

**Religinis paveldas ir ugniagesių tradicijos Lietuvoje ir Lenkijoje.
Istorinė ir kultūrinė studija apie šv. Florijono kultą
ir „Corpi Santi“ tradiciją Buivydžiuose.
Konferencijos medžiaga paremta monografija.**

**Dziedzictwo religijne i tradycje pożarnicze na Litwie i w Polsce.
Studium historyczno-kulturowe wokół kultu św. Floriana
i tradycji Corpi Santi w Bujwiedzach.
Monografia pokonferencyjna.**

**Religious Heritage and Firefighting Traditions in Lithuania and Poland.
A Historical and Cultural Study of the Cult of Saint Florian
and the Corpi Santi Tradition in Buivydžiai.
A Monograph Based on Conference Proceedings.**



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Buivydžių bendruomenės pirmininkė **Danuta Korkus**

Prezes Wspólnoty Bujwidzkiej **Danuta Korkus**

Chairwoman of the Buivydžiai Community **Danuta Korkus**



LT •

**„Pirmiausia mes formuojame
savo pastatus, o paskui jie
formuoja mus.“**

Winstonas Churchillis

Gerbiami skaitytojai,

Jūsų dėmesiui pateikiame mokslinių straipsnių rinkinį, parengtą remiantis pranešimais, skaitytais tarptautinėje mokslinėje konferencijoje „Buivydžiai — Šventasis Florijonas, Corpi Santi ir ugnia-gesybos raida: reikšmė Lietuvos ir Europos istoriniame bei kultū-riniame kontekste“, vykusioje 2025 m. rugsėjo 9 d. Buivydžiuose.

Konferencija buvo skirta unikalaus XVIII amžiaus kultūros paminklo — šv. Florijono Corpi Santi, nuo 1794 metų saugomo šv. Flo-rijono koplyčioje — išsaugojimui. Skulptūros ir pačios koplyčios architektūrinių bei meninių bruožų analizė atskleidžia jų ypating-

Pripažinimo žodžius skiriame visiems, remiančiams Buivydžių bendruomenės veiklą, už jų nesavanaudišką darbą, atsidavimą ir laiką, skirtą vietos bendruomenei.

Vadovaudamasi Winstono Churchillio žodžiais — „Pirmiausia mes formuojame savo pastatus, o paskui jie formuoja mus“ — Buivydžių bendruomenė, organizuodama mokslinę konferenciją, pradėjo tvarkos, harmonijos ir istorinės atminties atkū-

rimo procesą Buivydžiuose. Tikime, kad rūpinimasis mažų bendruomenių kultūros paveldu tampa platesnės visuomeninės tvarkos pagrindu.

Tikimės, kad ši publikacija prisidės prie žinių apie Buivydžius populiarinimo ir parems veiklą, skirtą viso paminklų ansamblio atstatymui ir apsaugai.

Konferencijos inauguracijos dalyviai. | Uczestnicy inauguracji konferencji. | Participants in the conference inauguration.



**„We shape our buildings,
and afterwards our buildings
shape us.“**

Winston Churchill

Dear Readers,

We present to you a collection of scholarly articles based on papers delivered at the international academic conference “Buivydžiai — St Florian, Corpi Santi and the Development of Firefighting: Significance in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe,” held on 9 September 2025 in Buivydžiai.

The conference was devoted to the preservation of a unique eighteenth-century cultural monument — the Corpi Santi of St Florian, housed in the Chapel of St Florian since 1794. An analysis of the architectural and artistic features of the sculpture and of the chapel itself reveals their particular significance within the local, national and European tradition of sacred art. These objects also remain an important testimony to the spiritual and cultural heritage of the region and to the artistic influences of the Enlightenment.

According to researchers, the sacred ensemble in Buivydžiai, the layout of the town and the manor may have been designed to the commission of the estate owner, the magnate Michał Radziszewski, by his friend — the eminent architect Laurynas Gucevičius. Documentation relating to these undertakings has not survived and was most likely lost during the wars and national uprisings.

Gucevičius was profoundly influenced by antiquity and the ideas of the Enlightenment. In his designs, architecture was to express order, harmony, dignity and republican values, and he drew his inspiration directly from ancient Rome.

To this day, the original urban layout of the town has been preserved in Buivydžiai. The manor and its estate buildings were destroyed during the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. What has survived, however, is the sacred triptych forming the historical centre of the town: the Church of St George, the Chapel of St Florian and the bell tower. These structures continue to define the spatial and symbolic order of Buivydžiai, remaining an important element of local identity.

History, however, did not spare these monuments either. In 1982, the wooden Church of St George was destroyed by fire. Through the determination of the parishioners, the church was rebuilt within four years on its original foundations — this time as a masonry structure. At present, the church roof, the Chapel of St Florian and the historic bell tower all require urgent conservation work.

In response to these needs, the Buivydžiai Community has launched a fundraising campaign to save this unique architectural ensemble. Information about the bank accounts to which donations may be directed can be found at the end of this publication. Every contribution will be a valuable investment in the protection of the cultural heritage of Buivydžiai.

The international academic conference “Buivydžiai — St Florian, Corpi Santi and the Development of Firefighting: Significance in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe” was widely covered by Lithuanian media. Among the outlets involved in promoting the event were TVP Vilnius, Kurier Wileński, the Delfi portal, LRT and Radio Znad Wilii.

The conference was preceded by a cycle of cultural events, a “Picnic with Firefighters” and an open-air painting session. Photographic reports from the accompanying events are included at the end of this publication.

An analysis of the architectural and artistic features of the sculpture and of the chapel itself reveals their particular significance within the local, national and European tradition of sacred art.

The realisation of a project of this scale would not have been possible without the support of sponsors, partners and friends of the Buivydžiai Community. We extend our gratitude for financial and organisational assistance to the Vilnius District Municipality, the Fire Protection and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, the Vilnius District Volunteer Fire Service, the closed joint-stock company MAKAS, the Polish Institute in Vilnius, the Buivydžiai Eldership and the Tadeusz Konwicki Gymnasium in Buivydžiai.

Special thanks for prayer and spiritual support go to Prelate Rev. Dr Eduardas Kirstukas and to the parish priest of Buivydžiai, Rev. Tadeusz Matulaniec.

The Buivydžiai Community was established in 2007 as a civic organisation serving the local community. Its activities encompass social, cultural and educational initiatives carried out in cooperation with the Vilnius District Municipality, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Angels and the Parish of St George in Buivydžiai. All projects are realised through the voluntary commitment of the Community’s members and supporters.

We extend our recognition to all those who support the activities of the Buivydžiai Community for their selfless work, dedication and time devoted to the local community.

Guided by the words of Winston Churchill — “We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us” — the Buivydžiai Community, by organising this academic conference, has initiated a process of restoring order, harmony and historical memory in Buivydžiai. We believe that care for the cultural heritage of small communities becomes the foundation of a broader social order.

We hope that this publication will contribute to spreading knowledge about Buivydžiai and will support the efforts to rebuild and protect the entire heritage ensemble.



Konferencijos inauguracija šv. Jurgio bažnyčioje. |
Inauguracja konferencji w kościele św. Jerzego. |
Conference Opening at St. George's Church.

Kunigas **Tadeušas Matulianec**, Buivydžių Šv. Jurgio ir Balingrado Dievo Apvaizdos parapijų klebonas

Ksiądz **Tadeusz Matulaniec**, proboszcz parafii św. Jerzego w Bujwiczach oraz Opatrzności Bożej w Balingródku

Father **Tadeusz Matulaniec**, Pastor of St. George Parish in Buivydžiai and Divine Providence Parish in Balingrad



LT •

Gerbiami konferencijos dalyviai, mieli svečiai,

Nuoširdžiai sveikinu jus visus, susirinkusius šiandien į tarptautinę konferenciją čia, Buivydžiuose, ypatingoje vietoje — prie šventojo Florijono relikvijų.

Šiandien ypatingai noriu pasveikinti ugniagesius — šio didžiojo šventojo gerbėjus, žmones, kurių kasdienė tarnystė reikalauja

ne tik profesionalumo, bet ir išskirtinės drąsos. Šventasis Florijonas — tai žmonių, kurie gelbsti kitų gyvybes ir turtą, globėjas. Taip pat jis — ir tų gynėjų globėjas, kurie, kaip ir jis pats, stojo ginti protėvių tikėjimo, dažnai rizikuodami savo gyvybe.

Šventasis Florijonas buvo Romos legionierius III amžiaus pabaigoje, kai krikščionybė vis dar kentėjo nuo skaudžių imperatoriškųjų persekiojimų. Vieno iš paskutiniųjų šių persekiojimų

Dear conference participants, honoured guests,

I warmly welcome all of you gathered today at this international conference here in Buivydžiai, in this exceptional place — beside the relics of St Florian.

I extend a special welcome to the firefighters present — devotees of this great saint, the patron of those whose daily service demands not only professionalism but extraordinary courage. St Florian is the protector of those who save the lives and property of

others. He is also the patron of all who, like him, have stood in defence of their forefathers' faith, often at the risk of their own lives.

St Florian was a Roman legionary at the close of the third century, when Christianity still suffered under the painful yoke of imperial persecution. During one of the last of these persecutions — under Emperor Diocletian — St Florian was ordered to offer sacrifice to pagan idols. Yet he boldly professed his faith in Christ, declaring: "O Lord, my God, in Thee I have placed my hope! I cannot therefore deny Thee, but I shall fight for Thee and offer Thee a



sacrifice of praise.” As punishment, a stone was tied around his neck and he was cast into the depths of a river — thus completing his service to Christ.

It is therefore no wonder that in Holy Scripture the Lord says to each of us: share in the hardships and adversities of your service as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If with Christ you die to sin, to evil, to idols, to envy and selfishness in your heart, then with Him you shall also live. Fear not those who kill the body but cannot kill

the soul. Rather, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

I wish you all a fruitful and meaningful participation in the conference that is now beginning. May today’s discussions, the sharing of experience and fellowship strengthen our bonds and inspire us to further service to our fellow men and to our community.

Thank you

Konferencijos inauguracija šv. Jurgio bažnyčioje. | Inauguracja konferencji w kościele św. Jerzego. |
Conference Opening at St. George’s Church.





Kun Teol. Dr. **Eduardas Kirstukas**

Kun Teol. Dr. **Eduardas Kirstukas**

Rev. Dr. **Eduardas Kirstukas**

LT •

Brangūs skaitytojai.

Su dideliu džiaugsmu pristatau ir tariau sveikinimo žodį Jums leidinį, kuris pristato mums tarptautinės konferencijos apie Buvydžių Šv. Florijono Corpi Sancti relikviją ir gaisrininkų judėjimo paveldą medžiagą.

Man teko didelė garbė tarti sveikinimo žodį dalyviams susirinkusiems į konferenciją Buvydžių bažnyčioje ir dalyvauti konferencijoje, kurios iniciatoriais buvo Buvydžių bendruomenė.

Kalbame apie vietą, kur susipina gilus katalikų tikėjimas, Europos istorija, architektūros paveldas ir gyva vietos bendruomenės atmintis. Buvydžiai yra ne tik mažas Lietuvos pasienio miestelis. Tai yra vieta, kurioje galime matyti kelių šimtmečių kultūros, tikėjimo ir žmonių pastangų išsaugoti savo paveldą istorija.

Ypatingą reikšmę šioje istorijoje užima Šv. Florijono Corpi Sancti relikvija, kuri yra saugoma bažnyčios ansamblio koplyčioje, pastatytoje kaip Radiševskių šeimos mauzoliejus. Tai ne tik unikalus Lietuvos sakralinio paveldo objektas, bet ir vienas retų Europos religinės istorijos liudijimų.

Buivydžiuose mes galime matyti ne tik pačią relikviją, bet ir jos aplinką – architektūrą, simbolius, memorialinę paskirtį ir vietos bendruomenės ryšį su šiuo paveldu.

Tikiu, kad šis leidinys taps ne tik mokslinės diskusijos apie istoriją, architektūrą ar relikvijų kultą supažindinimu, bet ir mūsų ir pokalbiu apie mūsų atsakomybę už paveldą, apie vietos tapatybę, apie bendruomenės vaidmenį saugant kultūrinės vertybes bei apie gebėjimą istorinius objektus paversti gyvais kultūros centrais.

Linkiu, kad pranešimai su kuriais susipažinsite šiame leidinyje paskatintų vietos bendruomenes labiau pažinti aplinką, kurioje gyvena.

**BUIVYDŽIŲ
BENDRUOMENĖ**



**WSPÓLNOTA
BUJWIDZKA**



TARPTAUTINĖ MOKSLINĖ KONFERENCIJA

Buivydžiai, 2025 09 09

„Buivydžių šv. Florijono Corpi Santi ir
gaisrininkų judėjimo svarba Lietuvos ir Europos
istorinio-kultūrinio konteksto rėmuose“

MIĘDZYNARODOWA KONFERENCJA NAUKOWA

Bujwidze, 2025 09 09

„Znaczenie Corpi Santi św. Floriana z Bujwidz
oraz ruchu strażaków w kontekście
historyczno-kulturowym Litwy i Europy“

PARTNERIAI, REMĖJAI:

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Buivydžių Šv. Jurgio parapija | UAB „MAKAS“

Parafia Św. Jerzego w Bujwidzach | UAB „MAKAS“



MUS PALAIKO ŽINIASKLAIDA:
WSPIERAJĄ NAS MEDIA:



Dear Readers,

It is with great joy that I present to you and offer a word of welcome to this publication, which brings us materials from the international conference on the relic of St. Florian Corpi Sancti in Buivydžiai and the heritage of the firefighter movement.

I had the great honor of delivering a welcoming address to the participants gathered at the conference in the Buivydžiai Church and of participating in the conference, which was initiated by the Buivydžiai community.

We are talking about a place where deep Catholic faith, European history, architectural heritage, and the living memory of the local community intertwine. Buivydžiai is not just a small town on the Lithuanian border. It is a place where we can see the history of several centuries of culture, faith, and people's efforts to preserve their heritage.

The relic of St. Florian Corpi Sancti, which is kept in the chapel of the church complex—built as the mausoleum of the Radiševskis family—holds special significance in this history. It is not only a unique object of Lithuania's sacred heritage but also one of the rare testimonies to European religious history.

When discussing the Corpi Sancti phenomenon, we touch upon 18th-century European history. After the catacombs in Rome were discovered, there was a surge of interest in the remains of the first Christian martyrs. Relics taken from the catacombs were transported to various countries around the world. These "holy bodies" became special signs of faith, symbolizing the continuity of early Christianity and the unity of the Church.

The relic in Buivydžiai stands out not only because it is one of only two such relics that have survived in Lithuania to this day. It is special for its authenticity, artistic value, and historical context. Original 18th-century documents attesting to the relic's or-

igin and the circumstances of its transfer have survived to this day. It is also important to note that an architectural and artistic complex has survived to this day—a pyramid-shaped chapel and an altar crafted from shell rock—the very place where the relics were displayed for veneration.

In Buivydžiai, we can see not only the relic itself but also its surroundings—the architecture, symbols, memorial purpose, and the local community's connection to this heritage.

It is precisely this complexity that makes the Buivydžiai site exceptional not only in Lithuania but in Europe. Often, individual historical artifacts have survived to the present day, but it is far rarer for the entire space created specifically for them to remain intact. This allows us to understand how relics were perceived and honored in their own time. In Buivydžiai, we can see not only the relic itself but also its surroundings—the architecture, symbols, memorial purpose, and the local community's connection to this heritage.

The architecture of the sacred complex itself is also very important. Researchers attribute its design to one of Lithuania's most prominent architects, Laurynas Gucevičius. Regardless of how much further scholarly debate lies ahead, it is clear that the Buivydžiai complex reflects the high architectural culture of the 18th century and the aesthetic ideals of that time. Here, sacred function, memorial purpose, and artistic expression converge.

The pyramid-shaped chapel is an extraordinary phenomenon in the context of Lithuanian architecture. Its form evokes the symbolism of eternity, memory, and resurrection characteristic of European memorial architecture. This architectural solution testifies not only to the founders' ambitions but also to the intellectual and artistic connections of that era with broader European cultural trends. The adjacent altar made of shellstone lends the ensemble even greater distinctiveness and speaks to a unique dialogue between art, faith, and architecture.

The history of Buivydžiai also tells a story of people. Over the centuries, this region has been associated with the names of the Dluski, Bžostovski, Augustinian monks, and Radiševski families. Each of these stories has left its mark on the town's cultural landscape. Therefore, the conference naturally went beyond the boundaries of mere relic or architectural research and invited us to look at Buivydžiai through a completely different lens.

