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CONTENTS

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JIN PING MEI: A STORY OF *GUANXI*

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Abstract: No fiction is without a narrative of human relationships. In Chinese literary history, the stories represented by *Jin Ping Mei* are especially seen as dealing with human relationships. Some researchers have interpreted *Jin Ping Mei* from the perspective of human relationships; however, the generic concept cannot describe social connections in Chinese culture. The concept of *guanxi,* the ubiquitous and quotidian social network in China, better describes the specific human relationships in this fiction. *Guanxi* as a Chinese cultural phenomenon originating from Confucianism is effective in procuring resources through instrumental and sentimental mechanisms. In *Jin Ping Mei*, which is centered on Ximen Qing, a *guanxi* network connects all the characters. Ximen Qing's fortune is built on *guanxi* manipulation. *Guanxi,* however, which was expected to embody Confucian values, violated Confucian principles in the late Ming context. *Jin Ping Mei* marks a turning point for attitudes toward *guanxi* in literary representation, and this derogatory attitude persisted in the narrative of fiction throughout the Qing dynasty.

Keywords: Confucianism, *guanxi, Jin Ping Mei, renqing xiaoshuo*, the late Ming dynasty

INTRODUCTION

Jin Ping Mei (The Plum in the Golden Vase) is the most representative human relationship fiction in ancient China. As the first vernacular story reflecting the common world of ordinary people in China, it is one of the four legendary masterpieces (*si da qi shu*), in addition to *Shuihu Zhuan* (Outlaws of the Marsh), *Sanguo Yanyi* (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms), and *Xiyou Ji* (Journey to the West). It marks the thematic transition of Chinese fiction from the world of legendary heroes, or nobles, to the world of ordinary civilians. Of these four stories, *Jin Ping Mei* focuses on *guanxi* to the greatest extent.

The story centers on Ximen Qing, a lustful merchant and corrupt social climber, who develops the mean inheritance from his father to huge abundant wealth. During the process, he makes good use of his wife and concubines, his

sworn brothers and corrupted officials. After his rapid success, however, he dies abruptly and his family is scattered. Those involved in his social network, including women, merchants, scholars, and villains, compose a panoramic picture that graphically reflects Ming society.

According to Lu Xun, *Jin Ping Mei* belongs to the fiction subgenre of *renqing xiaoshuo*, which flourished in the Ming dynasty (1368 AD–1644 AD) and differed from previous fiction genres in Chinese literary history, such as legendary or storytelling fiction, historical fiction, and good-evil fiction, which are far removed from social reality. He defined this subgenre of fiction in chapter 19 of his *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction) (1924): "This type of fiction is called 'shiqing shu' in that it does not narrate the supernatural gods or demons, but portrays human society to expose the inconstancy of human relationships" (Lu Xun 2006: 114). Noting the significance of human relationships in this subgenre, English translators such as Philip Clart (2007: xxxi) translated *renqing xiaoshou* as "novels dealing with human relationships".

The emphasis on human relationships due to Confucian influence is the most notable characteristic in East Asia, especially in China (Yum 1988). Human relationships in Chinese culture can generally be defined as *guanxi*. Without *guanxi*, nothing can be done in China (Y. Ju 1995). It is an informal social network that is ubiquitous, quotidian, and essential among Chinese people. As an Eastern approach to social networks (J. Huang & Aaltio 2014), it has no equivalent word in the English language. English translations such as "personal connections" or "social ties" are loose and general.

Confucianism values and principles do not involve initially instrumentalizing *guanxi* for resource procurement in human relationships. Confucianism states that an individual should act and perform duties according to their social position: "[l]et the ruler be a ruler; the subject, a subject; the father, a father; the son, a son" (Confucius 2007: 82). It also defines the principles of loyalty, filial piety, love and respect, tolerance, and benevolence for the five cardinal social relationships, which are principally the relationships between emperor and minister, father and son, brothers, husband and wife, and friends. *Li*, a Confucian ritual, is both fundamental and vital for the realization of duties and values. *Guanxi*, according to its values and principles, is intended to establish harmonious and ideal human relationships in a hierarchical society.

Various researchers have given different definitions for the Chinese concept of *guanxi*. For example, Gold (1985: 660) states it is "a power relationship as one's control over a valued good or access to it gives power over others". Osland (1990: 8) defines it as "a special relationship between a person who needs something and a person who has the ability to give something". Barbalet (2018: 936) defines it as "a form of asymmetrical exchange of favours between persons on

the basis of enduring sentimental ties in which enhancement of public reputation is the aspirational outcome". Despite the variance of definitions, *guanxi* is both sentimental and instrumental, as a means to procure resources. It is an intricate social network that the Chinese cultivate imaginatively, subtly, and energetically (D.B. Hwang et al. 2009). It has been continuously reinforced as a social mechanism throughout the two thousand years of China's feudal history (Fei 1992 [1947]). Its importance has even increased in contemporary Chinese society, despite economic modernization (Bian 2018).

This critical cultural concept has received scant attention in Chinese literary research, although its study has prospered in sociology, anthropology, and management. To address this gap, this article sets out to interpret the text of *Jin Ping Mei*, a fiction dealing with human relationships, from the perspective of *guanxi*.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND *GUANXI*

The human relationships in *Jin Ping Mei* have been noted by some researchers in China. Two articles have exemplarily discussed it. One is Tian Binge's (1994) "Speculation and disclosure of human tragedy: On the human relationship in *Jin Ping Mei*". He noted that the interpersonal network in *Jin Ping Mei* is centered on Ximen Qing, the protagonist; that the extensive social context is unfolded through the network; that money is the pivot of all the human relationships; when the death of Ximen Qing cuts the connection between money and politics, the decline and disaster of Ximen Qing's family is unavoidable. All the human relationships in this fiction are abnormal, full of betrayal and disloyalty, and both the rise and downfall of Ximen Qing's family are due to human relationships. Tian Moyun (2013) wrote an article "Intentionally communicating with others in one way or another: On the interpersonal relationship of Xi Men-qing in *Jin Ping Mei*". She explains that Ximen Qing obtains wealth, political protection, and the opportunities for illicit affairs through human relationships. Such researchers have described the function of *renji guanxi* (human relationships) as molding the fates of characters.

