

SYMBOLIC SIGNS IN CULTURE: A GESTURE OF HAND-KISSING, ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT IN LITHUANIA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Symbols, as a certain expression of signs, may be examined when concentrating on social functions of a sign or on logical functions of the same sign. This article deals with the place of signs (gestures) in communication not only in the eyes of the representatives of semiotics but also in the eyes of anthropologists and ethnologists. This article is restricted to the first group of gestures when non-verbal gestures appear as a part of ritual behaviour that is they are used in everyday situation at the moment of greeting. It is a hand-kissing which is the object of research in this article. The aim of the article is to reveal the origin of hand-kissing and follow the development of this gesture in Lithuania in the 20th century. The tasks there are: to examine forms of the expression of hand-kissing; to determine functions of ethical norms which regulate hand-kissing with regard to a sex, age, social status, degree of acquaintance; to show modifications of the expression and normative functions of this gesture in a certain period of time. The work is grounded on the data of field works from the territory of the Republic of Lithuania collected in ethnographical expeditions in 1998-2005 by the author herself, and it is also based on the archive manuscript collections, as well as works on non-verbal communication published by other researchers.

KEY WORDS: socio-cultural anthropology, gestures, symbolic signs, hand-kissing, ethnology, ethic norms, ethno-cultural identity.

ANOTACIJA

Gesto, kaip simbolinio ženklų, reikšmės ir vietos žmonių bendravimo prasme tyrimai kol kas yra gana naujas dalykas, tačiau pastaruoju metu šia tema susidomi vis daugiau įvairių mokslų sričių tyrinėtojų. Šiame straipsnyje apsiribojome etnologų ir antropologų požiūriu į rankos pabučiavimo gestą, jo ištakas ir raidą Lietuvoje XX a. Tikslas – atskleisti rankos pabučiavimo ištakas ir pasekti šio gesto raidą Lietuvoje XX a. Šiam tikslui pasiekti kelti uždaviniai: ištirti rankos pabučiavimo raiškos formas; nustatyti etinių normų funkcijas, reglamentuojančias rankos pabučiavimą lyties, amžiaus, socialinio statuso, pažinties laipsnio atžvilgiu; parodyti šio gesto raiškos ir normatyvinių funkcijų modifikacijas laiko kontekste. Taisant istorinį-lyginamąjį ir kartografinį metodus bei matematinę analizę tiriama rankos pabučiavimo paplitimo, kultūrinių įtakų bei etnokultūrinio tapatumo išsaugojimo problema. Darbas atliktas remiantis autorės 1998–2005 m. etnografinėse ekspedicijose surinktais lauko tyrimų duomenimis Lietuvos Respublikos teritorijoje, rankraštine medžiaga, taip pat publikuotais Lietuvos etnologų ir kitų tyrinėtojų apie neverbalią bendravimą darbais.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: sociokultūrinė antropologija, gestas, simbolinis ženklas, rankos pabučiavimas, etnologija, etinės normos, etnokultūrinis tapatumas.

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Introduction

Symbols, as a certain expression of signs, may be examined when concentrating on social functions of a sign or on logical functions of the same sign. This article deals with symbols as objects of social culture which foreground social behaviour and traditions.

A gesture is considered to be the main element of people's behaviour or a social action (Leoniavičius 1998:140). When people interact it –

... presupposes an ability of every member of communication to visualize his/her own action with the help of the point of view of another person, as well as an ability to perform or empathize with another individual (Leonavičius 1998:141).

This definition of a gesture shows that the main place in people's interaction is occupied by a sign as a means of communicational process. Functions of the communication via signs were thoroughly examined by the following representatives of semiotics¹: Karl Buehler (1879-1963), Roman Jakobson (1896-1982). However, this article will deal with the place of signs (gestures) in communication not only in the eyes of the representatives of semiotics but also in the eyes of historians, anthropologists and ethnologists.

From the history of investigations on gestures

An interest in gestures was already noticeable in the history of Western culture in the Ancient times. From the times of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian topics of the 'expression' and priority of the origin of the relations between gestures and language 'expression' have been dominating in the evolution of the art history of behaviour. Namely, how outer motions of body, especially those of the face, reflect inner processes, passion or emotions. Scientists of those times aimed at finding the equivalent of the expressions and norms of gestures (Schmitt 1996:170). In the beginning of the 20th century the historical and notional analysis of gesticulation was facilitated by the appearance of structural linguistics (the originator was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)) and its development (research of Roman Jakobson is of special notice). When it was deduced that a word is followed by the phenomenon of a gesture, scientists became interested in the interaction of non-verbal (gestures, mimic, and motions) and verbal (wordy) ways of communication. After World War II this trend gave birth to a very distinctive discipline of kinesics (body-language) (the originator was anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell (1918-1994)) in the United States of America especially. This science aimed at the application of linguistics analysis and description to non-verbal communication (Bull 2002:4-6).