It is particularly meaningful that, alongside the topic of the Corpi Santi relics, the history of the volunteer firefighter movement was also discussed at this conference. St. Florian is known throughout Europe as the patron saint of firefighters. It is therefore no coincidence that it was in Buivydžiai—where a volunteer firefighter team has operated since time immemorial, and where a firefighter orchestra was even established for a time—that the idea was born to combine these two histories into a single meaningful narrative.

This connection allows us to view heritage more broadly. Heritage is not just buildings or museum artifacts. It is also people's service to the community, traditions of volunteerism, responsibility for the safety of others, and the ability to unite for a common goal. The history of volunteer firefighters reminds us that cultural heritage is preserved not only by institutions but also by communities that understand its value and feel a sense of responsibility for its future.

Therefore, special thanks today go to the Buivydžiai community and its active members, who, through their initiatives, seek

to preserve the uniqueness of this region. Their efforts draw public attention to valuable sacred sites, historical traditions, and cultural memory. This is a perfect example of how a local community can become a vital force in heritage preservation and promotion.

Equally inspiring is the fact that after a fire during the Soviet era, the Buivydžiai church was rebuilt through the efforts and funds of local residents. This is eloquent testimony that the true value of heritage lies not only in walls or works of art, but also in people's determination to preserve them for future generations.

I believe this publication will serve not only to introduce academic discussions on history, architecture, or the veneration of relics, but also a conversation among us about our responsibility for heritage, about local identity, about the community's role in safeguarding cultural values, and about the ability to transform historical sites into vibrant cultural centers.

I hope that the articles you will read in this publication will encourage local communities to get to know the environment in which they live better.



Konferencijos sesijos moderatorius, meno istorikas Saulius Pilinkus. Buivydyžių bendruomenės pirmininkė Danuta Korkus. | Moderator sesji konferencyjnej; historyk sztuki, Saulius Pilinkus. Przewodnicząca wspólnoty w Bujwidzach: Danuta Korkus. | Conference Session Moderator, art historian: Saulius Pilinkus. Chairwoman of the Buivydziai Community: Danuta Korkus.

Tarptautinės mokslinės konferencijos programa

„Buivydžiai — Šventasis Florijonas „Corpi Santi” ir ugniagesybos raida: reikšmė Lietuvos ir Europos istoriniame bei kultūriniame kontekste”

Program Międzynarodowej Konferencji Naukowej

„Bujwidze – Święty Florian “Corpi Santi” i rozwój straży pożarnej: znaczenie w kontekście historyczno-kulturowym Litwy i Europy”

Programme of the International Academic Conference

“Buivydžiai — St Florian ‘Corpi Santi’ and the Development of Firefighting: Significance in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe”

LT •

Buivydžiai, 2025 m. rugsėjo 9 d. (nemokamas įėjimas)

10:00–11:00 Konferencijos atidarymas

Vieta: Šv. Jurgio bažnyčia; Bažnyčios g. 1, Buivydžiai I k., Vilniaus rajonas

Sveikinimo žodis

Buivydžių bendruomenės pirmininkė **Danuta Korkus**

Vilniaus rajono meras **Robertas Duchnievičius**

Vidaus reikalų ministras **Vladislavas Kondratovičius**

Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamento direktorius, vidaus tarnybos generolas **Renatas Požėla**

Buivydžiai, 9 September 2025 (free admission)

10:00–11:00 Opening of the conference

Venue: Church of St George; Bažnyčios g. 1, Buivydžiai I k., Vilnius District

Welcome addresses:

Chairwoman of the Buivydžiai Community, **Danuta Korkus**

Mayor of Vilnius District, **Robert Duchniewicz**

Minister of the Interior, **Władysław Kondratowicz**

Director of the Fire Protection and Rescue Department, General of Internal Service **Renatas Požėla**

Dean of the Nemenčinė Deanery, Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Rev. Dr **Eduardas Kirstukas**

Cultural Heritage Adviser at the Ministry of Culture, **Valdas Krulikauskas**

Director of the Polish Institute in Vilnius, Dr **Piotr Drobniak**

H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Holy See, **Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė** (video greeting)

11:00–12:00 Registration of participants

Venue: Vilkinės g. 3, Buivydžių sen., Vilnius District (prior registration required)

SESSION OF SCHOLARLY PAPERS

Moderator: Saulius Pilinkus (art historian)

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|--------------------|---|
| 12:00–12:30 | Dr Rūta Janonienė (art historian) „The work of architect Laurynas Gucevičius and the historic buildings of the town of Buivydžiai“ |
| 12:30–13:10 | Dr Paweł K. Gąsiorczyk (Central Museum of Firefighting, Mysłowice) „The history of voluntary fire and rescue services in Poland: the influence of VFB units on the preservation of tradition“ |
| 13:10–13:20 | Rita Pauliukevičiūtė, Violeta Indriūnienė (Museum of Church Heritage) „Traditions of relic veneration and the history of the Corpi Santi in the Church of St George in Buivydžiai“ |

13:20–13:40	Skirmantas Andriušis (Fire Protection and Rescue Department, Ministry of the Interior) „Under the patronage of St Florian: the history of firefighting in Lithuania“
13:40–14:20	Lunch break
14:20–14:40	Artūras Vaišnoras (Vilnius District Volunteer Fire Service Association) „The development of the volunteer firefighter movement in Lithuania“
14:40–15:00	Neringa Leonavičienė (Fire Protection and Rescue Department, Ministry of the Interior) „Fire protection of sacred buildings“
15:00–15:20	Raimundas Balza (Šiauliai Aušra Museum) „The concept of a firefighting museum and training centre for the protection of cultural assets from extreme situations“
15:20–15:40	Donatas Gurevičius (Fire Protection and Rescue Department, Ministry of the Interior) „Current issues in civil protection and the safeguarding of religious heritage sites“
15:40–16:30	Summary discussion and closing of the conference.



ŠVENTASIS FLORIJONAS
UGNIAGESIŲ
GLOBĖJAS

ŚWIĘTY FLORIAN
PATRON
STRAŻAKÓW

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The work of architect Laurynas Gucevičius and the historic buildings of the town of Buivydžiai

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Dr hab. **Rūta Janonienė** Full Member of the Academy of Sciences

LT •

Buivydžiai – jaukus miestelis netoli Vilniaus, tik kiek nuošaliau nuo didesnių kelių, išsidėstęs ant vaizdingo Neries kranto. Iš pirmo žvilgsnio jis panašus į daugelį mūsų senųjų bažnytkaimių ir dvarų, tačiau yra unikalus tiek savo istorija, tiek ir meno paminklais. Didžiausia vietovės įžymybė - XVIII a. pabaigoje Mykolo Radziševskio pastatyto dvaro ir jo funduotos bažnyčios kompleksas. Ansamblis turėjo būti neeilinio grožio, tikėtina projektuotas talentingojo architekto Lauryno Gucevičiaus, kurio ryšiams su Radziševskiais reikėtų skirti atskirą tyrimą. Galim tik paminėti, kad abu jie buvo patriotai, abu dalyvavo 1794 m. sukilime. Architekto braižą galima buvo atpažinti ir bendrame simetriškame ansamblio statinių išdėstyme, ir jautriame jų santykių su vaizdinga gamta, ir aiškiose geometrinėse 1785 m. funduotos Šv. Jurgio bažnyčios formose. Pasak Konstantino Tiškevičiaus, neabejojusio Gucevi-

čiaus autoryste, šventovė buvo labai išvaizdi, be to, su užmoju ir meniškai pastatyta. Iš obliuotų pušinių rąstų ant mūrinių pamatų statytos bažnyčios architektūra buvo persmelkta skaičių simbolikos – virš šešiakampio bažnyčios tūrio kilo didžiulis aštuoniabriaunis kupolas, užbaigtas aštuoniakampiu žibintu, išilgai šventovės erdvę patęsė penkiakampė presbiterija ir trisienis prieangis. Bažnyčios fasadas vizualiai priminė Vilniaus katedrą – keturių kolonų portiką puošė daugiau skulptūrų nei dabar – abipus įėjimo stovėjo šv. Kazimiero ir šv. Stanislovo figūros, o virš frontono – šv. Elenos su kryžiumi (centre), šv. Jurgio ant žirgo (dešinėje) ir šv. Mykolo (kairėje) statulos. Bažnyčios viduje meniškai ištaipytas sienas juosė galerija, paremta ant aštuonių medinių stulpų, padengtų pokostu ir smėliu taip, kad kūrė akmeninių atramų įspūdį. Bažnyčia parapijiečių buvo puoselėjama ir saugoma.



Šv. Jurgio bažnyčia Buivydžiuose. | Kościół św. Jerzego w Bujwidzach. | St. George's Church in Buivydžiai.

Šalia bažnyčios kaip dabar, taip ir anuomet žvilgsnius traukė originali mūrinė piramidės formos koplyčia, fundatoriaus dangiškojo globėjo garbei pavadinta Šv. Mykolo Arkangelo titulu. (Vėliau koplyčios globėju tapo šv. Florijonas)

Štai 1908 m. laikraščio *Zorza Wileńska* (nr. 50) korespondentas, rašydamas apie Buivydžių parapiją, paminėjo, kad čionykštė medinė bažnyčia dar nesena, rūpestingai prižiūrima, prieš keletą metų ženkliai padidinta, o prieš metus pastatytas naujas didysis altorius, todėl bažnyčia dailiai atrodo tiek iš išorės, tiek viduje. Šalia bažnyčios kaip dabar, taip ir anuomet žvilgsnius traukė originali mūrinė piramidės formos koplyčia, fundatoriaus dangiškojo globėjo garbei pavadinta Šv. Mykolo Arkangelo titulu. Reportaže minima, kad prieš keliolika metų audra nuplėšė nuo piramidės viršaus šv. Mykolo Arkangelo figūrą, kartu su ją dengusiu stogeliu, o vėliau toje vietoje lizdą susinešė gandas.

Dzień św. Floriana, tradycyjnie obchodzony 4 maja, od dawna był najważniejszym świętem parafii bujwidskiej. Pewnego razu, w 1920 roku, postanowiono połączyć te uroczystości religijne z obchodami uchwalenia Konstytucji 3 Maja. Święto było tak wielkie, jakiego – według ówczesnej prasy – Bujwidze jeszcze nie widziały. Ulice zostały zamiecione i posypane piaskiem. Wzniesiono bramy triumfalne, a domy przyozdobiono barwami narodowymi. Po uroczystej mszy świętej proboszcz, w otoczeniu kilku tysięcy

pielgrzymów, uczniów oraz niosących sztandary członków organizacji młodzieżowych, udał się na plac przed kościołem, któremu nadano imię 3 Maja. Wydarzenie to trafnie odpowiadało ideałom i nadziejom pielęgnowanym niegdyś przez budowniczych bujwidskiego kompleksu, ich determinacji w obronie wolności Ojczyzny, wzmacnianiu społeczeństwa obywatelskiego i pielęgnowaniu własnej tożsamości kulturowej. A jednocześnie jest to przypomnienie dla nas.

EN •

Buivydžiai is a charming little town not far from Vilnius, situated slightly off the main roads, spread along the picturesque bank of the Neris. At first glance it resembles many of our old church towns and manor estates, yet it is unique both in its history and in its artistic monuments. The town's greatest attraction is the palace-and-church ensemble founded and built at the end of the eighteenth century by Michał Radziszewski. The complex must have been of extraordinary beauty; it was most probably designed by the talented architect Laurynas Gucevičius, whose relations with the Radziszewski family would merit a separate study. We can only note that both men were patriots and both took part in the Kościuszko Insurrection of 1794. The architect's hand could be recognised in the overall symmetrical arrangement of the ensemble's buildings, in their sensitive relationship with the picturesque natural surroundings, and in the clear geometric forms of the Church of St George, founded in 1785. According to Konstantinas Tiškevičius, who had no doubt as to Gucevičius's authorship, the church was very handsome and, moreover, built with ambition and artistic skill. The architecture of the church, constructed of hewn pine logs on masonry foundations, was steeped in the symbolism of numbers — above the hexagonal body of the church rose a massive octagonal dome crowned with an octagonal lantern, while the interior space was extended lengthwise by a pentagonal presbytery and a three-sided porch.

The church façade was visually reminiscent of Vilnius Cathedral — its four-column portico was adorned with more sculptures than today: on either side of the entrance stood the figures of St Casimir and St Stanislaus, and above the pediment the statues of St Helen with a cross (in the centre), St George on horseback (on the right) and St Michael (on the left). Inside the church, artfully painted walls were encircled by a gallery supported on eight wooden columns coated with varnish and sand so as to create the impression of stone supports. The church was lovingly tended and protected by the parishioners.

In 1908, a correspondent of the newspaper *Zorza Wileńska* (No. 50), writing about the parish of Buivydžiai, noted that the local wooden church was still relatively new, carefully maintained, considerably enlarged a few years earlier, and that a new high altar had been erected the year before, so that the church presented a fine appearance both inside and out. Beside the church — then as now — the eye was drawn to the original masonry chapel in the form of a pyramid, named in honour of the founder's celestial patron under the title of St Michael the Archangel. The report mentioned that some dozen years earlier a storm had torn the figure of St Michael the Archangel from the top of the pyramid, together with the canopy that covered it, and that a stork had subsequently built its nest in that spot.

Beside the church — then as now — the eye was drawn to the original masonry chapel in the form of a pyramid, named in honour of the founder's celestial patron under the title of St Michael the Archangel. (Later, St. Florian became the patron saint of the chapel)

History did not spare Buivydžiai — of the imposing manor house and the picturesque park that surrounded it, almost no trace remains. Confiscated for participation in the November Uprising of 1831, the Radziszewski estate had already begun to deteriorate in the nineteenth century. The wooden Church of St George burned down in 1982; the masonry church rebuilt after the fire repeats the form of the former church only in its general outline. In essence, the only structure to have survived in fully authentic form is the masonry funerary chapel of the Radziszewski family, standing nearby. Perhaps it was saved from the flames by the intercession of St Florian, whose relics had been kept in this mausoleum from the very beginning. Church documents record that Ludwika Brzostowska-Radziszewska received these relics from Pope Pius VI on 3 May 1794, and that on the day of the church's consecration — 17 July 1796 — they were carried into the chapel and placed in its highly original altar, built (according to inventory data from 1810) of multicoloured fieldstones in imitation of a natural grotto or rock. The singular form of the chapel and the unexpected conception of its altar confirm that the ensemble was designed by an architect of no ordinary talent.

The feast of St Florian, traditionally celebrated on 4 May, had long been the most prominent holiday of the Buivydžiai parish. On one occasion, in 1920, it was decided to combine this religious observance with the commemoration of the Constitution of the Third of May. The celebration was of such magnitude as Buivydžiai —

according to the press of the day — had never seen. The streets were swept and sprinkled with sand. Triumphal arches were erected, and houses were decorated in the national colours. After a solemn Mass, the parish priest, accompanied by several thousand pilgrims, schoolchildren and flag-bearing members of youth organisations, proceeded to the square in front of the church, which was given the name of the Third of May. This event aptly echoed the ideals and hopes once cherished by the builders of the Buivydžiai ensemble, their determination to defend the freedom of the Fatherland, to strengthen civil society and to treasure their cultural identity. And at the same time, it is a reminder to us.

Varpinė. | Dzwonnica. | Bell Tower.



Šventųjų relikvijų garbinimo istorija.

Corpisanți tradicija ir šv. Florijono figūra Buivydžių bažnyčioje

Historia kultu relikwii świętych.

Tradycja corpisanți i figura św. Floriana w kościele w Buivydźiai

The history of the veneration of sacred relics.

The corpisanți tradition and the figure of St Florian in the church at Buivydźiai

Rita Pauliukevičiūtė Bažnytinio paveldo muziejus, direktorė

Rita Pauliukevičiūtė. Muzeum Dziedzictwa Kościelnego, Dyrektorka

Rita Pauliukevičiūtė Museum of Church Heritage, Director

LT •

Relikvijų temą derėtų pradėti nuo minties, kad krikščionybėje ypatinga reikšmė priskiriama ne tik žmogaus sielai, bet ir kūnui. Kristus yra įsikūnijęs Dievas, kenčiantis Dievas, Dievas, maitinantis žmoniją savo kūnu. Kūnui taip pat pažadėtas amžinasis gyvenimas.