The concept of "*renji guanxi*", however, is not adequate to analyze such a social mechanism for individuals. Although "*renji guanxi*" contains the word "*guanxi*", researchers have not analyzed the cultural meaning and social function of *guanxi* in a Chinese context. This is because people in China (including many literary researchers) take for granted the importance of human relationships in molding an individual's fate, as Chinese society is relationalism-

oriented. It further indicates the ubiquity and quotidian nature of *guanxi* in Chinese society.

In Chinese Confucianism, personhood is decided by the morals with which an individual interacts with others in social connections (K. Hwang 1999). When Confucianism became the dominant ideology in China, Chinese society was embedded in a relationalism-oriented culture. As relational particularism, *guanxi* emerged from the fundamentals of Chinese culture (Anderson & Lee 2008) and became a fixed element in Chinese society (Wong & Tam 2000). It is essential to human relationships in China.

Guanxi's importance in Chinese society attracted intense academic interest in fields such as sociology and anthropology. Fei Xiaotong describes *guanxi* as *cha xu ge ju*, which means "mode of differential associations" or "the overlapping of egocentric networks" (Fei 1992 [1947]). K. Hwang (1987) states that *guanxi* is a hierarchically structured social network. After Fei and Hwang, the study of *guanxi* flourished. Y. Luo (1997) suggests that *guanxi* is a concept associated with psychology, sociology, anthropology, human resource management, and organizational behavior, as well as economics, management, and marketing; hence, it requires further theoretical development. Chen and Chen and Huang (2013) point out that three streams are prominent in *guanxi* studies: one focuses on the domains of *guanxi* on the individual level, the second focuses on the organizational level, and the third is concerned with *guanxi*'s social and moral dilemmas. None of this theoretical development of *guanxi* has involved literary research, however.

Guanxi is a typical informal social network in the East (P.P. Li 2012), and so it has received the most academic attention among the different types of informal social networks (P.P. Li & Xie 2019).[1] Compared with the increased attention in disciplines such as economics, psychology, marketing, and management, however, there is little *guanxi* study in literary research.

Guanxi is critical for interpreting the social and cultural meanings in *Jin Ping Mei*. Distinguished from previous stories in China, this work was the first civic fiction (*shijing xiaoshuo*) to realistically represent common and mundane urban life (A. Sun 2006). Ximen Qing gains his fortune by manipulating *guanxi*, or the informal social network, and ultimately fails dreadfully. Without *guanxi*, there would be no narrative in this story. It is also interesting that the word "*guanxi*" is rarely used in the whole story, although *guanxi* exists throughout the social networks involved. The mindset of *guanxi* is so common that people take it for granted that *guanxi* is embedded in human relationships, so the word "*guanxi*" is rarely used in fiction.

Because "[*g*]*uanxi* is deeply rooted in 5000 years of Chinese culture" (Zhan et al. 2018: 2) and China is a strongly *guanxi*-oriented society (Y.-H. Huang

2000), an author cannot ignore its social role and value when writing, and readers should not neglect its significance when reading. *Guanxi* is also a literary archetype in Chinese fiction (Han 2020). The fortunes and misfortunes of the characters in a story are based on *guanxi*, a unique and ubiquitous phenomenon in China.

Jin Ping Mei details the social, familial, and official activities of Ximen Qing and presents readers with a vivid perception and understanding of *guanxi* in the Ming dynasty, an age filled with drastic cultural change. It initiated the growth of human relationship fiction (*renqing xiaoshuo*) in the Ming dynasty (Shi 2015: 72). The analysis of *guanxi* is fundamental to understanding *Jin Ping Mei*. An in-depth interpretation of this story is impossible without understanding the function of *guanxi* in it.

THE THREE INGREDIENTS OF *GUANXI*

In order to analyze *guanxi* in *Jin Ping Mei*, it is necessary to first investigate the ingredients of *guanxi*. *Guanxi* has three integral components: *ganqing* (affection), *renqing* (obligation), and *mianzi* (face) (K. Hwang 1987; Yen & Barnes & Wang 2011).

> Ganqing *refers to the degree of emotional understanding, connections and the sharing of feelings of happiness and fears alike. Additionally, it refers to a sense of loyalty and solidarity, the willingness to take care of each other under all circumstances.* (X.-P. Chen & C. Chen 2004)

It is the essential element in *guanxi* (C.L. Wang 2007). As a Chinese cultural concept, *ganqing* has no equivalent in English (L. Sun 1991). Although it can be regarded as the emotional attachment between two parties in a network (C.L. Wang 2007), "[t]o equate the Western concept of 'emotions' with *qinggan* or *ganqing*, as many Chinese beginners in English do, can be most misleading" (L. Sun 1991: 10). *Ganqing* can be nurtured and cultivated in a relational context by means of mutual help and care. Although mutual help and care is common in every culture, Chinese people use these things as the foundation that confirms and symbolizes relationships (Potter 1988). For example, the phrase *peiyang ganqing* (to cultivate feelings) indicates that the basis of a healthy and strong human relationship, or *guanxi* in China, can be nurtured.

In order to nurture *ganqing*, it is necessary to build and reinforce *guanxi*. A major source of intimacy for the Chinese comes from their in-group and family (Hsu 1972). To nurture *ganqing* and hence reinforce *guanxi*, it is therefore

necessary to establish a feeling of in-group or family, that is, to form a quasi-familial connection between the participants. *Jin Ping Mei* begins by Ximen Qing and nine other villains swearing brotherhood. Ximen Qing claims that he must swear brotherhood with the other nine because of their abilities and future mutual dependence.[2] Namely, through nurturing *ganqing* by swearing brotherhood, he establishes *guanxi*, which will provide mutual help and care in the future.

