism. During the project, a concept-feasibility study of the international route of the Dukes Radziwills and action plan stimulating cultural tourism was prepared. Besides, we published a travel guide, prepared by Associate Professor of Faculty of History of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Vilnius) Dr. D. Karvelis in Lithuanian language, and organized the final project's conference (Karvelis 2013; Masilionytė 2013: 3; Fiodorova 2013: 7, 9). The project's results were introduced to the Ministry of Culture and received very good assessment. We hope, that this our initiated project potentially may claim a status of the European cultural route.

Memory of the Scottish community

A house of the Scottish merchant Arnet, where we are establishing a Centre of

Traditional Crafts, is a place of a memory of Kėdainiai Scottish community. And this our project *The Virtual Past is a Keystone for the Future Museums* is also a contribution to commemoration of this numerous and influential community of our town. However, the main activity of the project as well as results are dedicated exactly to this Museum department. In the Arnets house, we reconstructed furniture of the 17th–18th centuries, ceramics, prepared a game *Re-create the Arnets House*. The virtual gallery presents articles produced by artisans of various nations and confessions (Švedienė 2014: 6; Žirgulis 2014:31–33).

A. Freitag as a Germans' memory

The German community was commemorated in 2008 unveiling on a wall of *Gymnasium Illustre* a memorial plaque dedicated to the 400th birth anniversary of the European-famous mathematician, philosopher, physician and war engineer A. Freitag, who worked and was buried in Kėdainiai (Žirgulis 2013: 16).

It is true to said, that our Museum is not a traditional museum (or maybe not museum at all?), and we continue various cultural activities and games, that had started for more than a decade and by which we trying to be more attractive for our visitors.

Famous people connected with Kėdainiai – as a background for open-minded thinking

I would like to quote my friend V. Toleikis. This is the text, what Vytautas read for young people of Lithuania, Poland and Russia in one event of our project last year. From the perspective of Lithuania land, the space of Kėdainiai seems to be very grateful. This is incredibly rich region of Lithuania. Was born, lived, loved to visit, heard about Kėdainiai.

Let's try to bend finger and name, starting with most famous and dearest:

- 1) **Czeslaw Milosz**, one of the biggest writers of the 20th century;
- 2) **Piotr Stolypin**, prime-minister of Russian Empire, famous reformer;
- 3) **Father Stanislovas** – Mykolas Algirdas Dobrovolskis, the most popular Lithuanian monk and priest among intellectuals during the period of the Soviet occupation;
- 4) **Eduard Franz von Tottleben**, a hero of Crimea and Balkans wars. It was him, who persuaded a tsar let Fiodor Dostoyevski to return from exile to St Petersburg prematurely;
- 5) **Antanas Mackevičius**, a priest, one of the leaders of the 1863 Uprising, who led the first regiment from his church in Paberžė;
- 6) **Vincas Svirskis**, a genius of a wooden sculpture. We know, that the wooden folk sculpture had inspired a lot of Litvaks artists, for example, Jacques Lipchitz;
- 7) **Vilna Gaon Elijah**, the biggest Jewish philosopher of the 18th century. About him knows everybody, who finished school in Israel. He arrived to Kėdainiai in his childhood and in Kėdainiai became mature as a personality;

8) **Moshe Leib Lillenblum**, one of creators of movement of Sion lovers. In Israel, a lot of streets are named by his name;

9) **Stanislaw Stomma**, Catholic intellectual, born in Šačiūnai;

10) **Oskaras Milašius**, a relative of Cz. Milosz, one of his most important teachers of life. The Milosz family descended from Labūnava;

11) **Witold Gombrowicz**, a friend of Cz. Milosz, also descended from banks of the Nevėžis;

12) **Alexander Menj**, conscience of Russia Orthodox Church, famous theologian, in summers used to holiday with his family in Paberžė, where Father Stanislovas lived;

13) **Arvo Part**, the most prominent in academic world Estonian composer, who found inspiration also in Paberžė;

14) **Kazimieras Paltarokas**, one of the most prominent bishops of Lithuania. In his youth was a priest in Surviliškis;

15) **Janusz Radziwill**, for Lithuanians – a hero, for Poles – traitor;

16) **Mikalojus Daukša**, an author of the first Lithuanian book in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania;

17) **Mikalojus Katkus**, a famous author of ethnographical work *Balanos gadynė* ('Splinter Time'), a participant of the national movement, an original, hermit and famous infidel;

18) **Juozas Urbšys**, the last minister of Foreign Affairs Ministry of the interwar Lithuania. He left an impressive memoirs. Born in Šateniai.

They all being in Kėdainiai – in their borderland, in their tenebrous province, had at least four things: a rich spiritual world, were thinking, communicated with world in most incredible ways, were open to their own space and did not ignore it. These people of the borderland were famous by their empathy, tolerance. Perhaps, thanks to these characteristics they were not provincial. They created their own cosmos, and they were as a centre of this cosmos (Toleikis 2013).

Riding of provinciality and creation of civilized Lithuanian nation

Talking about provinciality, it becomes clear, why various international projects are so important for me and our Museum. Like this project, during which we worked and cooperated closely with colleagues from Rezekne and Grodno. And I think, we became not only colleagues, but also friends. As a philosopher Prof. Leonidas Donskis wrote: *that is why the international professional and creative life is valuable, because thanks to it, people from various countries and cultures help each other to get rid of provinciality. A country, that creates more or less successful alternatives for provinciality, does it thanks to diversity of its people and institutions and cultivation of policy of openness* (Donskis 2005: 3).

I believe, that activities of our museum contribute to creation of Lithuanian civilized nation open to the world.

Finally, I would like to say, that Kėdainiai Regional Museum doesn't discover

anything new and unusual. We just follow the words of the national anthem, written by V. Kudirka, – *Iš praeities Tavo sūnūs te stiprybę semia* (http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=4056&p_k=1&p_rp=N&p_dr=N&p_d=49133), ‘*Let your sons draw their strength from our past experience*’ (http://www3.lrs.lt/home/w5_viewer/statiniai/seimu_istorija/w5_show-p_r=4056&p_d=49249&p_k=2.html), and we work organically – *Vardan tos Lietuvos* ‘For the sake of Lithuania’.

Conclusions

1. Kėdainiai is one of the towns, that has the richest multicultural history and heritage in Lithuania.

2. From 1999 Kėdainiai Regional Museum began to participate in project activities and through collaboration with various institutions and personalities started different activities in revealing and popularizing the multiculturalism of the region.

3. The most important attitude museum pays to educational and project activities, based on multicultural background.

4. All of those activities are dedicated to remind, preserve and nurture the historical memory of local society. Sometimes, through collaboration with local artists and authorities it becomes as invasion of public art into the public spaces of town.

5. The mostly and important topics of the museum activities are tragical history of Jewish community and the Holocaust, Cz. Miłosz as a bridge between Lithuania and Poland and possible brand of Kėdainiai region, heritage of the dukes Radziwills connected territories of Lithuania, Belarus, Poland and Ukraine – former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, history and heritage of Scottish and German communities.

6. Huge influence on activities of Kėdainiai Regional Museum and all perception of historical context of the region makes prominent and famous personalities of various nations and cultures, linked with Kėdainiai in one way or another.

7. Multicultural activities of Kėdainiai Regional Museum and collaboration with various institutions from other countries helps to get rid of provinciality and to create a Lithuanian modern civilized nation, open to the world.

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