Šventojo kūnas, tapęs relikvija, tampa liudytoju. Graikiškas žodis martyr, kuriuo vadiname kankinius, reiškia „liudytojas“. Pirmosiomis relikvijomis tapo I–IV amžiaus krikščionybės išpažinėjų ir kankinių, žuvusių už tikėjimą, palaikai. Krikščionių bendruomenei buvo svarbu matyti ištvermės ir drąsos pavyzdį, todėl kančios paženklintus kūnus imta ypatingai gerbti: juos rinkdavo, saugo-

davo ir prie jų meldavosi. Vienas pirmųjų žinomų relikvijų kulto atvejų yra krikščionių iš Smirnos laiškas iš 156 m. apie ant laužo sudeginto vyskupo šv. Polikarpo kūną:

„Surinkome jo kaulus, kurie yra brangesni už brangakmenius ir kilnesni už gryną auksą, ir padėjome juos deramoje vietoje; ten, Dievui leidus, visi kartu džiugiai rinkdamiesi, švęsime jo kankinystės dieną — prisimindami tuos, kurie jau kovojo šiame mūsų amžinyje, ir mokydami bei ruošdami tuos, kurie kovos ateityje.“

Plačiai paplitus relikvijų fenomenui, kilo įvairių prieštaraimų. Pastebėta, kad kai kurių relikvijų kilmė neaiški ir jų autentiškumo



Buivydžių šv. Florijono kūnas-relikvijorius, XVIII a. | Relikviarzas w formie ciała św. Floriana w Bujwidzach, XVIII w. |
The body-shaped reliquary of St. Florian in Buivydžiai, 18th century.

31 maja 1578 r. w Rzymie, w winnicach przy Via Salaria, odkryto pierwsze katakumby (Coemeterium Jordanorum). Rozpoczęło się odrodzenie kultu relikwii męczenników.

Katakumby stały się — jak nazwali je badacze — „kopalniami świętości”. Wierzono, że pochowano tam chrześcijańskich męczenników z I–IV wieku, dlatego zaczęto ekshumować ich ciała jako relikwie. Nieznanym świętym nadawano imiona, wystawiano dokumenty autentyczności, a szczątki w za-

plombowanych skrzyniach wysyłano do różnych diecezji europejskich, gdzie szybko rozpowszechniły się w kościołach. Największym zainteresowaniem cieszyły się relikwie całego ciała. Na ołtarzach wystawiano bogato zdobione klejnotami ciała świętych, świadczące o ich męczeństwie, odwadze i niebiańskim blasku.

Mniej więcej do połowy XVIII wieku szkielety z katakumb przekazywano proszącym w Rzymie w prostych zaplombowanych

na głowie znajduje się peruka z naturalnych ludzkich włosów. Ma na sobie jedwabne pończochy do kolan i czarne jedwabne buty z kokardami. Męczennik trzyma metalową gałązkę palmową pokrytą zieloną emalią i okryty jest czerwonym płaszczem. Wnętrze trumny wyłożono białą tkaniną haftowaną drobnymi jedwabnymi kwiatkami.

W relikwiarzach *corpisanți* czczone są bezimienne relikwie z katakumb, którym nadawano symboliczne imiona; potwierdza to zdjęcie rentgenowskie Floriana z Buivydžiai — wewnątrz widoczne są różne drobne kości. Jednak w trumience obok relikwii-rzeźby znajduje się ozdobny pozłacany kryształowy kielich z relikwiami dobrze znanego VIII-wiecznego męczennika św. Floriana, patrona chroniącego przed pożarami, przesłany z Krakowa. Do kielicha przywiązano kartkę z łacińskim napisem i

pieczęcią: „Relikwie z kości św. Floriana męczennika, przesłane z Krakowa wraz ze świadectwem księcia [Adama Stefana Sapiehy], biskupa krakowskiego, z dnia 13 maja 1925 r.” („*Reliquiae ex ossibus S. Floriani Mart. transmissae e Cracovia una cum testimonio Principis Episcopi Cracoviensis de d. 13 Maji 1925 an.*”). Najprawdopodobniej podczas I wojny światowej relikwie św. Floriana z kielicha zaginęły i w 1922 r. poproszono o przesłanie nowych z Krakowa, gdzie znajduje się słynne miejsce kultu tego świętego.

Opracowano na podstawie publikacji „Święte ciała. Św. Bonifacy z Valinkai”. Autorki tekstów: Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė, Ruth Sargent Noyes. Muzeum Dziedzictwa Kościelnego, 2023.

EN •

The subject of relics ought to begin with the thought that in Christianity, particular significance is ascribed not only to the human soul but also to the body. Christ is God incarnate, God who suffered, God who nourishes humanity with His body. The body, too, is promised eternal life.

The body of a saint that has become a relic becomes a witness. The Greek word *martyr*, which we use to describe those who died for the faith, means „witness.” The first relics were the remains of confessors of Christianity and martyrs of the first to fourth centuries who perished for their faith. For the Christian community, it was important to see an example of perseverance and courage, and therefore bodies marked by suffering began

to be accorded particular veneration: they were gathered, preserved and prayed over. One of the earliest known instances of the veneration of relics is the letter from the Christians of Smyrna, dated 156 AD, concerning the body of Bishop St Polycarp, who was burned at the stake:

„We gathered his bones, which are more precious than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a fitting place; there, God willing, we shall all joyfully gather together and celebrate the day of his martyrdom — remembering those who have already fought in this battle, and teaching and preparing those who will fight in the future.”

With the widespread proliferation of the phenomenon of relics, various controversies arose. It was noted that some relics were of unclear origin and their authenticity could not be confirmed; sometimes they were disseminated for commercial purposes. The sharpest criticism, however, concerned the fact that people prayed to them as to idols.

The Fathers of the Church supported the veneration of relics but emphasised that one must distinguish veneration from worship, which belongs to God alone. The miracles that occur during prayer before the relics of saints do not arise from any magical power of the relics, but from the fact that the work of God, which acted through the lives of the saints, continues after their death. God, according to His will, uses the memory of Christ and the saints as an instrument of grace. „God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul. Even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body were brought to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them“ (Acts 19:11–12).

Relics — the remains of holy persons or objects that belonged to them — are divided into three categories. First-class relics are parts of the bodies of saints and the instruments of the Lord's Passion. Second-class relics are personal objects of the saints, such as clothing or instruments of martyrdom. Third-class relics are any objects that have directly touched first- or second-class relics.

In the fourth century, when Christianity became a legal religion and the cult of relics spread, Roman Christians virtually flocked to the catacombs in search of martyrs' relics, practically plundering the remains. Initially, many people still wished to be buried alongside the martyrs. Over time, however, the custom of burial in the catacombs faded, and the dead were increasingly interred beside churches. In the tenth century, the catacombs were abandoned and forgotten until the sixteenth century.

On 31 May 1578, in Rome, in the vineyards along the Via Salaria, the first catacombs were discovered (Coemeterium Jordanorum). The revival of the cult of martyrs' relics began.

The catacombs became — as scholars termed them — „mines of holiness.“ It was believed that Christian martyrs of the first to fourth centuries had been buried there, and their bodies began to be exhumed as relics. Unknown saints were given names, certificates of authenticity were issued, and the remains were sent in sealed chests to various European dioceses, where they quickly proliferated in churches. The greatest interest was re-

Taurė su šv. Florijono relikvijomis, Krokuva 1925 m. | Kielich z relikwiami św. Florianą, Kraków, 1925 r. | Chalice with the relics of St. Florian, Kraków, 1925.



**Richly bejewelled bodies
of saints were displayed
on altars, testifying to
their martyrdom, courage
and heavenly radiance.**

Buivydžių šv. Florijono relikvija – skulptūra, XVIII a. | Rzeźba-relikwiarz
św. Floriana w Bujwidzach, XVIII w. | The reliquary sculpture of St. Florian in
Buivydžiai, 18th century.



served for whole-body relics. Richly bejewelled bodies of saints were displayed on altars, testifying to their martyrdom, courage and heavenly radiance.

Until approximately the mid-eighteenth century, skeletons from the catacombs were handed over to petitioners in Rome in simple sealed wooden chests together with a document confirming authenticity. The recipient was then responsible for the dignified display of the bones in their parish, monastery or private church.

Over time, complete remains were exhausted, and small fragments of bone began to be distributed for reliquaries. In this way, a considerable portion of the relics preserved in the treasuries of churches also reached Lithuania. For these small bone fragments, life-sized relic-sculptures called *corpisanți* began to be produced in Rome in the mid-eighteenth century.

The sculptures were fashioned from various materials, realistically reproducing the entire body of the saint; fragments of bone excavated from the Roman catacombs were placed within them. Wood, wire, paper, wax, plaster and fabrics were used in their production.

In the eighteenth century, male *corpisanți* figures were typically dressed as ancient Roman soldiers: in a short tunic, sandals, with a sword and a laurel or floral wreath and a palm branch symbolising martyrdom. The sculptures were depicted in a recumbent position, often propped on one elbow, resting on a silk cushion. All possessed an ampoule or small vessel containing the supposed blood of the martyr. *Corpisanți* became the solution for the veneration of small, fragile bone fragments.

Lithuanian bishops and heads of religious orders also began to bring relics to churches under their care or to family mausolea.

The first relics of saints' bodies from Rome were brought to Lithuania by the Jesuits in 1608, when Father Mikołaj Łęczycki (1574–1653) obtained from the Augustinian Father Aloysius de los Rios, procurator of the Spanish Queen Margaret of Austria, nearly 80 bodies of „catacomb saints.” Forty bodies were distrib-

uted among Jesuit colleges and houses in Poland; the remainder passed into the care of the Lithuanian Jesuit provincial, Paweł Boksa. For various reasons, including the costly preparation of relics for display, it was only 23 years later, on 6 July 1631, that the solemn introduction of 39 saints' bodies and smaller relics into the churches of Vilnius took place. On that day, relics were received by Vilnius Cathedral and the churches of St Casimir, St John and St Ignatius.

In the first half of the 1780s, the relic-sculpture of St Florian was brought to Buivydžiai. It was described in detail by the historian and archaeologist Konstantinas Tiškevičius (1806–1868) in his 1857 travel notes *Vilija and Its Banks*. The renowned traveller wrote that the relics of St Florian had been brought from Rome by the priest Paweł Ksawery Brzostowski (1739–1827) and placed in the masonry chapel-mausoleum, built beside the church at Buivydžiai in 1787 by Michał Radziszewski, the husband of his sister. However, we possess no other data to confirm Tiškevičius's assertion that it was Brzostowski who brought the relics. On the other hand, the epitaph on one of the tombs in the chapel — which served as the mausoleum of the Radziszewski family — states that it holds the remains of Ludwika Brzostowska-Radziszewska (1765–1794), who from Rome „[...] transported hither the whole relics of St Florian the Martyr, obtained from Pope Pius VI.” The Latin epitaph thus ascribes the role of bringing the relics to Ludwika Brzostowska herself.

In the chapel-mausoleum, the grotto-form altar mentioned by Tiškevičius still stands, built from ferruginous conglomerate and resembling catacomb burials; in its niche stands the coffin containing the body of St Florian. St Florian, like many *corpisanți*, is depicted as a Roman soldier in an ornamental tunic and scale armour with *pteruges*. In the coffin, he lies with his body turned at a three-quarter angle, his head propped on his right hand, as if sleeping. His face is made of wax, and on his head sits a wig of natural human hair. He wears silk knee-length stockings and black silk shoes with bows. The martyr holds a metal palm branch covered in green enamel and is draped in a red cloak. The interior of the coffin is lined with white fabric embroidered with tiny silk flowers.

St Florian, like many *corpisanți*, is depicted as a Roman soldier in an ornamental tunic and scale armour with *pteruges*.

In *corpisanți* reliquaries, anonymous relics from the catacombs are venerated, to which symbolic names were given; this is confirmed by the X-ray of the Buivydžiai Florian — various small bones are visible inside. However, in a small casket beside the relic-sculpture, there is an ornate gilded crystal chalice containing the relics of the well-known eighth-century martyr St Florian, patron saint protecting against fires, sent from Cracow. Attached to the chalice is a slip of paper bearing a Latin inscription and a seal: „Relics from the bones of St Florian the Martyr, sent from Cracow together with the testimony of Prince [Adam Stefan Sapieha], Bishop of Cracow, dated 13 May 1925” (*Reliquiae ex ossibus S. Floriani Mart. transmissae e Cracovia una cum testimonio Principis Episcopi Cracoviensis de d. 13 Maji 1925 an.*). Most probably, during the First World War the relics of St Florian from the chalice were lost, and in 1922 a request was made to send new ones from Cracow, where the renowned place of veneration of this saint is located.

Prepared on the basis of the publication *Holy Bodies. St Boniface of Val-kininkai*. Authors of texts: Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė, Ruth Sargent Noyes. Museum of Church Heritage, 2023.



Altorius šv. Florijonų koplyčioje, XVIII a. | Ołtarz w kaplicy św. Floriana, XVIII w. | Altar in St. Florian's Chapel, 18th century.

Savanoriškų ugniagesių komandų istorija Lenkijoje.

OSP padalinių įtaka tradicijų išsaugojimui.

Historia ochotniczych straży pożarnych w Polsce.

Wpływ jednostek OSP na zachowanie tradycji.

The history of voluntary fire brigades in Poland.

The influence of VFB units on the preservation of tradition.

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LT •

Kalbant apie ugniagesių judėjimą, dažnai pasigirsta žodžiai „Ištikimi tradicijai“. Šiame trumpame apžvalginiame straipsnyje pabandysiu atsakyti, kokia yra šios formuluotės genezė, pagrindimas ir jėga.

Savanoriškos ugniagesių komandos yra savanoriški susivienijimai, giliai įsišakniję mūsų tradicijoje, nors seniausios iš jų yra vos kiek daugiau nei 150 metų. Kaip organizacijos, veikiančios visuomenės labui, jos remiasi vietos bendruomenė-

mis. Dėl svarbos, kurią jos turi užtikrinant bendrapiliečių saugumą, bet taip pat dėl to, kad dažnai yra centrai, kuriuose sutelktas tam tikros vietovės kultūrinis ir visuomeninis gyvenimas, jos nuolat džiaugiasi simpatija, pagarba ir pasitikėjimu. Veikdamos mažose, dažnai tradicinėse bendruomenėse, OSP tampa jų atrama. Tokį elgesį neabejotinai stiprina šeimos tradicijos dalyvauti ugniagesių gyvenime bei maža OSP narių kaita — daugelis jų visą gyvenimą skiria tarnystei ugniage-

syboje, tapdami žinių lobynu ir pavyzdžiu jaunesniems draugams, taip pat natūraliais tradicijų saugotojais.

Stabili narystės struktūra užtikrina, kad OSP padaliniai rūpinasi tradicijų palaikymu savo aplinkoje. Būtent jų veikla tapo priežastimi, dėl kurios vienas iš šūkių, apibūdinančių savanoriškas ugniagesių komandas, yra „Ištikimi tradicijai“. Šiuo atveju tradicija suprantama kaip papročių, skirtų vietos bendruomenės gerovei, palaikymas.



Piknikas su gaisrininkais. | Piknik ze strażakami. | Picnic with Firefighters.

zarządzie kraju. Obok straży przymusowych, istniały straże zawodowe gminne i ochotnicze, oczywiście wszystko pod nadzorem policyjnym, czyli publicznym, gdyż słowo policyjne miało wówczas troszkę inne znaczenie niż obecnie.

W latach sześćdziesiątych XIX wieku organizacje przeciwpożarowe zorganizowano niezależnie we wszystkich zaborach.

W Galicji w 1860 r. powstało Krajowe Towarzystwo Ubezpieczeń od Ognia, od swojego patrona św. Floriana zwane „Floranką”. W następstwie tych działań założono między innymi, takie ochotnicze straże pożarne jak: Kraków, Gródek, Tarnów (1865), Wadowice (1867), Lwów, Stanisławów (1868), Bochnia (1869), Brody, Przemyśl, Sambor, Żywiec (1871).

W 1875 roku we Lwowie I Krajowy Zjazd Strażacki powołał Krajowy Związek Ochotniczych Straży Pożarnych Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerii z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskim. Jego założenie spowodowało dalszą działalność organizacyjną. Niezależnie od Krajowego Związku Królestwa Galicji w 1914 roku założono Krajowy Związek Polskich Straży Pożarnych na Śląsku Cieszyńskim z siedzibą w Cieszynie.

W Królestwie Polskim, tzw. Kongresowym jednymi z pierwszych były m.in. następujące OSP: Kalisz (1864), Częstochowa (1871), Konin i Zgierz (1874), Łęczyca (1875). W 1881 roku działało już 27 organizacji strażackich. W 1915 roku władze rosyjskie zatwierdziły założenie Towa-

When the subject of the firefighting movement arises, the words “Faithful to tradition” are often heard. In this brief sketch, I shall attempt to answer what lies behind this phrase — its genesis, its justification and its power.

Voluntary fire brigades are voluntary associations deeply rooted in our tradition, although the oldest of them are little more than 150 years old. As organisations acting for the benefit of society, they are founded upon local communities. Because of the importance they have in ensuring the safety of their fellow citizens, but also because they are often the centres around which the cultural and social life of a given locality revolves, they enjoy enduring sympathy, respect and trust. Operating in small, often traditional communities, the VFBs become their anchor. This is undoubtedly reinforced by the family traditions of participation in firefighting life and the low turnover of VFB membership — many members devote their entire lives to service in the fire brigade, becoming a treasury of knowledge and an example for younger comrades, as well as natural guardians of tradition.