Ganqing is the foundation of *guanxi* between the characters in premodern Chinese fiction. Quasi-familial connections to reinforce *ganqing* are described in many other Ming stories. For example, except in *Jin Ping Mei,* all the primary characters in the four legendary masterpieces are in a form of quasi-familial network, which is embedded in facilitating *guanxi* through consolidating *ganqing*. In the first chapter of *Sanguo Yanyi*, an early Ming dynasty work of fiction, Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei swear to be brothers, and hence are consistently loyal to each other. In *Xiyou Ji,* four pilgrims include one patriarchal mentor and three brotherly disciples. In *Shuihu Zhuan,* all one hundred and eight heroes and heroines are sworn brothers and sisters. The quasi-familial connections, mutual help and cooperation further enhance their *ganqing.*

Renqing is the obligation to repay favors in the future and show empathy to partners (K. Hwang 1987; C.L. Wang 2007; M.M. Yang 1994). Yang (1994: 67–68) defines it as "the bond of reciprocity and mutual aid between two people, based on emotional attachment or the sense of obligation and indebtedness". It is therefore both instrumental and expressive. It is reflected in the Chinese notion and moral code of *bao*, which is retribution, repayment, or reciprocity. The Chinese phrase *dong renqing*, which means "knowing reciprocity", and the phrase *gan'en tubao*, which means "feeling grateful and endeavoring to repay it", indicate the principle. If someone does not reciprocate in a suitable way, they will be regarded as *budong renqing* (ignorant of reciprocity).

The characters in *Jin Ping Mei* are in the debt and under the obligation of *renqing.* Ximen Qing is adept at creating *renqing.* His main means of creating *renqing* is through gift giving. He is generous when communicating with bureaucrats, and gives them lavish gifts. Also, he never mentions repayment and reciprocity. All the gifts *de facto* need repayment in the long run, although this is not expected immediately (Mauss 1990: 45–46). Premodern Chinese fiction narratives reflect social reality, and always weave the characters in a *renqing* net. The characters are both the debtors and creditors of *renqing*. For example, in *Shuihu Zhuan,* the central character Song Jiang is nicknamed *Jishi Yu* (Timely Rain), as he is like the timely rain in a drought, and always lends a helping hand to those who are suffering. According to the *renqing* principle, he thus always receives help when he is in a dilemma. Once he has received

help, a new *renqing* connection is then formed, and the plot will continue with the obligation and reciprocity created by *renqing*.

Mianzi, or face, refers to one's social position and standing, as recognized by others (Lockett 1988). Saving *mianzi* is critical to establishing and nurturing *guanxi* (Buckley & Clegg & Tan 2006). It is not only instrumental, in that it indicates social position, but also sentimental, in that "in Chinese culture, gaining and losing face is connected closely with issues of social pride, honor, dignity, insult, shame, disgrace, humility, trust, mistrust, respect, and prestige" (Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998: 54). *Mianzi* is critical in Chinese society, as indicated by the adage *ren yaolian, shu yaopi* (a person needs face as a tree needs bark).

Mianzi is ingrained in Chinese fiction. For example, in *Xiyou Ji*, the Monkey King has the utmost *mianzi.* In chapter 56, after he has killed several robbers, Tang Monk is afraid that the ghosts of the dead will sue him and prays that the dead should sue Monkey King and not himself.[3] Hearing Tang Monk's pray, Monkey King shows his authority by saying that all the bureaucrats, including the Jade Emperor, give him *mianzi.*[4] *Mianzi* is a specific cultural convention in Chinese society, and the English translations of *Xiyou Ji* cannot easily convey its cultural implications. Gao Na (2019) noted that the appellations of the characters in this fiction contain *mianzi* connotations, but that the cultural differences involved in understanding *mianzi* have left a gap in the English translations.

As the first realistic vernacular fiction in Chinese literary history, *Jin Ping Mei* does not narrate supernatural or historical stories. In contrast, it describes mundane life in the Ming dynasty. *Guanxi,* which is a literary archetype in Chinese fiction (Han 2020) and ubiquitous in Chinese society, is therefore inevitably pivotal.

GUANXI IN XIMEN QING'S WORLD

Jin Ping Mei panoramically depicts *guanxi* in the late Ming dynasty by telling Ximen Qing's story. The themes of Ximen Qing's story can be divided into three categories: family, society, and officialdom.

Domestic life

Ximen Qing's domestic life, centering on the relationship between Ximen Qing, his wife, and his concubines,[5] is the core of *Jin Ping Mei*. Taking the Zhenghe period of the North Song (1111 AD–1118 AD) as its literary context, *Jin Ping*

Mei represents the realities of the Ming dynasty, highlighting various human relationships, especially between males and females in the family (Yan & Wang 2013: 177). Connections between family members are a category of *guanxi.*

The *guanxi* between family members is regarded as the most intimate connection, compared to other categories of *guanxi,* such as the *guanxi* between friends and between acquaintances (Chang et al. 2016). *Jin Ping Mei* describes the convivial banquets and gifts exchanged in order to depict the *guanxi* among the family members.

The characters in *Jin Ping Mei* all communicate through the arena of banquets or the process of gift exchange. Such activities are frequent in Ximen Qing's social interaction with his brothers, and with bureaucrats. They are so common in this story that readers may even feel that they are boring, but the banqueting and gift exchange create a joyful atmosphere among the participants.

This does not mean that the *guanxi* in Ximen Qing's family is entirely intimate, however. The banquets and gift exchanges are measures to maintain reliable and trustworthy *guanxi* (M.M. Yang 1994; H. Wang 2000; Ai 2006). A closer scrutiny of the *guanxi* in Ximen Qing's family shows that the bond between the family members is not solidary, however. Although it is large, his family is not based on a blood connection or love: the impetus for these combinations of family members is interest-seeking. The instrumentality of *guanxi* in the family realm is highlighted. It is clearly demonstrated in Ximen Qing's *guanxi* with his wife and concubines, such as Pan Jinlian, Meng Yulou, Li Pinger, and Wu Yueniang.

Pan Jinlian is the fifth woman he marries after the death of Ms Chen, his first wife. She is well known for her carnality. The rapport between Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian is based on sexuality: to win Ximen Qing, she persecutes the other concubines, and when Ximen Qing neglects her slightly, she instantly fornicates with a manservant in the family.