Emile Durkheim's French school and its followers (Robert Hertz (1881-1915), Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), Marcel Granet (1884-1940)) are also of great importance in the history of gestures studies. They gave way to the 'cultural interpretation' of the entirety of body motions: every gesture is a product of any culture or a social situation (Schmitt 1996:172). On the other hand, the main alteration in the research of gestures as a means of non-verbal language appeared in the beginning of the forties of the 20th century. Then American anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) and his wife Margaret Mead (1901-1978), who was an anthropologist too, applied the findings of the theory of cybernetics and communication to human behaviour research. Namely, it was the effect of feedback which enabled to assume any gesture as a single element of interaction (Hagaman 1995:85-102; Mead:2006). Besides, these research agendas dealt with human manners and temperament in particular.

Soon afterwards research studies of the anthropologists mentioned above were supplemented by fundamental works of Erving Goffman (1922-1982) about public relations and by studies of anthropologist Edward Hall (born in 1914), who was an originator of a new discipline (proxemics)

¹ Term *semiotics* came from a Greek word which meant a sign; *semeion* gr. – a sign, *semeiotos* – marked. The process of the functioning of a sign and the revelation of its meaning is called *semeiosis* (gr. *semeiosis* – description, denotation). Dictionary of international words defines semiotics as a science which studies signs and systems of signs, as well as natural and artificial languages as systems of signs with regard to semantics, syntax and pragmatics (Bendorienė, Bogušienė, Dagytė, Daržinskaitė 2005: 668).

about symbolic and material areas where every individual was constantly moving (Hall 1966; Goffman 1971). Later research works of anthropologists who examined gestures and studies in other scientific spheres were more devoted to the description and expression of the motions of particular body parts as well as to the emphasis of the differences in the usage and performance of gestures between two sexes (Bull 2002:19-21; 79-105).

The concept and classification of the gesture

The terms 'gesture' and 'gesticulation' are actually somewhat ambiguous – most frequently used for hand and arm movements but also sometimes encompassing other bodily movements too. According to the affirmation of anthropologist Ruth Finnegan, due to that reason, there is no universal 'gesture language'. Human gesturing take diverse forms and it varies greatly in its degree of standardisation and explicitness. At one end of a rough continuum comes the (relatively) non-conscious gesticulation that co-occurs with speaking, at the other specialised forms such as dance, mime, and the marvellous array of more systematised 'sign languages' (Finnegan 2002:110-111). All deserve attention as established forms of visual communication.

Because gesture is visual, it is a silent means of communication and can be employed when it is difficult or impossible to use speech. The speech channel might be blocked momentarily by noise but it might also be blocked because it is already use (Kendon 1996:8-12). This or another situation of social interaction allows gestures to be split into three groups: 1) utterances on their own; 2) gestures may be employed as components of utterances in alternation with speech; 3) gestures may be employed in conjunction with speech (Байбурин & Топорков 1990:24; Kendon 1996:8-12).

This article is restricted to the first group of gestures when non-verbal gestures appear as a part of ritual behaviour that is they are used in everyday situation at the moment of greeting. According to ethnological research agendas, a usual greeting is performed by a word in Lithuanian culture but the word is quite often followed by a hand-shake, embrace, and a kiss on the cheek as well. When greeting someone at a big distance a word is substituted by a nod, a slight lifting of a cap or a gesture of hand-waving (Lapinskienė 2005a:111-129; 132-134). On the other hand, there are also unusual gestures of greeting. It is a hand-kissing which is *the object of research* in this article. It was attributed to the first group of gestures because of the fact that this gesture is used single when greeting. At the moment of greeting language does not play any role with regard to this gesture.

As cultural worth a gesture is formed by the regulation of body motions via particular communicative cultural standards which are fixed by rules of etiquette. It is interesting to know what rules of etiquette were obeyed or were not obeyed by Lithuanians when kissing a hand at the moment of greeting. Generally speaking, we are dealing with the origin and development of this gesture in Lithuanian culture. This article points toward the explanation of all these questions. *The aim of the article* is to reveal the origin of hand-kissing and follow the development of this gesture in Lithuania in the 20th century. *Tasks*: 1) to examine forms of the expression of hand-kissing; 2) to determine functions of ethical norms which regulate hand-kissing with regard to a sex, age, social status, degree of acquaintance; 3) to show modifications of the expression and normative functions of this gesture in a certain period of time.