A stable membership structure ensures that VFB units take care to maintain traditions in their communities. It is precisely their activities that gave rise to one of the mottos describing the voluntary fire brigades: “Faithful to tradition.” Tradition is understood here as the maintenance

of customs aimed at serving the good of the local community.

Among these is, of course, the rescue activity of the brigade and the effort to acquire the equipment and people needed to carry it out, but also broadly understood cultural activity — including the documentation of local history, in order to demonstrate through it the purposefulness of firefighting as care for the common good built up over generations. In this way, the brigade seeks to engage the public in a better understanding of the activities of voluntary fire brigades and their role.

Number of states to create legislation aimed at establishing a framework of fire protection based on the strength of their own inhabitants, creating various compulsory organisations obliged to fight fires.

These goals are pursued by the great number of VFB members gathered in the firefighters’ chronicle-keeping movement. It is estimated that at present some 8,000 chroniclers are active within the

VFBs, maintaining 7,000 chronicles. Within the VFB framework there also operate approximately 1,260 tradition rooms, around 31 museums (state, municipal and private). The VFBs are also home to 810 musical bands, 360 artistic ensembles and 600 sports teams. The strength and source of this devotion to tradition lies in the extraordinarily rich history of the firefighting movement, whose origins may be traced to the nineteenth century.

For centuries, fires wreaked havoc in towns and villages, bringing tragedy to individuals and whole communities alike. With the medieval development of towns, attempts were made to adopt appropriate legal measures to avert the calamity of fire. The first fire regulations appeared in Poland in the fourteenth century — the so-called “fire ordinances” (porządki ogniowe) — though they applied only to small areas. Initially, it was the authorities of individual towns that took an interest. On the territory of present-day Poland, the first such initiative was undertaken by the aldermen of Cracow as early as 1374. Similar statutes were enacted in Warsaw in 1546 and 1550. Smaller towns followed the example of the capitals in establishing fire regulations. The problem of fire protection was an important concern for the people of the time, as attested by the fact that in his famous work *Six Books on the Reform of the Commonwealth*, the author Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski put forward the postulate of creating ap-

proprate regulations to guarantee the smooth conduct of rescue operations.

In 1696, the Warsaw municipal authorities adopted a resolution entrusting the so-called *feierherowie* — senior fire wardens drawn from the municipal government — with the command of firefighting operations.

The next legal act regulating firefighting was the Fire Ordinance for Warsaw, established by authority of the Grand Crown Marshal, proclaimed in 1779 and drawn up by Marshal Stanisław Lubomirski.

In the following years, as nation-states developed, the responsibilities connected with the regulation of this matter began to be taken over by state authorities. This led a number of states to create legislation aimed at establishing a framework of fire protection based on the strength of their own inhabitants, creating various compulsory organisations obliged to fight fires. Among these states were Prussia and Austria, which introduced the relevant regulations as early as the second half of the eighteenth century. At the same time, as towns grew wealthier, some of them began to create their own professional fire brigades. The oldest was probably established in Lisbon in 1643. Perhaps following their example, brigades also began to appear in smaller towns, though their members were volunteers acting on a civic basis. The first such voluntary fire brigades were founded in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It soon became apparent that the fire brigades emerging in various European states in the nineteenth century felt the need to associate in corporate unions. These organisations became a platform for the exchange of ideas and experience, aimed at improving the functioning of fire brigades through better training of their members and the use of ever more advanced and efficient equipment. In the nineteenth century, as a result of the annexationist actions of neighbouring states, Poland did not exist. The present territory of our country was divided among Austria (later Austria-Hungary), Prussia (later Germany) and Russia. Power lay in foreign hands, and fire protection developed differently for most of the nineteenth century in Russia, Austria and Prussia. This also had a fundamental impact on the emergence of fire brigades and firefighting unions on the territory of present-day Poland.

The earliest legislation on fire protection arose in the Austrian partition. Two imperial statutes dating from 1786 concerned fire policing for towns and cities and fire policing for rural communes, and a hundred years later the so-called fire law for towns and cities was enacted in 1891.

In the Russian partition, the following legal regulations appeared: provisions on the obligation of towns to maintain firefighting equipment, to build wells and on the duties of chimney sweeps (1819); an ordinance on the establishment of a so-called punitive warehouse as a compulsory fire guard (1831); a decree for

villages on the maintenance of basic firefighting equipment (1836); and the designation of village mayors as responsible for fire safety (1864).

In the Prussian partition and on territories belonging to the Prussian state, fire legislation was based mainly on municipal statutes or police ordinances; compulsory fire brigades existed under the police administration law of 1850 and the general land administration law of 1883. Alongside compulsory brigades, there existed professional municipal and voluntary brigades — all, naturally, under police supervision, that is, public oversight, since the word “police” at that time carried a somewhat different meaning than it does today.

In the 1860s, fire-protection organisations were established independently in all three partitions.

In Galicia, the Provincial Fire Insurance Company was founded in 1860, known as “Florianka” after its patron, St Florian. As a result of these activities, voluntary fire brigades were established in, among other places: Cracow, Gródek, Tarnów (1865), Wadowice (1867), Lviv, Stanisławów (1868), Bochnia (1869), Brody, Przemyśl, Sambor, Żywiec (1871).

In 1875, at the First Provincial Firefighters’ Congress in Lviv, the Provincial Union of Voluntary Fire Brigades of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria with the Grand Duchy of Cracow was established. Its founding spurred further or-



Dėl avarinės Šv. Florijono koplyčios būklės Šv. Florijono Corpi Santi šiuo metu yra saugomas Šv. Jurgio bažnyčioje. | Ze względu na zły stan techniczny kaplicy św. Floriana, Corpi Santi św. Floriana jest obecnie przechowywany w kościele św. Jerzego. | Due to the poor structural condition of St. Florian's Chapel, the Corpi Santi of St. Florian is currently housed in St. George's Church.

organisational activity. Independently of the Galician Provincial Union, in 1914 the Provincial Union of Polish Fire Brigades in Cieszyn Silesia was founded, with its seat in Cieszyn.

In the Kingdom of Poland, the so-called Congress Kingdom, among the first VFBs were: Kalisz (1864), Częstochowa (1871), Konin and Zgierz (1874), Łęczyca (1875). By 1881, 27 firefighting organisations

were already in operation. In 1915, the Russian authorities approved the founding of the Society of St Florian. The following year, at a National Congress of Fire Brigades in Warsaw, the Florian Union (*Związek Floriański*) was established on the initiative of Bolesław Chomicz and Józef Tuliszkowski.

On the lands under Prussian rule, in 1845 the oldest VFB of the Prussian partition

was founded — the Voluntary Rescue Society in Poznań, which was transformed into a professional fire brigade in 1872. In subsequent years, VFBs were established in Gliwice (1860), Starogard Gdański, Brodnica, Strzelce Opolskie (1862), Mysłowice, Toruń (1864), Września (1869).

In 1863, the Union of Fire and Rescue Societies of the Communes of Silesia and

Poznań (the Provincial Silesian-Poznań Firefighters' Union) was founded; in 1893 it split into the Poznań Provincial Fire Brigade Union and the Provincial Silesian Fire Brigade Union. Additionally, in 1880, the Pomeranian Provincial Fire Brigade Union was established.

In independent Poland, the initiative to unify the fire service was taken by the Provincial Union of Voluntary Fire Brigades from Lviv and the Florian Union from Warsaw. As a result of their efforts, on 27 April 1920, the Inter-District Committee for Firefighting Affairs was established in Lviv, and its subsequent meetings took place until 1921.

Thanks to the efforts of the Inter-District Committee, the First All-Poland Congress of Fire Brigades took place in September 1921, bringing together nearly 3,500 participants. During the congress, the Main Union of Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland was established, uniting various firefighting unions from across Poland, including those from Greater Poland and Pomerania. Its first chairman was Bolesław Chomicz, and its chief inspector Bolesław Pachelski.

The principal founders were firefighting organisations that had emerged during the partition era on the territory of present-day Poland. Among them were the aforementioned Florian Union, the Provincial Union of Polish Fire Brigades in Cieszyn Silesia, the Provincial Union of Voluntary Fire Brigades of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria with the Grand Duchy of Cracow

— the oldest of them (both of the above from lands under Habsburg rule) — as well as the Greater Poland Fire Brigade Union and the Pomeranian Fire Brigade Union from the Prussian partition.

The newly established union struggled with many problems arising from the differences that had developed in the historical evolution of the individual unions, including divergences in regulations, uniforms and decorations. Work was also undertaken to standardise the union's organisational structures. As early as 1922, the provincial structures were harmonised, and steps were then taken to standardise the district and county unions. Efforts were also made to influence the authorities to address the neglected legislation on fire protection. Greater changes, however, came only in the 1930s. In 1933, by decree of the Council of Ministers, the Union was recognised as an organisation of higher public utility, and its name was changed by dropping the word "Main" — thus creating the Fire Brigade Union of the Republic of Poland. By the same decree, the Union was given a new statute that reorganised its governing bodies and gave it a more coherent structure, divided into provinces and counties. As a result of these changes, the establishment of new fire brigades intensified. A further change came in 1934, when the Law on Protection against Fires and Other Calamities was promulgated — the first legal act of its kind passed in independent Poland.

On the basis of the regulations of the 1930s, the Union operated until the Sec-

ond World War. Among the tasks it performed was training — firefighting and officers' courses were organised. The Union's Technical Department developed and approved norms for firefighting equipment; a special section for professional brigades oversaw the work of professional fire services. Firefighting press was also published, and the Union continued its educational and cultural activities. Data from 1938 records 2,561 common rooms, 707 libraries and reading rooms, 1,485 theatre groups and 1,020 bands.

After the end of hostilities, work began on rebuilding fire stations and firefighting structures, as the war had caused enormous losses in people and equipment.

The catastrophe of the Second World War did not spare the fire brigades. The selfless work of firefighters during the September fighting, particularly in extinguishing the effects of bombardment, exacted losses in both personnel and equipment. The advancing German forces did not always distinguish between military and firefighting uniforms, which also contributed to tragic errors in which firefighters perished. In place of the dissolved Fire Brigade Union, the Germans created the office of Commissarial Technical Director of the Polish Fire Brigades,

subordinate to the German Order Police, to which the Polish fire brigades were in turn subject. After agreement with the underground authorities, Colonel Jerzy Lgocki assumed this position. Upon taking office, he began to organise, together with his subordinates — among them Józef Mikula, former provincial fire inspector in the Silesian province — the Firefighters' Resistance Movement "Skała." The SRO "Skała" engaged in the military training of firefighters, sabotage, the concealment and transport of *cichociemni* (special operations soldiers parachuted in from the West) and of people hiding from the Germans, as well as illegal printed materials and weapons.

As the war drew to a close and the front advanced, firefighters undertook diversionary action aimed at halting the re-

moval of firefighting property by the occupiers. After the end of hostilities, work began on rebuilding fire stations and firefighting structures, as the war had caused enormous losses in people and equipment. It is worth noting that in the territories incorporated into the Reich, some volunteer firefighters were conscripted into the German military. The rebuilding of firefighting structures was interrupted by the dissolution in 1949, by the Communist authorities, of the revived Fire Brigade Union, whose leadership had once again been assumed by Bolesław Chomicz. As a replacement for the Union, in 1950 the Main Fire Brigade Headquarters was established, intended to oversee both professional and voluntary brigades. However, subsequent changes undermined the clarity and coherence of its structure, and only the establishment of the State Fire

Service in 1992 restored it. Returning to the voluntary fire brigades — on the wave of the 1956 thaw, permission was granted to re-establish the Union of Voluntary Fire Brigades, uniting voluntary brigades only. The final stage in the Union's rebirth was the restoration of the words "of the Republic of Poland" to its name, which took place in 1992.

From this abundant source — the extraordinarily rich history of the firefighting movement, which I have been able to sketch only in outline — firefighting tradition springs. From there, too, comes the strength of successive generations of firefighters to uphold the good customs that serve the good of us all, which we call tradition.



Piknikas su gaisrininkais. | Picnik with Firefighters.

Ugniagesybos istorija Lietuvoje

Historia pożarnictwa na Litwie

the history of firefighting in Lithuania

Pagal **Artūro Vaišnorą** medžiagą, Ugniagesių Savanorių Draugijos vadovo

Opracowanie skrócone na podstawie materiałów **Artūrasa Vaišnorasa**, prezesa Stowarzyszenia Ochotniczej Służby Strażaków Rejonu Wileńskiego.

Based on materials by **Artūras Vaišnoras**, Head of the Vilnius District Volunteer Firefighters Association

LT •

Ugniagesybos pradžia Lietuvoje

Žmonės nuo seno kovojo su gaisrais, tačiau ilgą laiką organizuotos priešgaisrinės apsaugos nebuvo. Gaisrus gesino patys gyventojai — kibirais, kirviais, ardydami degančius pastatus arba tiesiog stebėdami, kaip ugnis naikina jų turtą. Dideli miestų gaisrai buvo dažni visoje Europoje, ir Lietuva nebuvo išimtis. Nuo XIV iki XVIII amžiaus Vilnių gaisrai nusiaubė mažiausiai 16 kartų.

1536 metais Vilniuje buvo priimti pirmieji sprendimai dėl priešgaisrinės apsaugos: nurodyta statyti namus didesniu atstumu vieną nuo kito ir tiesti tiesesnes gatves, kad būtų sunkiau ugniai plisti. Žygimantas Augustas pavedė įrengti vandentiekio

tinklą, skirtą ne tik gyventojams, bet ir gaisrams gesinti. Vilniui buvo nupirktas apie 100 vandens siurblių — tais laikais tai atitiko Vakarų Europos standartus. Tai liudija, kad XVI amžiuje Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė buvo moderni valstybė ugniagesybos srityje.

XIX amžiaus pradžioje pradėjo formuotis organizuota priešgaisrinė apsauga. 1802 metais Karaliaučiuje buvo išleista pirmoji lietuviška knyga apie ugniagesybą — „Ugnies knygelė“. Antroje XIX amžiaus pusėje ėmė kurtis savanoriškos ugniagesių komandos. Rusijos imperijos valdžia ribojo jų steigimą, tačiau po 1905 metų kurti tokias organizacijas tapo lengviau ir Lietuvoje atsirado apie 25 draugijas.



Piknikas su gaisrininkais. | Piknik ze strażakami. | Picnic with Firefighters.

Spółeczeństwo dostrzegało jednak znaczenie zorganizowanej ochrony przeciwpożarowej, dlatego zaczęły powstawać ochotnicze drużyny. Jednym z najważniejszych organizatorów pożarnictwa został Domininkas Siemaška, który dążył do zjednoczenia wszystkich litewskich organizacji strażackich. W 1924 roku w Kownie odbył się pierwszy zjazd litewskich stowarzyszeń strażackich.

Największym problemem było finansowanie. Państwo nie przyjęło jasnej ustawy regulującej pożarnictwo, dlatego samorządy przeznaczały na ten cel bardzo różne środki. Niektóre nie przeznaczały niemal nic, podczas gdy inne wydawały na pożarnictwo znaczną część swojego budżetu. Ochotnicy na prowincji często utrzymywali się z darowizn, organizacji imprez, zabaw tanecznych i innych inicjatyw.

Departament Ochrony Przeciwpowodzi i Ratownictwa przez długi czas sceptycznie podchodził do działalności ochotników, jednak pozostali oni ważną częścią lokalnych społeczności.

Jednym z najbardziej wyrazistych przykładów jest Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna w Niemenczynie, której historia sięga okresu międzywojennego. W 2001 roku wznowiono tam działalność ochotniczą, odrestaurowano stary samochód pożarniczy „Sca-

nia”, a w 2024 roku strażacy ochotnicy zakupili ze środków własnych i przebudowali nowy wóz strażacki o pojemności zbiornika 8000 litrów.

Obecnie działalność ochotniczych straży pożarnych jest kontynuowana w Awizieniach, Podbrzeziu, Kowalczykach i Niemenczynie. Pomimo trudności tradycja ochotniczego pożarnictwa na Litwie pozostaje żywa.

EN •

The origins of firefighting in Lithuania

People have fought fires since time immemorial, yet for a long time there was no organised fire protection. Fires were extinguished by the residents themselves — using buckets and axes, pulling down burning buildings, or simply watching as the flames consumed their possessions. Great urban conflagrations were common across Europe, and Lithuania was no exception. Between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, Vilnius was devastated by fire on at least 16 occasions.