Meng Yulou is the third woman he marries. Before marrying Pan Jinlian, with whom he has been having a sexual affair for quite a long time, Ximen Qing hears from a matchmaker that Meng Yulou has abundant wealth. He soon forgets Pan Jinlian and decides to marry Meng Yulou. Ximen Qing's wealth means that Meng Yulou chooses to marry him, a dishonest merchant, to become one of his concubines, rather than Juren[6] Shang, another candidate suggested by a matchmaker.

Li Pinger is the sixth woman that Ximen Qing marries. Before their marriage, Li Pinger was the wife of Ximen Qing's sworn brother, Hua Zixu, but was having adulterous sex with Ximen Qing. She stealthily transfers Hua Zixu's wealth to Ximen Qing. Until Hua Zixu discovers he has lost his wealth, his illness is

so aggravated that he dies soon. Once she is a widow, Li Pinger learns of the trouble that Ximen Qing is involved in and marries Jiang Zhushan instead. Finding that Jiang Zhushan cannot meet her sexual desires, and that Ximen Qing is no longer in trouble, she divorces Jiang Zhushan and begs shamelessly to marry the former.

Wu Yueniang is his wife but not a concubine. She is no beauty, but Ximen Qing chooses her as his wife because her father is a local official who can provide him with political protection.

Ximen Qing obtains the economic and social capital for his commercial and official career through the *guanxi* with his wife and concubines, except for Pan Jinlian. He was forced to marry Pan Jinlian because he was afraid that if he did not marry her his crimes would be exposed. Pan Jinlian does not bring economic and social benefits; however, their only connection is sex, which is striking in the context of a culture where passion and sexual desire within marriage are not emphasized (K.-S. Yang 2006). The exchange of interests between Ximen Qing and his women creates *renqing,* an obligation, or reciprocity. In this sense, their *guanxi* is instrumental.

Their *guanxi* is also sentimental. This is shown by Ximen Qing's affection for his late concubine Li Pinger, which is demonstrated by his grieving for her death in chapter 65, and Wu Yueniang's heart-felt prayer for Ximen Qing's fortune in chapter 21. The sentimentality in such activities is a type of *ganqing* in their connections and forms the basis of their interactions.

The *guanxi* between Ximen Qing's family members is fundamentally instrumental, however. There is frequent disloyalty and betrayal due to the desire for money and sex. Both Ximen Qing and his women principally choose their partners according to social and economic capital. Although concubines often came from impoverished families in premodern China, in *Jin Ping Mei*, except for Pan Jinlian, Ximen Qing's concubines are all wealthy and can contribute to Ximen Qing's commercial activities. Marriage to Ximen Qing also brings economic and social interest to the women, because of Ximen Qing's *mianzi.*[7]

The best term with which to describe their connections is *guanxi*, rather than a human relationship or conjugal bond. A human relationship is a generic term which describes general social connections. A conjugal bond conjures altruism and compassionate familial affections. *Guanxi*, the concept of an interpersonal utilitarian relationship with affective attachment, depicts the nature of the family's social connections in *Jin Ping Mei*.

Commercial venture

It is easy for Ximen Qing's commercial venture to find opportunities to earn a huge profit and it is a critical force with which to defeat his business rivals. As the epitome of a new type of merchant in sixteenth-century China, he is a successful "economic man" (Ge 2014). Robinson Crusoe, the literary figure created by Daniel Defoe, is similar to the figure of Ximen Qing; however, *Robinson Crusoe* highlights the labor and struggle to create wealth on an isolated island, whereas Ximen Qing is not described in any productive activity in *Jin Ping Mei*. In contrast to Robinson Crusoe, Ximen Qing's fortune results from his social connections, or *guanxi,* in a crowded town. With the small amount of funds left to him by his father, an impoverished merchant, he accumulates his first capital through marriage, as discussed above. Marriage is not enough for his business, however, and his *guanxi* with bureaucrats and villains[8] plays a critical role in his commercial venture.

The *guanxi* with these two groups is not defined as friendship. Although it is regarded as one of the five cardinal relationships (*wulun*) by Confucius, friendship is belittled and threatened in Confucianism and its power is lessened by Confucian writers (Kutcher 2000). Friendship is part of the hierarchical order in the context of Chinese paternalism culture (Hall & Ames 1994). Ximen Qing manipulates the *guanxi* proficiently and makes the best use of it to serve his business.

He embeds the *guanxi* in quasi-familial or other hierarchical connections. As discussed above, he swears brotherhood with them to reinforce *guanxi* with the villains who are inferior to him economically and socially. His economic and social advantages mean that he is treated by the other nine as a big brother, although he is not older than any of them. In his first meeting with Cai Jing, the highest official in his *guanxi*, Ximen Qing acknowledges him as his adoptive father, and calls himself the latter's "son" (*haier*).[9] In his communication with the bureaucrats, he humbly calls himself "a poor officer" (*beiguan*)[10] and "servant" (*pu*),[11] or calls others "senior gentlemen"[12] (*lao xiansheng*).[13] The quasi-familial connections consolidate the *ganqing* between them. Similarly, using a humble appellation for himself and respectfully addressing others increases the *mianzi* of the counterpart. More importantly, his manipulation increases the harmony and stability of the hierarchy in which their *guanxi* is embedded.

Confucianism stresses the hierarchy of social relationships and regards a person's acceptance and fulfilment of the hierarchical role as essential to the smooth functioning of society. The exchange of social and economic interests is easily conducted in a hierarchy. The person with higher hierarchical rank is expected to assist those who are disadvantaged, and hence gains *mianzi*

(Yeung & Tung 1996). Those of lower hierarchical status can call for special favors which they do not have to equally repay (Alston 1989). Ximen Qing can gain favoritism from the bureaucrats with repayment at a relatively low price through the *guanxi* in the hierarchy. Similarly, the villains can also earn considerable incomes from him, while he can also obtain support from them.

In Ximen Qing's commercial activities, his greatest profit is through *guanxi* with corrupt bureaucrats. The favoritism of the bureaucrats is shown through their official power and political influence. For example, by bribing Zhuangyuan[14] Cai, who later became the inspector and supervisor of the salt business, Ximen Qing acquired privileges one month earlier than other merchants. In other words, he had a monopoly on salt sales for one month and thus gained a sudden huge profit; Ximen Qing monopolizes the antique trade through his *guanxi* with Song Qiaonian, the inspector of Shandong Province, and by buying the bureaucrats in charge of tax, Ximen Qing evades most tax payments.