Historical-comparative and cartographical *methods* as well as mathematical analysis are applied to examine the *problem* of the spread of hand-kissing, cultural influence and preservation of ethno cultural identity.

Sources: the work is grounded on the data of field works from the whole territory of the Republic of Lithuania collected in ethnographical expeditions in 1998-2005 by the author herself². It is also based on the manuscript material collected from the Institute of Lithuanian History, Department of Ethnology (LIIES in Lithuanian see further), library of Vilnius University, Department of Manuscripts (VUBRS), Vytautas Magnus University, Department of Ethnology and Folklore (VDUER), works on non-verbal communication published by other researchers.

There are very few works on this topic published by anthropologists and ethnologists or other scientists (sociologists, psychologists, semiotics, philosophers, etc.). This proves that reasoning on gestures, their scientific research is quite new in Lithuania. The search for the sources showed that research studies on the gesture which states for an element of non-verbal communication at the moment of greeting, appeared only at the end of the eighties of the 20th century. Among these research works of specialists in Lithuanian philology and philosophers from Lithuania should be mentioned (Stoškus, 1981; Vasilevskienė 1991; Vasilevskienė 1994). In order to distinguish certain peculiarities in the usage of gestures, the connection between the etiquette and traditions, the etiquette and a ritual and, lastly, between the etiquette and ethics were described in these works in detail. In other hand these works have had just generalizing nature. There was no attention paid to ethnic regions of hand kissing gesture and to the revelation of the intensity of its spreading and the time of existence at all.

In the nineties of the 20th century the first scientist who started compensating the lack of the first research studies on the gesture of touching mentioned above was Vingaudas Baltrušaitis (Baltrušaitis 1994; Baltrušaitis 1999). He was the first among Lithuanian ethnologists who began analyzing the gestures of greeting (i.e. those of taking off the hat, hand-shaking, kissing it and embrace). He was the first to pay attention to their spread among regions and the time of existence. The author signified that in the first half of the 20th century the gestures of greeting mentioned above (hand-kissing as well) were regulated by the age, sex and social status in villages and small towns of Lithuania (Baltrušaitis 1999:117-118). This fact was confirmed by Virginija Mikutavičiūtė's article which appeared in the middle of the nineties of the 20th century. It dealt with peculiarities of gestures of greeting (those in the regions of Rokiškis, Širvintos and Jonava in the beginning of the 20th century) (Mikutavičiūtė 1996). These research results are united and extended by the author's works, published at the end of the 20th century – at the beginning of the 21st century (Bylaitė 1999; Lapinskienė 2004; Lapinskienė 2005a; Lapinskienė 2005b).

Origin of a gesture of hand-kissing

The gesture of hand-kissing belongs to one of the most significant forms of behaviour, i.e. to touching. According to the sphere of the usage in communication, the very touching is divided into cultural or institutional actions and into social or every day actions (Kreydlin 2006:21), which outline the way of touching. The latter may be: 1) functional/professional; 2) social/polite; 3) friendly/warm; 4) intimate/declaring love; 5) stimulating sex (Helsin & Alper 1983:217). Other researchers noticed that touching may convey man's predominance and ill-feeling (Huwer 2003:19).

² All the material (458 respondents, born in 1905-1985, have been questioned) collected is stored in a manuscript in VMU Faculty of Humanities Department of Ethnology and Folklore. See the Archive of The Department of Ethnology and Folklore, Vytautas Magnus University (VDUER), case No. (b.) 157-158; 201-203; 246; 255-256; 591; 672-674; 710-714; 840. Collected by A. Bylaitė-Lapinskienė.

Social norms of touching are quite strict in the context of social concept. That is, a touch is possible only at the moment of greeting when it is socially accepted to touch certain body parts, for example, hands. In respect of hand-kissing, social norms require that a person, who is keeping another person's hand by the palm downwards, would start a greeting. Then a person, who is going to kiss a hand, leans over the given hand and gently keeping it, lips the knuckles politely. However, such a gesture of special respect lasts for only a few seconds.

History shows that a gesture of hand-kissing dominated among the high society in Europe in the 18th – 19th centuries. Its origin is connected with the demonstration of the loyalty of a person when kissing another person's ring, which is a symbol of the authority of a dominating person, in Spanish court ceremonies in the 17th – 18th centuries. Such a non-verbal way of showing a man's faith to a man or a man's faith to a woman continued in Europe up to the 20th century (Pujalte 2005:5). At the beginning of this century a gesture of hand-kissing began to disappear. This process went on a bit slower in Lithuania.