In 1536, the first fire protection measures were adopted in Vilnius: houses were required to be built at greater distances from one another, and streets to be laid out in straighter lines to impede the spread of fire. Sigismund Augustus ordered the construction of a water supply network intended not only for the inhabitants but also for firefighting. Approximately 100 water pumps were purchased for Vilnius — by the standards of the time, this was on a par with Western Europe. This testifies to the fact that in the sixteenth century the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a modern state in the field of fire protection.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, organised fire protection began to take shape. In 1802, the first Lithuanian book on firefighting was published in Königsberg — the Booklet on Fire (Ugnies knygelė). In the second half of the nineteenth century, volunteer fire brigades began to emerge. The authorities

of the Russian Empire restricted their establishment, but after 1905 the founding of such organisations became easier, and around 25 associations were created in Lithuania.

By 1914, when the First World War broke out, 79 fire brigades were already operating in Lithuania. In many small towns, firefighting equipment was maintained by local communities, particularly residents of Jewish origin.

Firefighting in interwar Lithuania (1918–1940)

After the First World War, the state of firefighting was dire. Some equipment had been destroyed or requisitioned. Fires were often extinguished by primitive means, putting the lives of residents at risk.

Society recognised the importance of organised fire protection, however, and volunteer brigades began to be established. One of the most important organisers of firefighting was Domininkas Siemaška, who strove to unite all Lithuanian firefighting organisations. In 1924, the first congress of Lithuanian firefighting associations took place in Kaunas.

The greatest problem was funding. The state did not adopt a clear law regulating firefighting, and so municipalities allocated very different amounts for this purpose. Some allocated almost nothing, while others devoted a considerable portion of their

budgets to fire protection. Volunteers in the provinces often sustained themselves through donations, the organisation of events, dances and other initiatives.

The backbone of interwar firefighting was the volunteer corps, among whose members were many Lithuanian Jews.

In 1926, a draft firefighting law was drawn up, but it was never enacted. A new draft appeared only in 1935, and it too failed to resolve all the problems.

The backbone of interwar firefighting was the volunteer corps, among whose members were many Lithuanian Jews. Litvaks living in towns and small cities established fire brigades to protect their property from frequent fires. Later, firefighting detachments of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union also began to be formed.

In the years 1930–1940, the number of mixed units in Lithuania grew, in which both volunteers and salaried specialists — drivers, mechanics and commanders — served together. Despite financial difficulties, firefighters effectively extinguished fires and saved lives.

Firefighting in Vilnius and the Klaipėda Region

After Lithuania recovered Vilnius in 1939, the city had a professional municipal fire brigade equipped with modern apparatus and workshops. In other localities of the Vilnius region, firefighters were mainly volunteers. It is known that volunteer brigades operated in Nemenčinė, Paberžė and Buivydžiai.

In the Klaipėda Region, firefighting was organised along the German model. Regulations adopted in 1936 stipulated that all residents were obliged to assist in extinguishing fires. Localities possessing equipment were also required to support neighbouring localities. This system was better organised than in the rest of Lithuania.

The period of Soviet and German occupation

In 1940, the Soviets outlawed the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and other organisations, dissolving the Union of Lithuanian Firefighting Organisations as well. Volunteer activity became uncertain, and some units were transferred to municipal authorities.

Between 1941 and 1944, Lithuanian firefighting suffered a tragedy. During the Holocaust, more than 2,000 Jewish volunteer firefighters were murdered. The number of firefighters in Lithuania fell by more than fourfold.

After the war, the Soviets created a centralised system. In the largest cities, professional, militarised fire brigades were established, while volunteer brigades continued to operate in rural areas. In 1949, the Volunteer Fire Society of the Lithuanian SSR was founded, uniting volunteers from across Lithuania.

On collective farms, small firefighting units were formed, often equipped with nothing more than hand pumps or a single vehicle. Despite this, volunteers saved towns from major fires on numerous occasions.

In 1957, the system definitively abandoned the volunteer model — the number of salaried personnel in the units grew, and firefighting became a professional service.

Firefighters in independent Lithuania

After the restoration of independence and the collapse of the collective farm system, rural firefighting came under threat. Many units survived solely thanks to the dedication of enthusiasts.

In individual districts, volunteer firefighter organisations began to emerge, seeking financial support, purchasing second-hand equipment and independently organising their activities.

The Fire Protection and Rescue Department long viewed volunteer activity with scepticism, yet volunteers remained an important part of local communities.

One of the most striking examples is the Volunteer Fire Brigade in Nemenčinė, whose history stretches back to the interwar pe-

riod. In 2001, volunteer activity was resumed there, an old “Scania” fire engine was restored, and in 2024, volunteer firefighters purchased and rebuilt — from their own funds — a new fire engine with an 8,000-litre tank.

At present, volunteer fire brigade activity continues in Avižieniai, Paberžė, Kalveliai and Nemenčinė. Despite the difficulties, the tradition of volunteer firefighting in Lithuania remains alive.

Sėdi iš dešinės į kairę: Elvira Černikova - Vilniaus rajono savivaldybės priešgaisrinės tarnybos buhalterė; Kęstutis Velikianecas - Vilniaus rajono savivaldybės priešgaisrinės tarnybos direktorius; Artūras Vaišnoras - Vilniaus rajono ugniagesių savanorių draugijos pirmininkas; Andrzej Waszczeniuk, Korycino, Lenkijos Respublika savivaldybės išdininkas. | Siedzą od prawej do lewej: Elvira Černikova - księgowa Straży Pożarnej Samorządu Rejonu Wileńskiego; Kęstutis Velikianecas - dyrektor Straży Pożarnej Samorządu Rejonu Wileńskiego; Artūras Vaišnoras - prezes Stowarzyszenia Ochotniczych Strażaków Rejonu Wileńskiego; Andrzej Waszczeniuk - skarbnik gminy Korycin, Rzeczpospolita Polska. | Seated from right to left: Elvira Černikova – accountant of the Vilnius District Municipal Fire Service; Kęstutis Velikianecas – director of the Vilnius District Municipal Fire Service; Artūras Vaišnoras – chairman of the Vilnius District Volunteer Firefighters Association; Andrzej Waszczeniuk – treasurer of Korycin Municipality, Republic of Poland.





Šv. Florijono globoje: Lietuvos ugniagesybos istorija

Pod opieką św. Floriana: historia litewskiego pożarnictwa

Under the Patronage of St Florian: A Brief History of Lithuanian Firefighting

Pagal **Skirmanto Andriušio** medžiagą. Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamentas prie VRM

Opracowanie skrócone na podstawie materiałów **Skirmantasa Andriušisa**. Departament Ochrony Przeciwpozarowej i Ratownictwa przy MSW

Based on materials by **Skirmantas Andriušis**, Fire Protection and Rescue Department, Ministry of the Interior

LT •

Ugniagesybos ištakos Lietuvoje

Kova su gaisrais Lietuvoje prasidėjo dar Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės laikais. XVI a. Vilniuje buvo priimami pirmieji priešgaisriniai reikalavimai: miesto gyventojai privalėjo turėti gesinimo priemones, o namai buvo statomi taip, kad ugnis neplistų. Vėliau uždrausta statyti medi-

nus pastatus miesto centre ir įsakyta stogus dengti čerpėmis. Šios priemonės rodo, kad gaisrų prevencija buvo svarbi jau ankstyvaisiais laikais.

Profesionalios ugniagesybos pradžia laikoma 1802 m. gegužės 26 d., kai Vilniuje buvo įsteigta pirmoji miesto ugniagesių komanda. Joje dirbo 45 ugniagesiai, va-

dovaujami brandmeisterio. Komanda turėjo gesinimo įrangą, vandens transportavimo priemones ir kitą inventorių. Tais pačiais metais pasirodė ir pirmasis lietuviškas priešgaisrinės apsaugos leidinys „Ugnies knygelės“.

XIX a. antroje pusėje Lietuvoje sparčiai kūrėsi savanoriškos gaisrininkų draugijos.

Jos vienijo žmones, kurie savo lėšomis ir darbu saugojo bendruomenes nuo gaisrų. Iki Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Lietuvoje veikė apie 80 tokių draugijų.

Ugniagesyba nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje (1918–1940)

Vienas svarbiausių tarpukario ugniagesybos organizatorių buvo Domininkas Sie-

maška. Jis 1913 m. subūrė Šnipiškių savanorių ugniagesių komandą, aktyviai dalyvavo gesinant gaisrus ir rūpinosi ugniagesybos plėtra valstybėje. 1923 m. pradėjo leisti pirmąjį Lietuvos ugniagesių žurnalą „Lietuvos gaisrininkas“.

Tarpukariu veikė įvairių rūšių ugniagesių organizacijos: savanorių, savivaldybių, kariuomenės, geležinkelio ir Lietuvos šaulių sąjungos ugniagesiai. Siekiant ko-

ordinuoti jų veiklą, 1924 m. buvo įkurta Lietuvos ugniagesių organizacijų sąjunga (LUOS). Ji rūpinosi ugniagesių mokymu, technikos tobulinimu, ryšiais su užsieniu ir profesijos populiarinimu.

Didžiausia problema buvo finansavimas. Valstybė neturėjo vieningos priešgaisrinės apsaugos finansavimo sistemos, todėl dauguma ugniagesių organizacijų išsilaikė savivaldybių, rėmėjų ir pačių narių lėšomis.

Skirmantas Andriušis, Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamentas prie VRM. | Skirmantas Andriušis, Departament Ochrony Przeciwpozarowej i Ratownictwa przy MSW. | Skirmantas Andriušis, Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior.



radzieckiemu i stopniowo przekształciło się w służbę zawodową. Jednocześnie następowała jego modernizacja, związana z ochroną strategicznych zakładów przemysłowych.

Po odzyskaniu niepodległości rozpoczęto budowę nowoczesnego systemu ratowniczego. W 1990 r. utworzono Departament Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej przy Ministerstwie Spraw Wewnętrznych, który w 1999 r. przyjął obecną nazwę — Departament Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej i Ratownictwa. Strażacy otrzymali również zadania ratownicze, a kolejne reformy doprowadziły do utworzenia profesjonalnych służb ratowniczo-gaśniczych, szkoły straža-

ków ratowników oraz integracji systemu ochrony ludności i numeru alarmowego.

Ważnym krokiem było także prawne uregulowanie działalności strażaków ochotników, które weszło w życie w 2016 r.

Współczesność

Obecnie Departament Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej i Ratownictwa jest jedną z kluczowych instytucji bezpieczeństwa państwa litewskiego. Zatrudnia ponad 4000 pracowników, w tym około 2600 strażaków ratowników. Odpowiada nie tylko za gaszenie pożarów i ratowanie życia, lecz

także za rozwój ochrony ludności cywilnej oraz przygotowanie społeczeństwa do sytuacji kryzysowych.

Strażacy ratownicy cieszą się największym zaufaniem społecznym spośród wszystkich instytucji publicznych — ufa im około 90% mieszkańców Litwy. Do 2030 r. planowana jest dalsza modernizacja systemu ochrony ludności, rozbudowa systemów ostrzegania oraz zwiększanie odporności społeczeństwa na zagrożenia.

Pomoc bliźniemu — chwala Bogu.

EN •

From Early Fire Prevention to Professional Firefighting

The history of firefighting in Lithuania dates back to the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As early as the sixteenth century, authorities introduced measures to protect cities from devastating fires. In 1522, the garrison of Vilnius was tasked with protecting residents from fires and other threats. Later regulations required homeowners to possess

firefighting equipment, prescribed safer urban planning, and eventually prohibited wooden construction in parts of the city. These measures reflected a growing understanding of fire prevention as an essential public responsibility.

Professional firefighting began on 26 May 1802, when the Vilnius Municipal Fire Brigade, the first organised fire service in Lithuania, was established. The brigade consisted of 45 firefighters equipped

with pumps, barrels, hooks and leather buckets. The same year saw the publication of the first Lithuanian-language fire protection manual, *Ugnies knygelės* ("Booklet on Fire"). In 1815, Kaunas established a permanent fire protection and night-watch unit.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, volunteer fire societies spread across Lithuania. Local communities organised and financed fire protection ef-

forts, and by the outbreak of the First World War approximately 80 fire societies were operating throughout the country. These organisations played a crucial role in protecting lives and property while fostering civic engagement.

Firefighting in Independent Lithuania (1918–1940)

One of the key figures in modern Lithuanian firefighting was Domininkas Siemaška.

In 1913, he organised a volunteer brigade in Vilnius's Šnipiškės district. During the First World War, his unit guarded warehouses, barracks and residential buildings, continuing to protect the city even after German forces entered Vilnius.

Following Lithuania's independence, Siemaška became a leading advocate for firefighting development. He participated in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, helped organise new brigades, as-

sisted in combating the major Kaunas fire of 1920, and launched the country's first firefighting journal, *Lietuvos gaisrininkas* ("The Lithuanian Firefighter"), in 1923.

Fire protection during the interwar period relied on a combination of volunteer, municipal, military, railway and Riflemen's Union fire brigades. To coordinate these diverse organisations, the Lithuanian Union of Firefighting Organisations (LUOS) was established in 1924. It promoted profes-

Piknikas su gaisrininkais. | Piknik ze strážakami. | Picnic with Firefighters.



sional training, public education, international cooperation and the advancement of firefighting throughout the country.

Despite these achievements, financing remained a persistent challenge. No unified state funding system existed, leaving municipalities and volunteer organisations responsible for maintaining fire services. Many rural brigades depended on donations, membership contributions and community events.

Between 1918 and 1940, Lithuania recorded approximately 27,300 fires, which destroyed around 45,600 buildings. About 450 people lost their lives, while roughly 2,000 were injured. The leading causes of fires were careless use of fire, building-code violations, poorly maintained chimneys and stoves, lightning strikes and arson.

Occupation, Modernisation and Independence

The first Soviet occupation (1940–1941) brought the dissolution of independent firefighting organisations, including those associated with the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. LUOS was banned, and many firefighting leaders faced repression. During the Nazi occupation (1941–1944), many Jewish firefighters were among the victims of the Holocaust.

Under the second Soviet occupation (1944–1990), firefighting evolved from a largely volunteer system into a pro-

fessional service. Although integrated into the Soviet administrative structure, firefighting remained less ideologically controlled than many other institutions. Significant investments in equipment and infrastructure were made, particularly to protect strategic industrial facilities.

Firefighter-rescuers enjoy the highest level of public trust among Lithuanian institutions, with around 90% of citizens expressing confidence in their work.

Following the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990, a modern national fire and rescue system was established. The Fire Protection Department was created under the Ministry of the Interior and later became the Fire Protection and Rescue Department (FPRD). In addition to firefighting, the department assumed responsibility for rescue operations, civil protection and emergency response coordination.

Major reforms included the creation of professional rescue and firefighting services, adoption of the Law on Fire Protection, establishment of the Firefighter-Rescuer School, integration of civil protection functions, and recognition of

volunteer firefighters through legislation enacted in 2016.

Fire Protection and Rescue Today

Over the past 35 years, the FPRD has become a cornerstone of Lithuania's internal security system. The department employs more than 4,000 personnel, including approximately 2,600 firefighter-rescuers. Its responsibilities extend beyond firefighting to rescue operations, disaster management, civil protection and public preparedness.

Firefighter-rescuers enjoy the highest level of public trust among Lithuanian institutions, with around 90% of citizens expressing confidence in their work. This trust reflects decades of professionalism, dedication and service to society.

Looking ahead, Lithuania plans to strengthen its civil protection system through 2030 by modernising shelters, expanding public warning systems and improving preparedness for emergencies and contemporary security challenges.

Service to one's neighbour — glory to God.

03

Sveikinimai Gratulacje Congratulations

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**Vilniaus rajono savivaldybės meras
Robert Duchnevič**

Mer Samorządu Rejonu Wileńskiego
Robert Duchniewicz

Mayor of the Vilnius District Municipality
Robert Duchnevič

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**Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo
Departamento direktorius vidaus tarnybos
generolas Renatas Požėla**

Dyrektor Departamentu Ochrony
Przeciwpozarowej i Ratownictwa, generał
służby wewnętrznej Renatas Požėla

Renatas Požėla, Director of the Fire and
Rescue Department, General of the Internal
Service

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**J.E. Lietuvos Respublikos ambasadorė
prie Šventojo Sosto ir Maltos ordino
dr. Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė**

J.E. Ambasador Republiki Litewskiej przy
Stolicy Apostolskiej i Zakonie Maltańskim
dr Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė

H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania
to the Holy See and the Order of Malta,
Dr Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė

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**Valdas Krulikauskas Vyresnysis patarėjas,
Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministerija
(Pasirengimo pareigūnas)**

Valdas Krulikauskas Starszy Doradca,
Ministerstwo Kultury Republiki Litewskiej
(Oficer ds. Gotowości)

Valdas Krulikauskas Senior Adviser, Ministry
of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania
(Readiness Officer)

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**Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų
ministras Vladislav Kondratovič**

Minister Spraw Wewnętrznych Republiki
Litewskiej Władysław Kondratowicz

Minister of the Interior of the Republic of
Lithuania Vladislav Kondratovič



Vilniaus rajono savivaldybės meras, **Robert Duchnevič**

Mer Samorządu Rejonu Wileńskiego, **Robert Duchniewicz**

Mayor of the Vilnius District Municipality, **Robert Duchnevič**

LT • —————

Jūsų rankose – itin retos tematikos leidinys, išskirtinis ne tik Lietuvos, bet ir pasaulio mastu.