Aside from the favoritism from the corrupted bureaucrats, Ximen Qing's commercial venture also gains help from villains at the bottom of society through his *guanxi* with them. The force of the villains was critical in the Ming dynasty, when the hooligan culture[15] dominated (Y. Wang 2000a, 2000b). It permeated every social level. Without a reliable legal system and enforcement, villains played a critical role. Whether his social status is low or high, Ximen Qing maintains intimate *guanxi* with the villains. His wife Wu Yueniang protests when he decides to swear brotherhood with the villains, but Ximen Qing demonstrates that the villains are useful and quite in service to him.[16] His judgement regarding the villains is supported. In many cases, the villains play a critical role in his commercial ventures. For example, he uses two villains to beat Jiang Zhushan, his adversary, almost to death. By persecuting Jiang Zhushan through the villains, Ximen Qing not only procures material wealth but also attains the woman he wants, Li Pinger.

Ximen Qing's collusion with both the corrupt bureaucrats and the evil villains is ostensibly not depicted as dark and wicked. The readers of *Jin Ping Mei* are told about banquets and gift exchanges in almost every episode of every chapter. As the narrative style of premodern Chinese fiction, without detailed introduction and explanation, relied greatly on dialogue to advance plot (Bishop 1956), such seemingly monotonous narratives often result in misinterpretation. To interpret the narrative correctly, it is necessary to identify the function of the banquet and gift exchange in Chinese culture for social connections, or *guanxi*.

The banquet and gift exchange are elements of *li* ingrained in social connections in China. *Li* means a ritual, gift, courtesy, propriety, rite, ceremony, or norm of conduct. Influenced by Confucianism, the practice of *li* was excessively stringent in ancient China, and it was even regarded as closely related to *dao*,

which is the natural order (Needham 1956: 544). The hierarchical order is further confirmed and stabilized through gift exchange and holding banquets. Propriety and norms of conduct are practiced in a banquet. Those of low hierarchical status should firstly donate gifts to those with higher status. Both gift and banquet are critical rituals in Chinese society.

The rituals significantly facilitate *guanxi.* According to *renqing* principle, the recipients of gifts should repay them in a suitable way, which for the bribed bureaucrats is to provide favoritism. The attendees of a banquet can earn *mianzi* and thus enhance their social prestige and honor. The joy and generosity in banquet and gift exchange promote the *ganqing* among the participants, which is the basis of their *guanxi.* The exchange of interests therefore does not seem like ugly collusion, but is *guanxi*, a normal social network in Chinese society.

Guanxi rationalizes Ximen Qing's bribery of bureaucrats. Although bribery is common in many societies, the use of ritual to morally validate bribery in China is a particular cultural phenomenon (Ruan 2021). Banquets and gift exchanges are the two most common means.

Ximen Qing's complicity with the villains is also extenuated to a large extent in the rituals. The story shows the readers the brotherhood between Ximen Qing and the villains through the narrative of banquet and gift exchange. All the rituals are based on the *guanxi* mechanism and ultimately contribute to its function in his commercial venture.

Official experience

Without attending the imperial examination, the semi-illiterate Ximen Qing later becomes an official through *guanxi* and thus inaugurates his official career.[17] As a successful and wealthy merchant, why does Ximen Qing want to become an official? There are two reasons for his eagerness to hold an official position.

The first reason is his need for official protection. Feudal China was a country that emphasized agriculture and repressed commercialism. This determined the low social status and unsafe economic situation of a merchant. Ximen Qing therefore covets an official position to procure greater commercial profit and secure his wealth (J. Wang 1995).

The second reason is that an official position can bring huge social and economic interests. As discussed above, premodern Chinese society greatly stressed hierarchy. Ximen Qing recognizes the importance of the hierarchy. For example, in chapter 41, he does not agree to the matchmaking for his infant son and the infant daughter of the Qiao family, who is relatively wealthy but not as much

a part of officialdom as Ximen Qing. He thinks this *guanxi* established by his son's marriage will bring ignominy to him and thus makes him lose *mianzi.*[18] His official influence would then weaken. He adeptly manipulates his *guanxi* to maximize the benefits brought by his official position. He bribes those with higher hierarchical status and is bribed by those with lower hierarchical status. It is difficult even for the educated Chinese to articulate the difference between bribery and *guanxi* (M.M. Yang 1994: 62–63). Walder (1986: 17) describes *guanxi* as "ceremonial bribery". *Guanxi* is also blurred with other concepts, such as friendship, blood and quasi-familial relationships. It facilitates Ximen Qing's bribery to a great extent. He gains an official position and promotion by bribing other bureaucrats. In chapter 30, impressed by Ximen Qing's sumptuous gifts, Cai Jing appoints him as the deputy magistrate of Shandong province.[19] Later, in chapter 70, his frequent gifts to Cai Jing mean that Ximen Qing is promoted from deputy magistrate to magistrate.[20] In chapter 49, seeing Yushi[21] Song is sent by the central government to supervise the local bureaucrats, Ximen Qing bribes him with a lavish banquet and extravagant gifts. In chapters 74 and 75, hearing Yushi Song praise the *ding*[22] in his courtyard, Ximen Qing happily donates it to Song Qiaonian.[23] After presenting gifts, in chapter 76, Yushi Song asks for suggestions from Ximen Qing, and reports favorably to the emperor about local bureaucrats who have *guanxi* with Ximen Qing.[24] Accordingly, Ximen Qing gains *mianzi* and expands his political influence in the local officialdom.

Meanwhile, Ximen Qing is also bribed by those lower in the hierarchy. In chapter 31, when the news that he has been promoted as an official spreads locally, people donate gifts to him all day when he assumes office.[25] A typical case during his term of office involves Miao Qing's bribery of him. As a murderer, Miao Qing endeavors to bribe him to evade legal punishment. His first bribery is not successful due to the low price of the gifts. In a second attempt he spends plenty of money to bribe him and achieves his goal. Ximen Qing accumulates huge wealth by accepting gifts like that. More meaningfully, they establish *guanxi* with each other through the bribery, which means the interest exchange will continue according to the principle of *renqing*. In chapter 77, Miao Qing buys a young girl and is willing to present her to Ximen Qing.[26] Resources, economic or social, are constantly flowing between hierarchies through *guanxi*.