Forms of a Gesture of Hand-kissing and their Development in Lithuania

Data of our ethnographical survey prove that a gesture of hand-kissing was used at the moment of greeting up to the middle of the 20th century. In this period of time three groups of hand-kissing when greeting a person were distinguished: 1) children used to kiss a hand to their parents (less rarely a hand to grandparents, relatives); 2) both the youth and the old used to kiss a hand to a priest; 3) a man would kiss a hand to a woman.

Hand-kissing to parents. In the Lithuanian village of the first half of the 20th century an action of greeting parents by a hand-kissing was a special proof of children's favour and respect to their parents. Opposite behaviour was not tolerated and equated to an insult of adults. Thus, according to the requirements of that time, children tried to kiss a hand of their parents not only when greeting but also when leaving or coming back home, when they got presents or money, before the confession in church or after some offence. One way or the other, quite strict rules were set for this gesture. For example, if a child wanted to kiss a hand to his father, he had to take father's hand into his own, first of all, and only then to kiss it. A similar way of hand-kissing is found in Russia (the Ukraine) (Байбурин & Топорков 1990:55).

It was noticed that children used to pay honour to other family members, (i.e. grandparents and relatives less often) in such a way as well. A respondent, born in Bajėnai village (region of Kėdainiai) in 1932, remembers that:

... children were afraid to go to old people because they used to give their hand so strongly that their lips hurt. Children would take off their hat and tremble at the door... (ER b. 714, l. 1).

One could not behave in a different way as he/she would have been blamed for the lack of cultural behaviour. The old would stroke children's hair tenderly or praise him/her that he/she was polite as a reply to the respect shown to them.

There were cases of exceptions when children and grandchildren would kiss an elbow when, for instance, grandparents worked in the fields and their hands were dirty. (ES, b.1119, l. 17). Whereas, grandparents would kiss their grandchildren's forehead as a reply to the respect and gratitude shown by their grandchildren. In the 17th-19th centuries a kiss to the forehead showed respect of a person of higher social status to a person of a lower rank in Russia and other European countries (Байбурин & Топорков 1990:54).

A custom to kiss an elbow to grandparents mentioned above may have come from a greeting of Lithuanian noblemen with a magnate. According to Jonas Goštautas, in the middle of 19th century when a nobleman met a magnate he had to kiss the magnate's shoulder or an elbow alone depending on a degree of favour. The magnate, on the contrary, had the goodness to nod (Goštautas 1967:58). This gesture of greeting was present among Polish noblemen in the 16th-18th centuries as well (Bogucka 1994:42-47). We can infer from this that a gesture of greeting described by J. Goštautas came to the Lithuanian culture from Poland.

On the other hand, it was noticed that already in the clash of the forties-fifties of the 20th century children would rarely kiss a hand to their grandparents or parents. Gradually, this gesture transferred into a face-kissing and a short word 'thank you' (*ačiū* in Lithuanian) in the meantime).

Hand-kissing to a priest. In the beginning of the 20th century a gesture of hand-kissing was a sign of respect to a priest as well. One of the reasons that the faithful kissed the priests' hand was because they used their hand to distribute the Holy Communion. That is why by kissing the hand of a clergy people it was shown people's respect to the Holy Spirit, which is carried by the clergy. So, kissing the priest's hands is a delicate expression of faith and love for Jesus whom the priest represents. This tradition came to Europe from the Old and New Testament³.

According to our research it was not only children but also grown-up people who would greet a priest by hand-kissing in Lithuanian villages and small towns in the first half of the 20th century. According to an inhabitant of Suvalkija, in the beginning of the 20th century a priest responded to this gesture by kissing his father's shoulder (BRS b. F. 169-321, l. 28). Such behaviour of a priest was an exception, however. A way of showing respect by kissing a shoulder is usually common among people of lower social level (Байбурин & Топорков 1990:54).

A gesture of kissing a hand of a priest when greeting was found in the second half of the 20th century too. Yet, this custom continued only due to the old generation. For instance, an inhabitant of a small town Varniai (a region of Telšiai) tells that when once a priest came to her house; her grandfather kissed him a hand and told her to do the same. Such a way of greeting was not acceptable to a respondent born in the Soviet period of time and, thus, she experienced a shock (ER b. 710, l. 34).

On the other hand, some representatives of older generation claim that in the period mentioned above one did not have to kiss a hand of a representative of clergy if he did not have a ring with reliquary (ER b. 672, l. 62). Such a ring was worn only by the clergy of a higher rank (i.e. bishops, cardinals). It was noticed that people used to kiss their ring in the beginning of the 21st century as well.