Nedidelė Buivydžių parapija Vilniaus rajone ir jos bendruomenė, gyvenanti pačiame Lietuvos, o kartu ir – Europos Sąjungos pasienyje, saugo unikalų religinį paveldą – šv. Florijono *Corpi Santi* relikviją. Tai per šimtmečių karus išsaugotas ir sovietinės okupacijos ateizmo dešimtmečius išgyvenęs sakralinis atminimo ženklas, liudijantis mūsų krašto tikėjimo, kultūros ir istorijos tvarumą.

**Ten sakralny znak pamięci,
ocalony z zawieruch
dziejowych minionych
stuleci i przetrwały dekady
ateizmu w okresie okupacji
sowieckiej, stanowi
świadek trwałości
wiary, kultury i historii
naszej ziemi.**

Największą radość budzi troska lokalnej społeczności o dzieje rodzinnej ziemi oraz szczere pragnienie przekazania przyszłym pokoleniom wartości drogich ich przodkom. Bez zaangażowania wspólnoty pamięć historyczna stopniowo bowiem zanika.

Bujwidze posiadają wyjątkowy potencjał do tworzenia narracji zarazem fascynującej, wielowymiarowej i głęboko zakorzenionej w historii – opowieści, która nie tylko przybliży przeszłość, lecz także wynosi rejon wileński daleko poza jego granice, rozślawiając go w całym świecie katolickim.

Każdemu, kto sięgnie po tę publikację, życzę, by stała się ona inspiracją do odwiedzenia Bujwidz i zatrzymania się na chwilę w kościele św. Jerzego, a także do ujrzenia na własne oczy relikwii św. Floriana *Corpi Santi* – śladu odległej epoki baroku, zachowanego na naszej ziemi. Być może to spotkanie stanie się początkiem nowych odkryć i przypomni, że wielkie historie często rodzą się w niewielkich miejscowościach.

EN •

You hold in your hands a publication of an exceptionally rare theme – one that is unique not only in Lithuania but on a global scale.

The small parish of Buivydžiai in the Vilnius district and its community, situated on the very frontier of Lithuania and the European Union, safeguard a unique piece of religious heritage: the *Corpi Santi* relic of St Florian. Preserved through centuries of warfare and having survived decades of state-mandated atheism under Soviet occupation, this sacred token of remembrance

stands as a testament to the endurance of our region's faith, culture, and history.

The conference held in 2025 may serve as a significant milestone in establishing new tourism and pilgrimage routes. While the event itself was vital, the papers presented and published within this volume are of equal importance. They allow contemporary society to rediscover the cultural and religious heritage of medieval Lithuania.

Preserved through centuries of warfare and having survived decades of state-mandated atheism under Soviet occupation, this sacred token of remembrance stands as a testament to the endurance of our region's faith, culture, and history.

Most heartening is the local community's devotion to its history and its sincere desire to pass on ancestral values to future generations. For without the engagement of the community, historical memory inevitably fades.

Buivydžiai possesses an extraordinary potential to weave a compelling, engaging, and meaningful narrative – one that not only reflects on the past but also carries the name of the Vilnius district far beyond its borders and into the wider Catholic world.

To everyone reading this publication, I wish you a visit to the town of Buivydžiai, to enter the Church of St George and see with your own eyes the *Corpi Santi* of St Florian – a trace of the distant Baroque era in our land. May this encounter inspire new discoveries and serve as a reminder that great histories are often born in small towns.



J.E. Lietuvos Respublikos ambasadorė prie Šventojo Sosto
ir Maltos ordino dr. **Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė**

J.E. Ambasador Republiki Litewskiej przy Stolicy Apostolskiej
i Zakonie Maltańskim dr **Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė**

H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Holy See
and the Order of Malta, Dr **Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė**

LT •

Krikščionybėje relikvijų kultas remiasi tikėjimu mirusiųjų prisikėlimu ir įsitikinimu, kad Dievas nepalieka tikinčiųjų mirties karalystėje (Ps 16,10; Apd 2,27).

Ankstyvai krikščionių bendruomenei relikvijos buvo kankinys-tės liudijimas, tikėjimo pergalė prieš baimę ir būsimojo prisikėlimo pranašystė. Kankiniai be baimės išpažino tikėjimą mirties akivaizdoje, jį paliudydami savo gyvenimu. Todėl jų žemiškieji palaikai laikomi nemirtingumo ir Dievo malonės nešėjais. Praktikuodami relikvijų kultą, tikintieji išpažįsta, kad net pati trapiu-

**Światło i spokój otaczają
te figury (corpi santi),
przedstawiane często jako
uśpioni rycerze czy królewny,
których rany zostały uleczone,
cierpienia wynagrodzone,
a trudna walka ze złem –
ostatecznie wygrana.**

To cenne dziedzictwo świętości i nośnik łaski Bożej odnajdujemy również w bujwidskim corpi sancti św. Floriana – żołnierza Chrystusa i męczennika. Relikwia ta została sprowadzona do Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVIII wieku, a w 2022 roku poddano ją szczegółowym badaniom naukowym w Muzeum Dziedzictwa Kościelnego w Wilnie. Nie ulega wątpliwości, że choć św. Florian po przybyciu w te strony przez pewien czas pozostawał w ukryciu i popadł w zapomnienie, nie przestawał wypraszać darów nieba. Wierni z okolic Bujwidsz, wzywając jego wstawiennictwa, niezmiennie zyskują ratunek od pożarów – zarówno tych dosłownych, jak i wewnętrznych.

EN •

**Light and peace surround
these figures (corpi santi),
often depicted as sleeping
knights or princesses whose
wounds have been healed,
whose sufferings have been
recompensed, and whose
arduous battle against evil
has been finally won.**

In Christianity, the cult of relics is grounded in the belief in the resurrection of the dead and in the conviction that God does not abandon the faithful in the realm of death (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:27).

For the early Christian community, relics were a testimony to martyrdom, the victory of faith over fear, and a foreshadowing of the resurrection to come. The martyrs fearlessly professed their faith in the face of death, bearing witness to it with their very lives. For this reason, their earthly remains are regarded as bearers of immortality and of God's grace. In practising the veneration of relics, the faithful profess that even the most fragile and vulnerable link in the chain of humanity — the human body — has its share in eternity and is a sign of hope. That is

why relics, and especially the complete bodies of saints, have always been highly prized and adorned with precious fabrics and jewels. Light and peace surround these figures (*corpi santi*), often depicted as sleeping knights or princesses whose wounds have been healed, whose sufferings have been recompensed, and whose arduous battle against evil has been finally won.

This precious heritage of holiness and bearer of God's grace is also to be found in the Buivydžiai *corpi sancti* of St Florian —

soldier of Christ and martyr. This relic was brought to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the eighteenth century, and in 2022 it was subjected to detailed scholarly examination at the Museum of Church Heritage in Vilnius. There can be no doubt that although St Florian, upon arriving in these lands, spent a time in concealment and fell into oblivion, he never ceased to intercede for the gifts of heaven. The faithful in the environs of Buivydžiai, invoking his intercession, unfailingly receive deliverance from fires — both literal and those within.



Vladislav Kondratovič, Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministras

Władysław Kondratowicz, Minister Spraw Wewnętrznych Republiki Litewskiej

Vladislav Kondratovič, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

LT •

Gerbiamieji,

su dideliu džiaugsmu reiškiu padėką tarptautinės mokslinės konferencijos „Buivydžių šv. Florijono Corpi Santi ir ugniagesių judėjimo reikšmė Lietuvos ir Europos istoriniame bei kultūriniame kontekste“ organizatoriams ir dalyviams bei šio leidinio rengėjams, kuris šiandien pasiekia Jūsų rankas.

Zorganizowana z inicjatywy lokalnej wspólnoty konferencja stała się ważnym wydarzeniem naukowym i społecznym, przypominającym o znaczeniu pamięci historycznej oraz roli mieszkańców w pielęgnowaniu tradycji i dziedzictwa regionu.

Szczególne znaczenie ma również postać św. Floriana – patrona strażaków. Odkrycie jego relikwii w bujwidzkiej kaplicy przypomina o wielowiekowej tradycji służby, solidarności i odpowiedzial-

ności za drugiego człowieka, z którą od lat związany jest także lokalny ruch strażacki.

Dziękuję wszystkim osobom zaangażowanym w organizację konferencji oraz popularyzację wiedzy o tym wyjątkowym miejscu. Wierzę, że niniejsza publikacja stanie się ważnym świadectwem wspólnego dziedzictwa Litwy i Europy.

EN •

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I express my appreciation to the organizers and participants of the international scientific conference “The Significance of the Corpi Santi of St. Florian in Buivydžiai and the Firefighting Movement in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe”, as well as to the editors of this publication, which now reaches your hands.

The reconstruction of the Church of St. George after the tragic fire during the Soviet era stands as a testimony to the people's strength, determination, and commitment to preserving their local heritage.

Buivydžiai is a unique place where history, faith, and a strong sense of community have shaped the identity of local residents for generations. The reconstruction of the Church of St. George after the tragic fire during the Soviet era stands as a testimony to the people's strength, determination, and commitment to preserving their local heritage.

Organized on the initiative of the local community, the conference became an important scientific and social event, reminding us of the significance of historical memory and the role of residents in preserving the traditions and heritage of the region.

Particular importance is also attached to the figure of St. Florian – the patron saint of firefighters. The discovery of his relics in the chapel of Buivydžiai recalls the centuries-old tradition of service, solidarity, and responsibility for others, with which the local firefighting movement has long been associated.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the organization of the conference and to promoting knowledge about this exceptional place. I believe that this publication will become an important testimony to the shared heritage of Lithuania and Europe.



Šv. Florijono relikviorius, XVIII a. | Relikwiarz św. Floriana, XVIII w. | St. Florian's reliquary, 18th century.



Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo Departamento
direktorius vidaus tarnybos generolas **Renatas Požėla**

Dyrektor Departamentu Ochrony Przeciwpozarowej i
Ratownictwa, generał służby wewnętrznej **Renatas Požėla**

Renatas Požėla, Director of the Fire and Rescue Department,
General of the Internal Service

LT •

Nuoširdžiai sveikinu visus susirinkusius į tarptautinę konferenciją, skirtą išskirtinei temai – šv. Floriono *Corpi Santi* relikvijų ir gaisrininkų judėjimo reikšmei Lietuvos bei Europos istoriniame ir kultūriniame kontekste.

Šiandien Buivydžiai tampa vieta, kur susitinka istorija, tradicija, tikėjimas ir tarnystė žmogui. Tai ne tik akademinė diskusija ar kultūrinis renginys. Tai gyvas priminimas, kad ugniagesio pašaukimas nuo seniausių laikų buvo grindžiamas ne vien profesine

Dla Departamentu Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej i Ratownictwa istotne są nie tylko nowoczesne technologie, przygotowanie do sytuacji nadzwyczajnych czy sprawne reagowanie operacyjne. Nie mniej ważne jest pielęgnowanie historii naszej profesji, jej tradycji i fundamentu wartości. Wspólnota strażacka jest silna wtedy, gdy opiera się nie tylko na profesjonalnym przygotowaniu, lecz także na szacunku dla swoich korzeni, dla ludzi, którzy tworzyli tę służbę, oraz dla społeczności, które ją wspierały.

Konferencja ta przypomina, że dziedzictwo kulturowe i bezpieczeństwo społeczeństwa nie są odrębnymi dziedzinami. Łączą je człowiek, wspólnota oraz odpowiedzialność za drugiego człowieka. Historia ruchu strażackiego na Litwie była zawsze ściśle związana z postawą obywatelską, wolontariatem i poczuciem wspólnoty. Wartości te są dziś nie mniej aktualne niż przed stuleciem.

Pragnę serdecznie podziękować wszystkim, którzy przyczynili się do organizacji tego wydarzenia – Wspólnocie Bujwidzkiej, jej przewodniczącej Danucie Korkus, duchownym, naukowcom, opiekunom dziedzictwa kulturowego oraz wszystkim partnerom. Państwa wysiłki pokazują, że pamięć historyczna może być żywa, znacząca i jednocząca.

Wspólnota strażacka jest silna wtedy, gdy opiera się nie tylko na profesjonalnym przygotowaniu, lecz także na szacunku dla swoich korzeni, dla ludzi, którzy tworzyli tę służbę, oraz dla społeczności, które ją wspierały.

Wierzę, że konferencja ta przyczyni się do nowych badań, rozwoju współpracy międzynarodowej oraz jeszcze większego zainteresowania historycznym i kulturowym dziedzictwem strażaków. Życzę Państwu owocnych dyskusji, cennych refleksji i inspirujących spotkań.

Dziękuję za Państwa służbę, za troskę o zachowanie pamięci oraz za wspólnotę.

EN •

I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone gathered here for this international conference, which is dedicated to a unique topic: the significance of the relics of Saint Florian *Corpi Santi* and the firefighting movement within the historical and cultural context of Lithuania and Europe.

Today, Buivydžiai is becoming a place where history, tradition, faith, and service to humanity converge. This is not merely an academic discussion or a cultural event – it is a vivid remind-

er that, since time immemorial, the calling of a firefighter has been grounded not only in professional duty, but also in core values: courage, self-sacrifice, responsibility, and respect for human life.

Saint Florian is more than just a symbol to firefighters across Europe. He embodies service to the community, readiness to help in the face of disaster, and moral strength. It is therefore very meaningful that the complex of St. George's Church in Buivy-

džiai is becoming the spiritual center and an important place of remembrance for firefighters and rescuers in Vilnius region.

The Fire and Rescue Department focuses not only on preparedness for emergencies, operative management or modern technology – it equally understands the importance of preserving history, traditions, and core values of our profession. The firefighting community is strong when it is grounded not only in professional preparedness, but also in respect for its roots, the people who established this service, and the communities that have supported it.

This conference serves as a reminder that cultural heritage and public safety are not separate areas. They are linked by the individual, the community, and a strong sense of responsibility for one another. The history of the firefighting movement in Lithuania has always been closely tied to civic engagement, volunteerism, and a sense of community. These values are no less relevant today than they were a century ago.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who helped to organize this event – Buivydžiai community, its chairwoman Mrs Danuta Korkus, clergy members, scholars, cultural heritage promoters,

**The firefighting community
is strong when it is grounded
not only in professional
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that have supported it.**

and all our partners. Your efforts highlight that historical remembrance can be alive, meaningful, and unifying.

I strongly believe that this conference will spur new research, international cooperation, and an even greater focus on the historical and cultural legacy of firefighters. I wish you all meaningful discussions, valuable insights, and inspiring encounters.

Thank you for your service, for preserving our memory, and for your solidarity.



Valdas Krulikauskas Vyresnysis patarėjas, Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministerija (Pasirengimo pareigūnas)

Valdas Krulikauskas Starszy Doradca, Ministerstwo Kultury Republiki Litewskiej (Oficer ds. Gotowości)

Valdas Krulikauskas Senior Adviser, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (Readiness Officer)

LT •

Savanorystė ir tarnavimas: šv. Florijono dvasia ugniagesio tarnystėje

Gerbiamas Ministre, gerbiamas Mere, Generale, gerbiama Bendruomenės Pirmininkė, konferencijos dalyviai, gerbiami svečiai, ponios ir ponai,

Šiandienos susitikimas Buivydžiuose man yra didelė garbė. Tai ypatinga vieta, kurioje saugoma viena iš brangiausių mūsų re-

Dzisiaj, gdy świat staje się coraz bardziej technologiczny i globalny, niezwykle ważne jest pamiętać, że podstawowe wartości — odwaga, wspólnotowość i służba drugiemu człowiekowi — pozostają niezmiennie. Wartości te symbolizuje również św. Florian. Strzegli ich nasi przodkowie, rozwijali je ochotnicy, a my przekazujemy je naszym dzieciom i uczniom.

Ta konferencja jest wyjątkowa także dlatego, że spotykają się na niej różne doświadczenia: spojrzenie historyków i badaczy kultury na dziedzictwo, doświadczenie środowiska strażackiego oraz przywiązanie lokalnej społeczności do własnych tra-

dycji. Takie spotkania nie tylko wzbogacają naszą wiedzę, ale również wzmacniają wzajemne więzi.