The resource flow by no means involves only economic transactions. It also involves the creation of social capital, which is embodied as *guanxi.* Bourdieu defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986: 249), and economic capital as the capital that "is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights" (ibid.:

245). *Guanxi* is a variant of social capital, and its influence is more profound than economic capital in that it can bring out both economic interest and further social capital (Qi 2013: 318).

Ximen Qing is wise in that he never treats bribery ostensibly as an economic transaction. In *guanxi*, the obligations should not "be enforced and imposed on the obliged party by third parties", otherwise it will be economic capital without social capital (Smart 1993: 393). When he presents gifts, Ximen Qing never claims repaid obligations from others. The bribery created by the gift-presenting is all in the name of brotherhood, filial piety, respect, compassion, and other intimate affections of *guanxi*. Gift presentations maintain good *guanxi* between Ximen Qing and other officials, gain him an official position, and enable him to procure increasing wealth. The price of the gifts he sends out, compared to his income and protection through *guanxi*, is negligible.

In the context of the "rule of man" (*renzhi*), but not "rule of law" (*fazhi*) in premodern China (Su 2005), Ximen Qing is not punished despite his nefarious activities; on the contrary, he is highly respected because he maintains good *guanxi* with different hierarchies. More importantly, he both secures and accumulates his wealth by obtaining an official position, and through his *guanxi* net.

PECUNIARY SOCIETY AND *GUANXI*

The prevalence of *guanxi*'s special function in the late Ming dynasty, as reflected in *Jin Ping Mei*, is due to the pecuniary society of the era. The late Ming dynasty, which is reflected in *Jin Ping Mei*, witnessed a profound change of culture and customs in the transformation from an agricultural society to a commercial community. With the boom in commercialism, advances in productivity, and the cheap labor force, China, especially southeast China, experienced unprecedented economic prosperity, with silver "headed to China from all corners of the earth" (Flynn & Giráldez 1997: XVIII). Commercialism meant that numerous merchants became rich quickly. The economic transformation also resulted in an alteration of ethos.

Admiration for money was soon widespread throughout society. Many civilians no longer engaged in agriculture, which was traditionally advocated by the preceding dynasties, and instead engaged in commercial business or learned the techniques of commercial production (H. Wang 2015: 36). Popular customs changed accordingly in this atmosphere of commercialism. Society became money-oriented. For example, before the late Ming dynasty, a marriage match was made according to social status and morality; however, in the late Ming dynasty, it was according to the wealth possessed by the two families involved

(H. Wang 2015: 36). In *Jin Ping Mei*, Meng Yulou chooses Ximen Qing rather than Juren Shang as her husband because the latter has less wealth than the former, despite his higher social status.

This age also witnessed astonishing corruption, from emperors to the lowest-level officials, and severe chaos. Unfettered power caused the malfunctioning of the Ming dynasty governments. This is especially apparent in the emperors' laziness in national governing and their intentional embezzlement of the revenue intended for the governments (Z. Liu 2008). Ming officials had unprecedently low salaries compared to official salaries in the dynasties of Chinese history (Liu & Huang & Hu 2006). Officials who relied solely on salary in the Ming dynasty could not lead a decent life, and so some officials had to borrow money from rich merchants. As demonstrated in chapter 3 of *Jin Ping Mei*, matchmaker Wang Po describes Ximen Qing as a usurer for officials. The poor salary situation contributed to corruption in officialdom (Ni & Van 2006). Once honest income was too meager to sustain a decent living with the widened gap between honest and corrupt incomes, officials had to resort to other means, including accepting or even demanding bribery.

Under these conditions, *guanxi* became prominent. This is shown in *Jin Ping Mei*, in chapter 36, where Zhuangyuan Cai, who has insufficient traveling expenses to return to his hometown, borrows money from Ximen Qing. By lending money to Zhuangyuan Cai, who would have important power in the future, Ximen Qing establishes steady *guanxi* with him. He procures a monopoly on salt sales for one month through this *guanxi*, and thus earns a huge commercial profit. This abuse of power and the illegitimate monopoly, however, damage the rights of other merchants and imperil the market order, resulting in the merchants' eagerness to curry *guanxi* with officials, and thus creating a vicious circle.

Despite the mean salaries, severe corruption enabled Ming officials to generally enjoy quite luxurious lives by accepting bribes (Zhuang 2012). Corrupt income was estimated to be between 14 and 22 times the formal salary income in the Ming and Qing governments (Ni & Van 2006). However, the corruption resulted in the decline of the Ming dynasty. Neglected by the emperors and exacerbated by officials on different levels, it was so ruinous that the army was weakened due to decreased national income when Yan Song was the prime minister (Z. Luo 2007). It even endangered the national disaster relief system and ultimately worsened the disasters of drought, locust plagues, and epidemic deaths in the Chongzhen period (1628 AD–1644 AD), which dealt a heavy blow to the Ming dynasty (M. Ju 2011).

Money worship further aggravated social chaos. The most typical example of this turbulence is the rising hooligan culture, which damaged the social

atmosphere. This extraordinary hooligan culture emerged and permeated different levels of social strata, accelerating the collapse of traditional social institutions and moralities (Y. Wang 2000a). It was pervasive in all social strata, from the emperors to the grassroots. For example, in high officialdom, the bureaucrats were villain-like in their political operations (Y. Wang 2000a, 2000b); at the grassroots level, the heads of villages were generally hooligans or villains who bullied and exploited villagers through various means (B. Chen 2013: 375).

The hooligan culture subverted healthy human relationships among the folk. For example, in Xinghua County in the late Ming dynasty, a "frivolous mood permeate[d] society; modest and honest ethos vanish[ed]; hierarchal order of the older and younger was abandoned" (Li Chunfang 2014: 156). Unconditional trust, sincere affection, and universal benevolence, which were advocated by Confucianism for human relationships, faded or even disappeared. *Guanxi*, which originated from Confucianism (Luo & Huang & Wang 2012), was thus transmuted into a pragmatic tool for material procurement.

