

CFP: Baltic States Esotericism in Context: Histories, Practices, and Cultural Dialogues

Conference Date: November 13, 2026

Location: Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Organized by: Eglė Aleknaitė-Škarubskė, Adas Diržys, Andrius Kaniava, Ina Kiseliova-El Marassy, Kristel Kivari, Anita Stašulāne, Linas Tavaras

Organizational Institutions: Lithuanian Esotericism Study Group, Vytautas Magnus University, Daugavpils University, University of Tartu, Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Vilnius University

The Baltic states - embracing Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia - holds a uniquely layered esoteric landscape shaped by pre-Christian traditions, folklore, modern occult revivals, cross-border exchanges, and contemporary spiritual subcultures. From Baltic neopaganisms and Theosophical networks to Soviet-era underground practices and emerging digital esoteric communities, the region offers a rich yet understudied field of inquiry.

This conference invites scholars from all disciplines to explore **cases of esotericism in the Baltic states**, broadly interpreted. We aim to bring together researchers working on historical, ethnographic, literary, artistic, philosophical, religious, and sociopolitical dimensions of esoteric thought and practice.

We welcome proposals addressing, but not limited to, the following topics:

- **Regional traditions and mythologies:**
Baltic pagan revivals, folklore-based esoteric currents, ritual landscapes, and mythopoesis.
- **Transmission and exchange:**
Cross-cultural flows between the Baltic region, Scandinavia, Central Europe, and Slavic countries; esoteric networks, translation histories, and migration of ideas.
- **Esotericism under political regimes:**
Esoteric movements during the interwar period, Soviet suppression and underground practices, post-Soviet transformations.

- **Textual and artistic expressions:**
Esotericism in literature, visual arts, performance, music, architecture, and digital media.
- **Historical esotericism:**
Pre-modern and early modern esoteric currents in the Baltic region; hermeticism, alchemy, astrology, mysticism, Christian esoteric traditions, manuscript cultures, etc.; historical case studies that illuminate local or transregional esoteric developments.
- **Contemporary spiritualities:**
New Age currents, neopagan communities, alternative healing, ecological esotericism, and digital occultism.
- **Methodological and theoretical approaches:**
Concepts of “esotericism” as applied (or contested) in the Baltic context; case-based research challenging established definitions.

Submission Guidelines

- **Abstract length:** 250-300 words
- **Include:** title, author name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact email, and 3-5 keywords
- **Presentation format:** 20-minute presentations + 10-minute discussion
- **Submission deadline:** September 10, 2026
- **Notification of acceptance:** September 20, 2026
- **Send proposals to:** adasdirzys@gmail.com

Publication

Selected papers may be invited for inclusion in a planned edited volume in Brill Esotericism Reference Library series focusing on Central and Eastern European esotericism.

Contact

For inquiries, please contact: Adas Diržys, adasdirzys@gmail.com

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