Życzę więc, aby ten dzień był nie tylko czasem wystąpień naukowych, lecz także świętem wspólnoty. Niech dyskusje pomogą nam jeszcze pełniej docenić dziedzictwo, umacniać ducha wolontariatu i inspirować przyszłe pokolenia.

Dziękuję Państwu za uwagę! Życzę wszystkim owocnego i inspirującego czasu spędzonego razem.

EN •

Volunteerism and service: the spirit of St Florian in the firefighter's calling

Dear Minister, Dear Mayor, General, Madam Chairwoman of the Community, conference participants, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Today's gathering in Buivydžiai is a great honour for me. This is a special place, home to one of our most precious relics — the corpisanto of St Florian. It is not only a unique heritage of our region, but also a spiritual symbol that connects us to the fire-fighting tradition, to community, and to self-sacrifice.

St Florian, patron saint of firefighters, is particularly close to my heart. Over more than 25 years of service in the State Fire and Rescue Service, I took part in extinguishing fires, rescuing people and commanding firefighter-rescuer crews, and sub-

sequently spent over 15 years leading the Firefighter-Rescuer School. During that time, I was able to observe on many occasions how the firefighter-rescuer's vocation reveals itself in both everyday and extreme situations.

I would like to share one story from my many years of service. Returning from leave to the school, two cadets noticed a house on fire in Salininkai, a settlement on the road to the Firefighter-Rescuer School in Valčiūnai. Terrified people were running around the building, and the fire service had not yet reached the scene. Without a moment's hesitation, the young men stopped and began rescuing the elderly residents still inside the building and putting out the fire. It was a remarkable example of volunteer firefighters rushing to help before the state fire and rescue forces could arrive. Their determination and simple but unshakeable readiness to assist saved not only property but also human lives. It was then that I understood that volunteering in

firefighting is not a hobby or a duty performed “in one’s spare time,” but a true vocation, born of a sense of community and compassion for one’s fellow human being.

Later, as director of the Firefighter-Rescuer School, I often met young people who arrived with little experience but with an enormous desire to serve. Some came from small towns and villages where the tradition of volunteer fire brigades remains alive. They brought with them what they had learned from their parents and grandparents — the spirit of self-sacrifice and solidarity. And it was precisely this spirit that became the foundation upon which we later built professional knowledge and skills.

It is therefore especially significant that at today’s conference we will speak not only about the historical importance of the relic of St Florian, but also about the volunteer fire brigade movement. These are two phenomena that complement each other: the relic of St Florian reminds us of the depth of our faith and culture, while the volunteer fire brigade movement bears witness to the way those values have taken root in everyday life and become a living part of the community.

Today, as the world grows ever more technological and global, it is vitally important to remember that fundamental values — courage, community and service to others — remain unchanged. These values are also symbolised by St Florian. Our forebears safeguarded them, volunteers nurtured them, and we pass them on to our children and students.

**Volunteering in
firefighting is not a hobby
or a duty performed “in
one’s spare time,” but a
true vocation, born of a
sense of community and
compassion for one’s
fellow human being.**

This conference is exceptional also because it brings together different experiences: the perspectives of historians and cultural researchers on heritage, the experience of the firefighting community, and the attachment of the local community to its own traditions. Such gatherings not only enrich our knowledge but also strengthen the bonds between us.

I therefore wish that this day may be not only a time for scholarly presentations, but also a celebration of community. May the discussions help us to appreciate our heritage more fully, to strengthen the spirit of volunteerism and to inspire future generations.

Thank you for your attention! I wish everyone a fruitful and inspiring time together.

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Iš 50 tūkstančių išliko tik 100, iš jų du yra Lietuvoje, vienas – Buivydžiuose. Kas yra corpisanti?

Z 50 tysięcy przetrwało zaledwie 100 — dwa z nich znajdują się na Litwie, jedno w Bujwidzach. Czym są corpisanti?

Of 50,000, only 100 survive — two of them in Lithuania, one in Buivydžiai. What are corpisanti?

Buivydžius keičianti konferencija

Konferencija zmieniająca Bujwidze

A conference that is changing Buivydžiai

LT •

Buivydžiai — vaizdingas Vilniaus rajono miestelis, esantis prie pat Baltarusijos sienos — išsiskiria ne tik gražiu kraštovaizdžiu, bet ir išskirtiniu istoriniu paveldu.

Jo vizitinė kortelė yra unikali XVIII amžiaus koplyčia, priskirta Laurynui Gucevičiui. Pastatyta kaip Radziszewskių šeimos mauzoliejus, savo viduje ji saugo nepaprastą relikviją — šv. Florijono Corpi Santi (Šventąjį Kūną). Vietos bendruomenė ėmėsi ryžtingų veiksmų, siekdama išsaugoti šių objektų vertę ir atkreipti visuomenės bei sprendimus priimančių institucijų dėmesį į šį vertingą paveldą.

Miestelyje šiandien vyravo neįprastas šurmulys. Garbingi svečiai, vietos bendruomenės atstovai ir aukšto

rango delegacijos susirinko šv. Jurgio bažnyčioje. Būtent ten buvo iškilmingai atidaryta tarptautinė konferencija „Buivydžiai — Šventasis Florijonas „Corpi Santi“ ir ugniagesybos raida: reikšmė Lietuvos ir Europos istoriniame bei kultūriniame kontekste“.

Buivydžių bendruomenė, vadovaujama Danutos Korkus, šia proga suplanavo visą renginių ciklą, pabrėžiantį šio krašto istorinį, dvasinį ir visuomeninį pobūdį. Šiandienos susitikimas tapo šių iniciatyvų vainiku.

Viso ciklo ašimi tapo būtent Buivydžių šventovėje saugoma šv. Florijono, ugniagesių globėjo, relikvija. Kadangi tarpukario laikais parapijoje aktyviai veikė savanoriška ugniagesių komanda ir pučiamųjų orkestras, kilo idėja sujungti šventojo kulto istoriją su vietos ugniagesybos istorija.

Konferenciją atidarė Vilniaus rajono meras Robertas Duchnievičius, Lietuvos vidaus reikalų ministras Vladislavas Kondratovičius, Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamento direktorius, vidaus tarnybos generolas Renatas Požė-



Edita Mildažytė, Lietuvos žurnalistė, publicistė, TV laidų vedėja, prodiuserė, visuomenės veikėja. | Edita Mildažytė, litewska dziennikarka, publicystka, prowadząca programy telewizyjne, producentka, działaczka społeczna. | Edita Mildažytė, Lithuanian journalist, publicist, television presenter, producer, and public figure.

la ir Lenkijos instituto Vilniuje direktorius dr. Piotras Drobnikas. Specialų vaizdo sveikinimą su linkėjimais atsiuntė dr. Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažylienė, Lietuvos ambasadorė prie Šventojo Sosto ir Maltos ordino. Renginyje taip pat dalyvavo kiti kultūros, visuomeninių institucijų atstovai ir dvasininkai.

Visas teminis ciklas prasidėjo jau prieš mėnesį nuo tapybos plenerio. Vietos gyventojai buvo pakviesti amžinti unikalų Buivydžių bažnyčios architektūrinį ansamblį, įskaitant šv. Florijono relikviją ir parapijos globėją — šv. Jurgio — atvaizdą. Sukurti darbai vėliau papuošė šventovės vidų.

Šventinėje programoje taip pat buvo „Piknikas su ugniagesiais“ — renginys, parengtas jauniausiems seniūnijos gyventojams. Vaikai atvyko į aikštę didžiudamiesi dėvėdami ugniagesių kostiumus. Konkursai buvo verti dalyvavimo, nes patrauklūs prizai nebuvo vienintelė staigmena. Pikniko metu visi norintieji galėjo apžiūrėti kovinius automobilius, išbandyti savo jėgas gesinant imituojamą gaisrą ar pamatyti, kaip greitai ugniagesiai reaguoja į tikrą kvietimą pasigirdus sirenai.

Šiandienos diskusijų sesijose buvo ypač pabrėžta kultūrinių vertybių svarba formuojant vietinį patriotizmą. Ekspertai atkreipė dėmesį į Buivydžių religinio-istorinio komplekso unikalumą, savanoriškų ugniagesių komandų istoriją ir tradicijas, taip pat į pagrindinį saugumo ir sakralinių paminklų apsaugos vaidmenį.

Buivydžiai — a picturesque town in the Vilnius district, situated right on the border with Belarus — stands out not only for its beautiful landscape but also for its exceptional historical heritage.

Its hallmark is a unique eighteenth-century chapel attributed to Laurynas Gucevičius. Built as the mausoleum of the Radziszewski family, it holds within it an extraordinary relic — the Corpi Santi (Holy Body) of St Florian. The local community has taken decisive steps to preserve the value of these sites and to draw the attention of the public and decision-making institutions to this precious heritage.

The town was buzzing with unusual activity today. Distinguished guests, members of the local community and high-level delegations gathered in the Church of St George. It was there that the international conference “Buivydžiai — St Florian ‘Corpi Santi’ and the Development of Firefighting: Significance in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe” was ceremonially inaugurated.

The Buivydžiai Community, led by Danuta Korkus, had planned a whole cycle of events for the occasion, highlighting the historical, spiritual and civic character of the region. Today’s gathering was the culmination of these initiatives.

The focal point of the entire cycle was the relic of St Florian, patron saint of

firefighters, preserved in the Buivydžiai church. Since a volunteer fire brigade and a brass band had been active in the parish during the interwar period, the idea arose to bring together the history of the saint’s cult with the history of local firefighting.

The conference was opened by, among others, Vilnius District Mayor Robert Duchniewicz, Lithuanian Minister of the Interior Władysław Kondratowicz, Director of the Fire Protection and Rescue Department General of Internal Service Renatas Požėla, and Director of the Polish Institute in Vilnius Dr Piotr Drobniak. A special filmed greeting was sent by Dr Sigita Maslauskaitė-Mažyliienė, Lithuanian Ambassador to the Holy See and the Order of Malta. Other representatives of cultural and civic institutions, as well as clergy, also took part in the event.

The thematic cycle had begun a month earlier with an open-air painting session. Local residents were invited to capture on canvas the unique architectural ensemble of the Buivydžiai church, including the relic of St Florian and the image of the parish patron, St George. The resulting works subsequently adorned the interior of the church.

The programme of celebrations also included a “Picnic with Firefighters” — an event prepared with the youngest residents of the district in mind. Children arrived at the square proudly dressed in firefighter costumes. The competitions were well worth entering, as attractive prizes were not the only surprise. During the picnic, all those interested could inspect fire engines, try their hand at extinguishing a simulated fire, or see how quickly firefighters respond to a real call when the siren sounds.

During today’s panel discussions, the importance of cultural values in shaping local patriotism was strongly emphasised. Experts drew attention to the uniqueness of the religious-historical complex in Buivydžiai, the history and traditions of volunteer fire brigades, and the key role of safety and the protection of sacred monuments.

The relic of St Florian, the centrepiece of the conference, is a phenomenon unique on a national scale — in all of Lithuania, only two such objects exist (the other is in Valkininkai). The so-called Holy Bodies are an eighteenth-century phenomenon that spread following the discovery of the Roman catacombs.

At that time, these early Christian relics were sent to parishes across the world, particularly to Canada and Latin America, but also reached Europe, including the lands of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The Buivydžiai relic of St Florian is exceptional not only for its Baroque style and excellent state of preservation. What makes it truly unique is the completeness of the site — the pyramidal funerary chapel of the Radziszewski family (attributed to Gucevičius) and a special reliquary altar decorated with shells in the manner of the catacombs, with original inscriptions dating to the eighteenth century, have both survived.

The relic of St Florian, the centrepiece of the conference, is a phenomenon unique on a national scale — in all of Lithuania, only two such objects exist.

Situated within the geography of the country, these relics are housed in the easternmost Catholic church in Lithuania, right on the border with Belarus. This location naturally invites the national security services and armed forces to reflect

on the fuller utilisation of this site — both as a religious symbol and as a bastion of historical heritage.

The presence of the relic of St Florian in Buivydžiai, viewed in the context of the experience of services from Poland, demonstrates how deeply volunteer firefighters are embedded in the life and identity of the local community. As the Chairwoman of the Buivydžiai Community Danuta Korkus concluded, the first important step has already been taken, and in the future similar events are planned, in order to build awareness of the value of this unique corner of the land on an ongoing basis.

Edita Mildažytė apie Buivydžius: „Čia gimsta tikrasis patriotizmas”

Edita Mildažytė o Bujwizach: „Tu rodzi się prawdziwy patriotyzm”

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LT •

— *Niekas neina ginti abstrakčių sąvokų. Visi eina ginti savo motinos, savo žemės ir bažnyčios, — pokalbyje su LRT.lt sako žurnalistė Edita Mildažytė, kuri su vyru Sauliumi Pilinkumi leidžia jau ne pirmą vasarą savo namuose Buivydžiuose. Būtent čia, prie pat Baltarusijos sienos, Buivydžių bendruomenė priminė apie unikalų paveldą — šv. Florijono corpi santi — ir parodė, kad patriotizmas prasideda nuo vietos, kurioje gyvename.*

Buivydžiuose, Vilniaus rajone, vyko tarptautinė konferencija „Buivydžių šv. Florijono Corpi Santi ir ugniagesių judėjimo reikšmė Lietuvos ir Europos istoriniame bei kultūriniame kontekste“, skirta sakraliniam paveldui ir ugniagesių tradicijoms. Šv. Jurgio bažnyčioje, šalia šv. Florijono koplyčios, susirinko visuomenės veikėjai, meno istorikai, priešgaisrinės apsaugos specialistai iš Lietuvos ir Lenkijos bei valstybinių institucijų atstovai. Diskusijos vyko apie unikatinę relikviją — šv. Florijono corpi santi, 1793 m. relikvijų-skulptūrą, vieną iš dviejų išlikusių Lietuvoje. Šv. Florijono koplyčia, piramidinio pavidalo, kadaise atliko Radziszewskių giminės

mauzoliejaus funkciją. Būtent čia buvo saugomas relikvijorius — europinės reikšmės lobis, bet kartu ir vietos tapatybės simbolis.

Mildažytė: „Patriotizmas gimsta ginant motiną, žemę ir bažnyčią“

Edita Mildažytė, žinoma žurnalistė ir visuomenės veikėja, jau kelerius metus leidžia vasarą Buivydžiuose su vyru Sauliumi Pilinkumi. Būtent čia — kaip ji pabrėžia — rado ne tik unikalų paveldą, bet ir tikrus draugus.

„Nobody goes out to defend abstract concepts. Everyone goes to defend their mother, their land and their church,” journalist Edita Mildažytė tells LRT.lt. Together with her husband Saulius Pilinkus, she is spending yet another summer at their home in Buivydžiai. It is here, right on the border with Belarus, that the Buivydžiai community has drawn attention to a unique heritage — the corpi santi of St Florian — and demonstrated that patriotism begins in the place where we live.

In Buivydžiai, in the Vilnius district, an international conference was held on „The Significance of the Corpi Santi of St Florian from Buivydžiai and the Firefighting Movement in the Historical and Cultural Context of Lithuania and Europe,” devoted to sacred heritage and firefighting traditions. In the Church of St George, beside the Chapel of St Florian, civic activists, art historians, fire-protection specialists from Lithuania and Poland, and representatives of state authorities came together. The discussions centred on a unique relic — the corpi santi of St Florian, a relic-sculpture dating from 1793, one of only two surviving in Lithuania. The Chapel of St Florian, pyramidal in form, once served as the mausoleum of the Radziszewski family. It was here that the reliquary was kept — a treasure of European significance, but also a symbol of local identity.

Mildažytė: „Patriotism is born from defending your mother, your land and your church”

Edita Mildažytė, a well-known journalist and civic activist, has been spending her summers in Buivydžiai with her husband Saulius Pilinkus for several years. It is here — as she emphasises — that she found not only a unique heritage but also true friends.

„The first thing I heard here was the story of the church rebuilt by the hands of the residents after the fire in 1982. It was a true miracle. Later, when we discovered the presence of the corpi santi of St Florian, it became clear that everything connects

beautifully — the patron saint of firefighters, the local fire brigade, and even the brass band that once existed here. The most important thing is that the residents themselves should realise how exceptional this place is,” says Mildažytė.

„My family is very fond of Buivydžiai. We were received here very warmly, and I have found many true friends. We are grateful for that and feel a debt to this region,” she recounts.

She stresses that the deepest dimension of patriotism lies precisely in everyday matters:

„Nobody goes out to defend abstract concepts. Everyone goes to defend their mother, their land and their church. These are real things, present in the heart of every person — and it is precisely through them that one can find the way to people’s hearts,” she underlines.