Hand-kissing to a woman. It is important to mention that in the Lithuanian village of the 20th century a gesture of hand-kissing also expressed a boy's respect to a girl or a man's respect to a woman. In the first half of the 20th century this custom was widely spread in western Lithuania (especially in the area of Klaipėda)⁴, in South-Western Lithuania and the Vilnius of 1920-1939 occupied by Poland (especially in the area where there was a borderline). Such occurrence shows that a gesture of hand-kissing is a relic of German and Polish culture which was taken over by Lithuanian people. History presents facts that when this custom of greeting and parting started to disappear in European countries

³ "In the Old Testament people kissed the hands of the Rabies', as chosen people of God. In the New Testament people kissed the hands of the disciples, priests and deacons because they carried the power of the Holy Spirit through their priesthood from the day of their ordination" (Kile & Rev. [2006 09 30]. <<http://www.stgeorgepiscataway.org/kissing.html>>).

⁴ German people made 41,9% of all inhabitants in the area of Klaipėda, 12,6% - in the region of Vilkaviškis, 4,3% - in the region of Šakiai, 3,5% - in the region of Marijampolė (Gaučas & Matulevičius 1988: 595).

in the 20th century, Poland and Austria were the only countries which preserved it. In Poland a gesture of hand-kissing is indispensable in about 80% of official greetings in the 21st century (Lydeka 2004:23).

According to the data of ethnographical survey, it was people who came up from noblemen (ER b. 255, l. 7), squires (ER b. 246, l. 52; ER b. 672, l. 51.) officers (ER b. 672, l. 48), descendants of Polish *szlachta* (Polish gentry) (ER b. 157, l. 75; ER b. 158, l. 20; ER b. 673, l. 6; ER b. 713, l. 35, 40, 43) who prompted to kiss a hand to girls or women in the Lithuanian village in the first half of the 20th century. This was also influenced by the culture of big towns (ER b. 591, l. 20). That was the reason why this way of greeting was common in towns, manors, whereas in the society of a village it was more usual among intelligent, more educated, cultural boys or men, among richer farmers. This is witnessed by 50% of respondents. According to V. Baltrušaitis, a peasant, wishing to avoid sneering of a rich neighbour of being called a rustic, started propagation of kissing a hand. It was noticed that in the beginning of the 20th century peasants used to kiss a thumb, though this gesture was considered to be a kiss of obligation not of respect (Baltrušaitis 1999:119). Simple villagers learned hand kissing of respect when they served squires. For example, an inhabitant of Vaidai village (a region of Širvintos) tells that when she served in Šešuolėliai manor she was always very surprised to see how a squire used to kiss his wife's hand when leaving or coming back (ER b. 673, l. 69). Besides, teachers also inculcated the gesture of hand-kissing at the moment of greeting in the twenties-fifties of the 20th century:

I kissed a hand to a class-teacher but I was very ashamed when in the lesson of ethics-aesthetics she said to all pupils that hand-kissing was very cultural behaviour (ER b. 712, l. 6).

On the other hand, this way of greeting was not acceptable to all people of the Lithuanian village of the 20th century. Inhabitants of Rumšiškės, a small town of Kaišiadorys region, claim that some people of the town used to mock upon the Polish or inhabitants of the town who followed the example of the Polish. That is, some people would take a woman's hand and, when raising it up to their lips, would kiss their own hand. Others used to respond in the words:

... I am not Polish; I won't kiss your hand ...

when a woman would give her hand to kiss (ER b. 591, l. 46). Similar behaviour was common in North-Western Lithuania (regions of Mažeikiai, Skuodas) (ER b. 710, l. 25), where hand-kissing was mostly influenced by the Germans via Latvia. This was a peculiar way to preserve Lithuanian ethno cultural identity, to protect them from the influence of foreign culture.

In the Soviet period of time the gesture of hand-kissing was considered as "bourgeois relic" (ER b. 840, l. 54, 76). Therefore, in this period of time not very often was kissed a hand of a girl or a woman. According to an inhabitant of Šilalė, who was born in 1938:

... we used to kiss a girl's or a woman's hand only in the period of the renewal of Lithuania (1990-2000). In the Soviet period of time one belonged to a higher social level if he kissed a woman's hand (ER b. 711, l. 55).

Such behaviour was common only among representatives of the authority. For instance, a respondent born in the region of Prienai in 1939 remembers that:

There were reporting meetings held in the period of the existence of collective farms. There were guests of higher rank present in those meetings [officers of the authority – A. L.], who would kiss a hand to a woman whose husband was the head of a collective farm. I was very surprised to see

that, but when my hand was kissed, I became a bit ashamed and thought that I could have washed my hands with scented soap (ER b. 672, l. 38).

The fact that hand-kissing was not a common way of greeting in the Lithuanian village of the 20th century is indicated by emotional state and actions which women did when a representative of male sex would lean over their hand. The majority of girls and women state that they would hesitate to give their hand (ER b. 710, l. 1), they felt mean,

... as if somebody would hit you on the face (ER b. 710, l. 17; ER b. 591, l. 133; ER b. 673, l. 11).