The pecuniary society of the Ming dynasty meant that *guanxi* had a negative effect. The corrupt bureaucracy and hooligan culture weakened Confucian values in the social ethos and misused *li*. The *li* in *guanxi* was used pragmatically to access resources in hierarchical society, as demonstrated by Ximen Qing's domestic life, commercial venture, and official experience. *Guanxi* became a magical weapon, which was ostensibly justified by Confucianism, for pecuniary procurement through social connections in the late Ming dynasty when mercantilism was burgeoning.

JIN PING MEI: A TURNING POINT FOR THE LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF *GUANXI*

Although *guanxi* is a ubiquitous social network in Chinese society, *Jin Ping Mei* delineates and criticizes its negative function in such a turbulent age. This denunciation is demonstrated by the following: first, the author's identity, although still unidentified, is that of Confucian gentry, as indicated by his familiarity with Confucian classics and literary art; second, he affirms and emphasizes Confucianism, although he satirizes the abnormal behavior of Confucian intellectuals in this masterpiece (L. Chen 1992). Through his disclosure of the ugly side of *guanxi*'s function, we can see that he longs to idealize human relationships that conform to the Confucianism value.

The social condition of the late Ming dynasty determined that such a poetic human relationship could never come true. The unprecedented economic focus, political corruption, and money worshipping ethos all led to a new mechanism

of *guanxi*. Further, harmonious traditional Confucian human connections were ruined with the weakened influence of Confucian values, partly as a result of the extreme difficulty of the imperial examination[27] (X. Liu 2007), in addition to the dire low salaries of Confucian officials, and the numerous nouveau riche in the merchant class. The social turbulence resulting from the collusion of the merchant class and officials (Tang & Wang 2015: 75) also exacerbated the distrust of Confucian values. Consequently, *guanxi* in the late Ming dynasty was transformed to serve new goals. *Jin Ping Mei* represents the transformation. The characters in the story make use of *guanxi* to do evil and procure undeserved status and wealth. *Guanxi* has therefore had a derogatory meaning in literary representation since the late Ming dynasty.

The derogatory meaning of *guanxi* did not disappear in the following Qing dynasty. The Qing dynasty faced almost the same fundamental situations as those in the late Ming, including the low salaries and corruption of the official classes and the increasing difficulty in the imperial examination (R. Wang 1993). Trade was also active, as demonstrated by international trade: despite the restrictions from the government, trade between China and Europe increased by 4% annually, and the trade volume doubled every 18 years (Myers & Wang 2002: 587). The official promotion of Confucianism in the two dynasties did not reinforce Confucian values but, on the contrary, further damaged them. Witnessing the recession of Confucianism, the Ming and Qing governments promoted Confucianism in all social strata (Chow 1996 [1994]; Nie 2015). The economic, political, and social situation doomed it to failure, however. As *guanxi*, an informal social network that was critical to welfare, depended on *li*, the external expressions of Confucian values, the promotion by governments only consolidated the misuse of Confucianism to serve the mechanism of *guanxi* to procure underserved fortune.

The derogatory meaning of *guanxi* therefore continued in the literary works of the Qing dynasty. The theme of *guanxi* supports all the conflicts and plots in *Honglou Meng* (A Dream of Red Mansions), the most renowned Qing masterpiece. It is described as a negative social force. *Guanxi* from the emperor empowers the four large families. Although they are rampant and despotic, the *guanxi* from the emperor means that the families have never been punished. Once the *guanxi* from the emperor vanishes, all four large families collapse, their wealth is confiscated, and the people are sold as slaves.

Jin Ping Mei is the epitome of the popular perception of *guanxi* in the late Ming dynasty. In literary history, it is a representative turning point of the attitude toward *guanxi* in Chinese fiction writing. It provides a cultural perspective from which to delineate the implications and perceptions of *guanxi*, and shows that the concept of, and attitude toward, *guanxi* was not static

but dynamic. Although it originated from Confucianism and has existed in China for a long time, *guanxi*'s distinct function was not palpable until the late Ming dynasty, when mercantilism burgeoned and Confucian values faded. As a realistic fiction, *Jin Ping Mei* details the mechanism and function of *guanxi* in every aspect of social life.

CONCLUSION

Human relationships exist in any fiction narrative, and in *Jin Ping Mei,* a story created in the late Ming dynasty, they have a special social meaning. Human relationships can be defined as *guanxi* due to their mechanism and function. Centered on Ximen Qing, a *guanxi* net connects all the characters in this fiction, which include those from the high official Cai Jing to the grassroots villains. The rise and fall of Ximen Qing, a semi-illiterate villain, are decided by *guanxi*. As a successful merchant, he is proficient in the operation of *guanxi*, the magic weapon for his wealth and status. Without understanding *guanxi,* there will be no appropriate interpretation of *Jin Ping Mei*.

The utilitarian nature of guanxi in interest exchange is highlighted in its representation. Although *guanxi* originated from Confucianism and existed in the fiction prior to *Jin Ping Mei,* its derogatory meaning was not stressed so distinctly until this fiction. The derogatory implications and perceptions of *guanxi* are determined by the historical context of the late Ming dynasty, a period of money worship, social chaos, and political corruption. The unique social context decided the perception of *guanxi* in the late Ming culture. Burgeoning mercantilism and the recession of Confucianism were the two fundamental contexts for the new mechanism and function of *guanxi*, and eventually resulted in the distinct palpability of *guanxi* in culture. Further, in the pandemonium of the late Ming dynasty society, such as hooligan culture and bureaucratic corruption, the *guanxi* principle deviated from its original Confucianism value. This social network became the cause of social injustice with great effect. The derogatory narration of *guanxi* inaugurated in *Jin Ping Mei* then persisted in literary creations in the Qing dynasty.

NOTES

[1] For example, despite the tremendous influence of *yongo*, which is the informal social network in Korea, it gained less academic attention than *guanxi* in China (Jaeyeol 2000). The Japanese informal social network is also lesser known than *guanxi* (Esyun & Shumpei & Creighton 1985; Suzuki 1989).