Danuta Korkus: corpi santi — an impulse for the community

The Chairwoman of the Buivydžiai Community, Danuta Korkus, tells LRT.lt that the firefighting ethos is in the locals’ genes. „The church became a symbol of approaching freedom and civic solidarity,” she emphasised. Korkus notes that for years the residents of Buivydžiai had known that they possessed the relics of St Florian.

**Nobody goes out to
defend abstract concepts.
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of every person.**

„However, they were modestly venerated, since they were housed in the nearby chapel. Meanwhile, all attention was focused on the Church of St George. It was only when the wooden church burned down in 1982 that services moved to the chapel,” she recounts.

The relic remained virtually forgotten for years. Only the research and conservation carried out in 2022 at the Museum of Church Heritage restored its lustre. Interest then grew — museum professionals, scholars and journalists came to Buivydžiai. Today, the reliquary, owing to the poor condition of the chapel, is kept in a side altar of the church.

Around the conference, a cycle of events was organised: free excursions, fire-safety workshops, an open-air painting session and a children’s parade in firefighter costumes. All this so that knowledge of the local heritage might reach the residents and future generations.

**Saulius Pilinkus: „This is an example that
there are no tensions between us”**

Saulius Pilinkus, art historian and collector, who has been associated with Buivydžiai for years, stresses that this place truly teaches real patriotism.

„When I first came here in 2007, during an expedition in the footsteps of Konstantinas Tiškevičius, I understood that this is an

exceptional land. This edge of the European Union shows that, without any special effort, it is possible to live normally, fraternally, preserving the past. There is no better patriotism than local patriotism — it is like family patriotism,” says Pilinkus.

In his view, Buivydžiai are proof that Poles and Lithuanians can coexist without tension, despite linguistic or cultural differences.

„This event, prepared together with the local community, shows that there are no barriers between us. We are able to communicate bilingually, and symbols and relics are shared by us all. This is an excellent example for the entire country,” he emphasises.

Pilinkus adds that politicians often see things differently, stoking disputes over schools or language.

„One must bravely answer the question of who is the autochthon, who has lived here for centuries. There are historical facts that need to be known,” he stresses.

In his view, shared history is what unites nations most and allows one to recognise true friends.

„Our enemy today understands this perfectly — for centuries it has been in Russia’s interest to ensure that unity is lacking between our nations,” Pilinkus underlines.

A common cause above divisions

The conference in Buivydžiai became an occasion to recall that heritage is not merely history — it is a tool for building community. The joint efforts of the residents, the support of scholars and institutions showed that Buivydžiai can be a symbol of local patriotism and solidarity.

Today, the greatest challenge is the rescue of the Chapel of St Florian. This requires time, funds and bureaucratic procedures. But — as the residents say — in Buivydžiai it has already been proved more than once that a common cause can unite everyone.

Now the Buivydžiai community is beginning the next stage — establishing contacts with the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, writing grant applications, putting documentation in order.

„It is tedious, bureaucratic work, but God willing, we shall encounter open hearts along the way. The ultimate goal is the restoration of the entire sacred ensemble. The priority is the cultural monument — that is, the Chapel of St Florian, the bell tower and the churchyard wall. Although the Church of St George was rebuilt as recently as 1987, nature and the elements take their toll — the roof has begun to leak, the windows are becoming unsealed and the situation is critical,” the Chairwoman assessed.

In Korkus's view, any community that wishes to protect its unique places should start with a simple step: love for one's own land and care for what has been entrusted to it.

„When life, one's professional career, has been in a sense completed, there comes a moment of reflection, of turning one's attention to one's own history. As Czesław Miłosz said, the past is a reflection of reality. Zofia Nałkowska once wrote that we are not such as we think ourselves to be, but such as the surroundings around us. If we wish to look dignified, stately, beautiful and elegant, we must take care of it ourselves. Then we shall be able to take pride in what we have achieved,” concluded the Chairwoman of the Buivydžiai Community, Danuta Korkus.

Buivydžiai, with their corpi santi of St Florian and their firefighting tradition, show today that community and memory can be stronger than divisions.

„Buivydžiai is a place of miracles” — confirm the politicians

The significance of the event was also recognised at the state level.

Minister of the Interior Władysław Kondratowicz observed that the conference itself was an exceptional event.

„One miracle is this church, another is the gymnasium that operates here. Everything we observe in Buivydžiai is the fruit of the local community's effort,” he said. He added that it is precisely such initiatives that give hope to smaller localities on the border, which despite the difficulties „remain alive and look to the future with optimism.”

Vilnius District Mayor Robert Duchniewicz drew attention to the fact that Buivydžiai is an example of how unique monuments and enormous tourism potential lie hidden in small towns.

„St Florian as the patron saint of firefighters is also close to me personally, because I myself am a volunteer firefighter. That is why I am pleased that the local community is making efforts to save the chapel and the church — this is heritage of national significance,” he stressed.

Director of the Fire Protection Department Renatas Požėla recalled that Lithuanian firefighting celebrates its 500th anniversary this year, and that its origins reach back to Vilnius. „Buivydžiai is truly a place of miracles,” he summed up the conference, noting that fire has changed the fates of people and entire nations throughout the ages.

LRT.It recalls that on 7 and 9 September 2025, events were held in Buivydžiai in the Vilnius district, highlighting the significance of local sacred, civic and historical values connected with the ensemble of the Church of St George — exceptional on many levels.

**Iš 50 tūkstančių išliko tik 100, iš jų du yra Lietuvoje,
vienas – Buivydžiuose. Kas yra *corpisančiai*?**

**Z 50 tysięcy przetrwało zaledwie 100 — dwa z nich znajdują
się na Litwie, jedno w Bujwidzach. Czym są *corpisančiai*?**

**Of 50,000, only 100 survive — two of them in Lithuania,
one in Buivydžiai. What are *corpisančiai*?**

LT •

Buivydžių bendruomenė teigia, kad jų corpisančiai (lot. „šventieji kūnai”) – žmogaus figūros skulptūra, jungianti šventą relikviją ir relikvijorių – gali prisidėti prie vietovės populiarinimo, tačiau kartu yra ir puikus bendros Lietuvos ir Lenkijos istorijos simbolis.

– Šiandien Buivydžiai yra nedidelė gyvenvietė, esanti vos už 2 km nuo Baltarusijos sienos. Juokaujame, kad čia velnias sako labanakt. Tačiau XVII–XVIII amžiais buvo visai kitaip – tuomet Buivydžiai plėtėsi ir klestėjo. Pastačius Radziszewskių rūmus, vietovė įgijo daugiau spindesio ir tapo svarbia Abiejų Tautų Respublikos elito susitikimų vieta. Būtent tada Liudvika Brzostowska-Radziszewska į Bui-

vydžius atgabeno šv. Florijono corpisan-
ti – laikraščiui „Kurier Wileński” pasakojo
Buivydžių bendruomenės pirmininkė Da-
nuta Korkus.

Buivydžių istorija

Pirmieji Buivydžių paminėjimai siekia
XVI amžių. 1537 m. Lenkijos karalius ir Lie-

tuvos didysis kunigaikštis Žygimantas Au-
gustas šias žemes suteikė Andriui Dluskui.
XVII amžiaus pirmojoje pusėje dvaras jau
priklausė Bžostovskių giminei.

1784 m., susituokus Michalui Radzis-
zewskiui ir Liudwikai Brzostowskiai,
Buivydžiai tapo Radziszewskių šeimos
nuosavybe. Michał čia pastatė medinę
Šv. Jurgio bažnyčią.

A black and white portrait of Antoni Radczenko, a middle-aged man with a short beard and mustache, wearing a dark button-down shirt. He is seated and looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background consists of a dark, textured stone wall.

Antoni Radczenko, žurnalistas. | Antoni Radczenko,
dziennikarz. | Antoni Radczenko, journalist.

**XVIII amžiuje atsirado
corpisanți – unikalus
sakralinis objektas. Tai
žmogaus figūrą vaizduojanti
skulptūra, kurioje sujungta
relikvija ir relikvijorius, o
viduje saugomi pirmųjų
šventųjų iš Romos
katakombų kaulai.**

– Kas buvo bažnyčios architektas, tiksliai nežinoma. Buivydžių architektūros tyrimai dar tik prasideda. Vis dėlto labai tikėtina, kad architektas buvo Laurynas Gucevičius. Jam taip pat priskiriami ir prie Neries stovėję Radeševskio rūmai, – pasakoja Danuta Korkus.

Už dalyvavimą 1830–1831 m. sukilime Radziszewskių dvaras buvo konfiskuotas. Rūmai sunyko dar XIX amžiuje. „Dar ne taip seniai – mūsų atmintis siekia tuos laikus – šie rūmai buvo didingi ir puošnūs, o šiandien jie netekę puošybos, be langų, durų ir stogo, virtę visiškais griuvėsiais“, – 1868 m. išleistoje knygoje „Vilija ir

*The Buivydžiai community maintains that their **corpisanto** (Latin: „holy body”) — a human-figure sculpture combining a sacred relic with a reliquary — could help promote the area, while also serving as an excellent symbol of the shared history of Lithuania and Poland.*

„Today, Buivydžiai is a small settlement barely two kilometres from the Belarusian border. We joke that this is where the devil says goodnight. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, things were quite different — Buivydžiai was growing and thriving. After the Radziszewski manor was built, the place gained a new lustre and became an important meeting point for the elites of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was then that Ludwika Brzostowska-Radziszewska brought the *corpisanto* of St Florian to Buivydžiai,” Danuta Korkus, chairwoman of the Buivydžiai community, told the *Kurier Wileński* newspaper.

The history of Buivydžiai

The earliest mentions of Buivydžiai date to the sixteenth century. In 1537, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund Augustus granted the lands to Andrzej Dłuski. By the first half of the seventeenth century, the estate had passed to the Brzostowski family.

In 1784, following the marriage of Michał Radziszewski and Ludwika Brzostowska, Buivydžiai became the property of the

Radziszewski family. Michał erected a wooden church dedicated to St George.

In the eighteenth century, the *corpisanto* emerged — a unique sacred object. It is a sculpture depicting a human figure, combining a relic and a reliquary, with the bones of early saints from the Roman catacombs preserved inside.

„The identity of the church’s architect is not known with certainty. Architectural research on Buivydžiai is only just beginning. It is, however, highly likely that the architect was Laurynas Gucevičius. The Radziszewski palace that once stood on the banks of the Neris is also attributed to him,” says Danuta Korkus.

For their participation in the Uprising of 1830–1831, the Radziszewski estate was

confiscated. The manor fell into ruin during the nineteenth century. „Not so long ago — within living memory — this palace was grand and magnificent, yet today it stands stripped of its ornament, without windows, doors or roof, reduced to utter ruins,” wrote the renowned archaeologist and local historian Konstantinas Tiškevičius in his 1868 book *Vilija and Its Banks*.

The church survived until the late 1970s. In 1982, a fire broke out due to faulty electrical wiring. Through the efforts of the faithful, the church was rebuilt in the final years of the Soviet Union.

The bones of the first martyrs

In the first half of the sixteenth century, catacombs containing the remains of the first Christian martyrs were rediscovered in Rome. Their bones began to be used as relics.

As Dr Ruth Sargent Noyes of the National Museum of Denmark writes in her article „The Catacombs of Poland: The *Corpisanto* Relic of St Felix in the Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin

Mary in Tomaszów Lubelski” (*Rocznik Tomaszowski*, 2021), in the seventeenth century the Vatican created a system regulating the management and distribution of this „precious resource” in response to the requests of the faithful, particularly for the most prized „whole bodies” — complete skeletons. These relics became so popular that by the eighteenth century the greater part of them had been distributed among churches and monasteries.

As the stock of „sacred material” dwindled, the Church found a new solution. Thus, in the eighteenth century, the *corpisanto* emerged — a unique sacred object. It is a sculpture depicting a human figure, combining a relic and a reliquary, with the bones of early saints from the Roman catacombs preserved inside. These relics are integrated into a three-dimensional sculpture fashioned from various materials.

Scholars estimate that between 30,000 and 50,000 *corpisanti* were created in total. Only around 100 have survived to the present day. The majority are found in Southern Europe and Latin America — in Italy, France, Spain and Mexico. Lithuania can take pride in possessing two such sacred objects.

The holy body in Buivydžiai

In 1794, at the very end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s existence, the *corpisanto* of St Florian

reached Buivydžiai through the efforts of Ludwika Radziszewska. The relic was kept in a chapel, and after the fire it was moved to the church.

The chapel and the sculpture of St Florian are bearers of our historical memory. They are our cultural heritage, giving us a sense of national belonging and genealogical continuity.

It is worth noting that the reliquary went missing during the First World War. In the interwar period, however, a new reliquary was brought from Cracow.

„The current Lithuanian Ambassador to the Holy See, and former director of the Museum of Church Heritage, Sigita Mašlauskaitė-Mažylienė, one might say, „brought back to life’ the *corpisanto* of St Florian in Buivydžiai. Sadly, this artefact had been completely forgotten. Of course, everyone knew that something lay inside the coffin in the church, but no one dared to open it and look,” recalls Korkus.

„In 2022, our *corpisanto* was taken to the Museum of Church Heritage for restoration. Comprehensive research was carried out and the figure was restored. It

was confirmed that all materials are authentic and date to the eighteenth century. The relic was subsequently returned to our church. Unfortunately, the chapel is in very poor condition, so we cannot currently house the *corpisanto* there. Our goal is to repair the chapel and create a fitting setting for this artefact,” emphasises Korkus.

One of the Buivydžiai community’s objectives is to spread awareness of the *corpisanto*.

„The chapel and the sculpture of St Florian are bearers of our historical memory. They are our cultural heritage, giving us a sense of national belonging and genealogical continuity. They allow us to reach into the past, inspire pride and offer the possibility of physically experiencing history. This is our heritage, and we are duty-bound to pass it on to future generations,” says Danuta Korkus.

At present, there are only two *corpisanti* in Lithuania — in Buivydžiai and in the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Valkininkai.

Gerbiamieji,

kreipiamės į Jus, prašydami prisidėti prie Šv. Florijono koplyčios renovacijos. Tai išskirtinės istorinės ir dvasinės reikšmės sakralinis objektas, liudijantis vietos bendruomenės tradicijas, tikėjimą ir kultūros paveldą.

Laikas ir gamtos veiksniai koplyčiai padarė žalos, todėl būtini skubūs tvarkybos darbai, siekiant sustabdyti tolesnį jos nykimą ir išsaugoti šį vertingą paveldo objektą ateities kartoms. Jūsų parama padėtų ne tik atkurti koplyčios būklę, bet ir išsaugoti jos istorinę atmintį bei gyvąją bendruomenės dvasią.

Nuoširdžiai kviečiame prisidėti prie šios prasmingos iniciatyvos ir tapti šio paveldo išsaugojimo dalimi.

Iš anksto dėkojame už Jūsų geranoriškumą ir paramą.

BUIVYDŽIŲ BENDRUOMENĖ
Banko sąskaita EUR
LT337044060006241260
Paskirtis – Koplyčios renovacija

Nuotraukų autorius – Kšyštof Volodko

Szanowni Państwo,

zwracamy się do Państwa z prośbą o wsparcie renowacji kaplicy św. Floriana. Jest to obiekt sakralny o wyjątkowym znaczeniu historycznym i duchowym, świadczący o tradycjach, wierze oraz dziedzictwie kulturowym lokalnej społeczności.

Upływ czasu oraz czynniki naturalne spowodowały uszkodzenia kaplicy, dlatego konieczne są pilne prace konserwatorskie, aby powstrzymać jej dalszą degradację i zachować ten cenny obiekt dziedzictwa dla przyszłych pokoleń. Państwa wsparcie pomogłoby nie tylko przywrócić stan kaplicy, ale także ocalić jej historyczną pamięć oraz żywego ducha wspólnoty.

Serdecznie zapraszamy do włączenia się w tę ważną inicjatywę i stania się częścią ochrony tego dziedzictwa.

Z góry dziękujemy za Państwa życzliwość i wsparcie.

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Rachunek bankowy (EUR):
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Tytuł przelewu: renowacja kaplicy

Autor zdjęć – Krzysztof Wołodko

Dear Sir or Madam,

we kindly ask for your support in the renovation of St. Florian's Chapel. It is a sacred site of exceptional historical and spiritual significance, reflecting the traditions, faith, and cultural heritage of the local community.

Time and natural elements have caused damage to the chapel, therefore urgent restoration works are necessary to stop its further deterioration and preserve this valuable heritage site for future generations. Your support would not only help restore the chapel's condition but also preserve its historical memory and the living spirit of the community.

We warmly invite you to take part in this meaningful initiative and become part of the preservation of this heritage.

We sincerely thank you in advance for your kindness and support.

BUIVYDŽIŲ COMMUNITY
Bank account (EUR):
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Payment purpose: chapel renovation

Photo author – Kšyštof Volodko