Women felt so ashamed that they wanted to disappear, they would often become red in the face (ER b. 246, l. 13; ER b. 672, l. 17) or would even withdraw their hand (ER b. 158, l. 10; ER b. 256, l. 14; ER b. 710, l. 8) and run away (ER b. 672, l. 56).

Usually, men understood withdrawal of a hand as offence and dishonour. A girl or a woman who did so was called dumb (ER b. 158, l. 14; ER b. 256, l. 41), namby-pamby (ER b. 158, l. 12). Sometimes people thought that a woman could be angry (ER b. 158, l. 29). However, some men were of the opinion that such behaviour of a girl did not insult them. A girl or a woman behaved in such a way because of ever-lasting modesty of Lithuanian woman (ER b. 158, l. 2; ER b. 672, l. 51). Women themselves spoke about a feeling of inferiority as well:

Hands are not beautiful, unsuitable for kissing” (ER b. 591, l. 16),

I am a simple girl of a village, why should one celebrate me...” (ER b. 591, l. 27).

Hence, it is not surprising that the majority of women, especially elderly ones, used to withdraw their hands when representatives of male sex wanted to kiss their hands. However, there were women who would do that in order not to feel humiliated:

If I were a lady, I would agree that men kissed my hand. Now such behaviour seems like ridicule (ER b. 591, l. 56).

Some young single girls did not let kiss their hand because they thought that such a gesture made them older (ER b. 673, l. 2, 6; ER b. 712, l. 6, 38). Moreover, it was the first sign of being an old-maid which witnessed that it was high time to get married (ER b. 590, l. 29). Thus, a young man who had a liking for a girl or intended to marry her would usually kiss her hand at the moment of greeting. There was even a saying that if a young man kissed a girl’s hand, “the rue will not green” (the period of girlhood will be finished) (ER b. 712, l. 15).

Allowance to kiss a woman’s hand depended on who kissed it:

If a girl did not like the boy, she would withdraw her hand (ER b. 712, l. 29).

The very way of hand-kissing was also important. Several degrees of hand-kissing, which are accepted in other European cultures as well (i.e. in France), can be distinguished: 1) “to kiss the air”, that is to lean over a girl’s or a woman’s hand lightly and having lifted it by tips of fingers, in order to glance at her eyes, kiss a hand. The essence of correctness in this case is that a man should not touch a woman’s hand by lips but only imitate a kiss, sending it in the air without raising the head. Such hand-kissing is especially acceptable at the very beginning of acquaintance; 2) “a gentle touch”, that is to lean over a girl’s or woman’s hand in a noble way and give a light and soft kiss by

dry lips⁵. A man could greet only a familiar girl or woman in this way. Otherwise, such behaviour was considered as foolish and uncultured one (Hane 1993).

It should be noted that in the Lithuanian village of the 20th century representatives of male sex did not always follow the rules of hand-kissing mentioned above. Moreover, it was noticed that at the end of the 20th century men, when kissing a girl's or a woman's hand, did not try to lean over her and show their favour in this way. This was the reason why a gallant hand-kissing was changed by an arrogant one. The rules of hand-kissing mentioned above were more acceptable to intelligent or educated people in the village. There were some of them who claimed, however, that hand-kissing was:

... an unhygienic matter and thus, there should not be any attention paid to it (ER b. 202, l. 24).

They considered it as:

... exaggerated politeness which humiliates a man (ER b. 713, l. 67).

Simple man in a village would show his respect to a girl or a woman by kissing her hand only being tipsy. He felt braver then:

Such cases of hand-kissing were cheerful and joyful (ER b. 714, l. 4).

By the way, ordinary girls and women in a village did not know how to give a hand to a man in the right way. Only some girls who were more educated would be praised for the ability to give a hand nicely (ER b. 591, l. 31), i.e. to give it slightly with knuckles upwards.

On the other hand, it should be stated that in the last decades of the 20th century hand-kissing did not become a common phenomenon of greeting and parting in the Lithuanian village either. However, according to 50% of respondents one could meet more and more girls and young women who did not object to this way of greeting and felt respected by men:

I felt embarrassed. It seemed very old-fashioned but still it was very pleasant (ER b. 712, l. 53), very kind (ER b. 710, l. 17), you felt appreciated (ER b. 591, l. 31), etc.

Hence, hand-kissing to a woman at the moment of greeting, as a non-verbal means of communication influenced by foreign cultures, remained as the only gesture of hand-kissing known at the end of the 20th century. However, it did not develop deep traditions of matter and form in the Lithuanian village and small towns especially.

Conclusions

The research of symbolic signs in Lithuanian culture in the 20th century proved that a gesture of hand-kissing at the moment of greeting was a sign of respect, loyalty and favour, first of all; second, it was a means of showing one's attention, of expressing one's liking, of making one's acquaintance or even serious fellowship.

In the context of social interaction a ritual gesture of hand-kissing at the moment of greeting was regulated by rules of etiquette. Namely, a younger person would kiss a hand to an older one and a person of a lower social status would do the same to a person of a higher social status irre-

⁵ In Europe a boy/a man would kneel in front of a girl/woman when making this gesture at the time of English Queen Victoria's ruling. It was an especially gallant hand-kissing of a girl/woman. *Victorian Etiquette and Basic Rules of Propriety*. [2004 11 20]. <<http://www.geocities.com/victorianlace20/etiquette.html>>.

spective of a sex. Etiquette of the interrelationship between different sexes required that a man would kiss a hand to a woman.

Etiquette regulated the accomplishment of hand-kissing throughout the 20th century: a hand of a person to be greeted had to be taken into one's hand gently (not to be drawn anyhow) and, having leaned over it, kissed by the palm downwards. With regard to sexes, especially in case of their acquaintance, this ritual gesture had to nothing but imitate a kiss. Inobservance of these requirements for etiquette was considered as personal offence, lack of cultural behaviour.

At the moment of greeting a gesture of hand-kissing was used in respect of both parents (grandparents and relatives less often) and a priest. Children would kiss a hand to their parents, and both children and adult people would kiss a hand to a priest. A man also used to kiss a hand to a woman as a sign of liking, fellowship, love or devotion.

While mentioning the gesture of hand-kissing to parents and a priest, it should be stated that this gesture was mostly dominant in all Lithuania (especially in villages and small towns) only in the first half of the 20th century (except for a hand-kissing to a priest in church). This was influenced by later, syncretized traditions of Christianity that passed from to generation to generation. The origin of the gesture of kissing a hand to parents and a priest hand is connected with and expressed via these traditions.

A gesture of hand-kissing when a man greeted a woman was preserved alone because of the Sovietization and intense modernization present in the second half of the 20th century as well as due to Western culture rapidly penetrating at the end of the 20th century. Cartography of ethnographical material showed that the origin of this gesture in Lithuania is a relic of other cultural influences (Polish most of all). Positive answers of a half of respondents confirmed that this gesture was quite common in Lithuania but it was not a massive phenomenon. It was used among people of higher social stratum, the intelligentsia, mostly.

In the last decades of the 20th century it is single girls who were shown respect and attention via hand-kissing more and more often. Men leant over girls'/women's hands in order to kiss them less and less frequently. That is, gallantry was gradually forgotten. What this proves is the fact that traditional ethical normative functions changed and forms of the gesture of hand-kissing were simplified.

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SIMBOLINIAI ŽENKLAI KULTŪROJE: RANKOS PABUČIAVIMO GESTAS, JO IŠTAKOS IR RAIDA LIETUVOJE XX A.

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S a n t r a u k a

Gesto, kaip simbolinio ženklo, Lietuvos kultūroje reikšmė, jo vieta žmonių komunikacijoje, yra gana naujas dalykas. Šia tema tik pastaruoju metu susidomi vis daugiau įvairių mokslų sričių tyrinėtojų. Tačiau mes šiame straipsnyje apsiribojome etnologų ir antropologų požiūriu.

Kaip kultūrinė vertybė gestas formuojasi reglamentuojant kūno judesius atitinkamais komunikaciniais kultūriniais etalonais, kurie fiksuojami etiketo taisyklėmis. Ypatingai etinių normų saistomas prisilietimų kategorijai priskirtinas rankos pabučiavimo gestas. Todėl jam ir buvo skirtas

pagrindinis dėmesys šiame straipsnyje. *Tikslas* – atskleisti rankos pabučiavimo ištakas ir pasekti šio gesto raidą Lietuvoje XX a. Šiam tikslui pasiekti kelti tokie *uždaviniai*: 1) ištirti rankos pabučiavimo raiškos formas; 2) nustatyti etinių normų funkcijas, reglamentuojančias rankos pabučiavimą lyties, amžiaus, socialinio statuso, pažinties laipsnio atžvilgiu; 3) parodyti šio gesto raiškos ir normatyvinių funkcijų modifikacijas laiko kontekste. Taikant istorinį-lyginamąjį ir kartografavimo *metodus* bei matematinę analizę buvo tiriama rankos pabučiavimo paplitimo, kultūrinių įtakų bei etnokultūrinio tapatumo išsaugojimo *problema*.

Darbas atliktas remiantis autorės 1998-2005 m. etnografinėse ekspedicijose surinktais lauko tyrimų duomenimis iš visos Lietuvos Respublikos teritorijos (iš viso apklausta 458 pateikėjų), rankraštine (Lietuvos Istorijos instituto Etnografijos skyriaus, Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos rankraščių skyriaus, Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto Etnologijos ir Folkloristikos katedros rankraštine medžiaga, taip pat publikuotais Lietuvos etnologų (Baltrušaitis 1994; Baltrušaitis 1999; Mikutavičiūtė 1996) ir kitų tyrinėtojų apie neverbalinį bendravimą darbais.

Istoriškai, rankos pabučiavimo gestas buvo paplitęs XVIII - XIX a. Europoje tarp aukštuomenės. Jo kilmė sieta su vieno asmens lojalumo demonstravimu kitam bučiuojant žiedą, kaip dominuojančio asmens valdžios simbolį, Ispanijos teismų ceremonijose XVII – XVIII a. Tokiu neverbaliniu būdu vyro ištikimybė vyrui arba vyro – moteriai buvo demonstruojama Europoje iki XX a., t.y. daug anksčiau nei Lietuvoje. Mūsų atliktas empirinis tyrimas parodė, kad Lietuvoje rankos pabučiavimas vienokia ar kitokia savo forma ir turiniu buvo žinomas dar ir XX a. antrojoje pusėje.

Socialinės sąveikos kontekste rankos pabučiavimo gestas kaip ritualinis – pasisveikinimo – veiksmas buvo normuojamas etiketo taisyklių: nepriklausomai nuo lyties jaunesnis žmogus bučiavo ranką vyresniam bei žemesnio socialinio statuso asmuo – aukštesniam. Skirtingų lyčių tarpusavio santykiuose etiketas reikalavo, jog vyras bučiuotų ranką moteriai. Be to, per visą XX a. Lietuvoje etiketas reguliavo ir rankos pabučiavimo atlikimą: sveikinamojo ranka privalėjo būti švelniai (jokiu būdu netempiant) paimama į savo ranką ir pasilenkus pabučiuojama delnu žemyn. Lyčių atžvilgiu, ypač jų pažinties atveju, šis ritualinis gestas turėjo būti tik bučinio imitacija. Nesilaikymas šių etiketo reikalavimų laikytas asmens įžeidimu, kultūringumo stoka.

Kaip pagarbos, lojalumo bei palankumo ženklas rankos pabučiavimo gestas pasisveikinimo metu buvo naudojamas tėvų (kiek rečiau senelių, giminės narių) bei kunigo atžvilgiu. Tėvams ranką bučiavo vaikai, kunigui – vaikai ir suaugusieji. Simpatijai, draugystei, meilei ar ištikimybei išreikšti ranka buvo bučiuojama ir vyro moteriai.

Tėvų bei kunigo atžvilgiu rankos pabučiavimo gestas pasisveikinant buvo paplitęs visoje Lietuvoje (ypač kaimuose ir miesteliuose) tik XX a. pirmojoje pusėje (išskyrus kunigo rankos bučiavimą bažnyčioje). Šiuo laikotarpiu tam turėję įtakos iš kartos į kartą perduodamos vėlesnės, sinkretizuotos krikščionių religijos tradicijos. Su pastarosiomis siejama ir aiškinama tėvų bei kunigo rankos bučiavimo kilmė.

Dėl XX a. antrojoje pusėje buvusios sovietizacijos ir suintensyvėjusios modernizacijos bei XX a. pabaigoje sparčiai besiskverbiančios vakarietiškos kultūros išliko tik rankos pabučiavimo gestas, kuriuo vyras pasisveikindavo moterį. Etnografinės medžiagos kartografavimas parodė, kad šio gesto ištakas Lietuvoje – kitų kultūrinių įtakų (labiausiai Lenkijos) reliktas. Pusės apklaustųjų teigiami atsakymai parodė, kad šis gestas Lietuvoje buvo ganėtinai prigijęs, tačiau nebuvo masinis reiškinys, o labiausiai naudotas tarp aukštesnio socialinio sluoksnio, inteligentijos.

XX a. paskutiniaisiais dešimtmečiais pagarbos bei dėmesio rankos pabučiavimu vis dažniau susilaukia netekėjusios merginos, vyrai vis rečiau lenkiasi bučiuoti merginoms/moterims ranką, t.y. užmiršamas galantiškumas. Visa tai liudija tradicinių etinių normatyvinių funkcijų pasikeitimą, rankos pabučiavimo gesto formų supaprastėjimą.

Gauta 2006 m. gruodžio mėn.