[2] Ximen Qing said, "I find your conversation delightful, but today your remarks are a little wearying. To hear you talk, all my friends might be beyond the pale. I don't mind so much what you say about the others, but surely Brother Ying is an honest, entertaining fellow. If we ask him to do anything for us, he never raises any objection, and what he does, he does well. Then Xie Xida is clever as well as conscientious. But there is this much to be said. So long as our meetings are irregular and uncertain, we can never develop our friendship on the proper lines. The next time we all come together, the best thing we can do will be to form a brotherhood, and ever afterwards we shall be able to count upon receiving assistance, if we need any." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 15)

(The citation of *Jin Ping Mei* is according to the Chongzhen edition. The English translation is according to Clement Egerton's *The Golden Lotus*. Egerton chose the past tense to translate the fiction. As the present tense can create a feeling that the events are in real time and thus have a vivid effect, I chose the present tense to discuss the fiction in the main text of this article.)

[3] Know who it was who wronged you, just as you would know a debtor, and do not bring a case against the monk who is going to fetch the scriptures (Wu 2010: 1859).

[4] "I am not scared. The Jade Emperor knows me. The Heavenly Kings do as I say. The Twenty-eight Constellations are afraid of me. The Nine Bright Shiners, the star lords, are scared of me. The city gods of counties and prefectures kneel to me; the God of the Eastern Peak Who Is Equal to Heaven is terrified of me. The Ten Kings of the Underworld used to be my servants. The Five Fierce Gods were once my juniors. The five Commanders of the Three Worlds and the Officers of the Ten Directions are all my very good friends. So go and bring your case wherever you like." (Wu 2010: 1861)

[5] Concubine in Chinese is *qie*, which means the woman a man married except his wife in premodern China.

[6] Juren, an erudite in Confucianism, means a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level.

[7] Although a commoner and villain, Ximen Qing has profound influence in the local area. He is crafty and has *guanxi* with high officials, so all the natives in the county are quite afraid of him.

"Ximen Qing was reckless, but when he took it into his head to bestir himself, he was capable of showing that he was no fool. He lent money to the officials and even had dealings with the four corrupt ministers, Gao, Yang, Tong and Cai. So he came to be mixed up in all kinds of official matters, acting as intervener for people at law, arbitrating in cases of dispute, and, sometimes, acting as stakeholder. The people of Qinghe stood in awe of him…" (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 13)

[8] Villain in Chinese is *liumang*, which indicates those of immoral behaviors. Ximen Qing, his sworn brothers, and the hooligans, scoundrels and rascals are *liumang*.

[9] In chapter 55, when Ximen Qing first meets Cai Jing, he says:

"Your son," he said, "has nothing to offer. I have brought no more than a few trifles in honor of your most illustrious birthday. It is as though one brought a feather for ten thousand li. But may your Eminence live as long as the Mountains of the South!" (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1331)

[10] In chapter 36, he tells Zhuangyuan Cai and Jinshi An:

"I am only a poor military officer of low rank," Ximen Qing said. "How should I dare to allow myself to be called by my second name?" (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 889)

(Jinshi was the highest degree in the imperial examination in imperial China. Zhuangyuan was the rank in imperial examination, and Jinshi is an academic degree. Those obtaining a rank and degree, who were selected by imperial examination, would be appointed as imperial officials.)

[11] For example, in chapter 49, when Ximen Qing first meets Song Qiaonian:

[He] fell upon his knees. "Your humble servant," he said, "is but a plain soldier, one subject to your commands. It is an honor to receive from you a visit which brings enlightenment to this poor hovel." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1165)

[12] In Chinese culture, being senior in age is regarded as having more experience and knowledge, so the appellation *lao xiansheng* is to show respect.

[13] In chapter 36, when he meets Zhuangyuan Cai and Jinshi An for the first time, he says:

"I had a letter from Master Zhai the other day telling me that your worthinesses were about to visit us on your emblossomed boat. I should have been there to welcome you, but, unfortunately, my official duties would not allow me. I must most humbly beg your pardon…" (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 887)

[14] Zhuangyuan is the first-placed scholar in the highest imperial examination, who was promised a future official career in imperial China.

[15] In his research article "Mingdai liumang wenhua de exing pengzhang yu zhuanzhi zhengti de guanxi jiqi dui guomin xinli de yingxiang" (Y. Wang 2000a, 2000b), Wang Yi translated *liumang wenhua* as "hooligan culture". He sees that hooligan culture is an ingredient of Chinese social culture, especially in the middle and late Ming dynasty. Although premodern Chinese culture is generally based on Confucianism hierarchy, it also has some marginal cultures originating from vagrant stratum since the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), which is hooligan culture.

[16] Ximen Qing said, "If we ask him to do anything for us, he never raises any objection, and what he does, he does well." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 15)

[17] Imperial examination was the main way to select candidates for the bureaucracy in premodern China, after the mid-Tang dynasty. The system focused on its intellectual nature during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

[18] "Now that it has been settled," Ximen Qing said, "it doesn't matter, but there is a certain inequality of position. Qiao has some property, but he is only a private citizen, while I am an officer and have duties at the courts. If we have to ask him to a party here, he will wear an ordinary hat, and I don't see how I can invite him to sit with me. It will be most awkward." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 997)

[19] The Imperial Tutor called for writing materials and filled up a blank warrant of appointment. (He wrote the name of Ximen Qing on it, which indicated the latter as having the official rank as a deputed captain and an official position as a magistrate in Shandong province.) (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 715)

Clement Egerton did not translate the meaning in the brackets for the Chinese sentence. To complement the meaning, I translated it. Deputy captain is an official rank, and magistrate is an official position. Therefore, his official title is Deputy Magistrate of Shandong province.

[20] Ximen Qing had sent a man to Huaiqing to get news from Captain Lin. The captain gave him a copy of the Imperial Gazette and five qian of silver, and the man traveled back post-haste to Qinghe. Xia and Ximen Qing were waiting for him at the office. They opened the envelope. First, they read the document that dealt with the inspection of the officials in their district. It related his Majesty's approval of the project to investigate the conduct of the officers, and spoke of Xia and Ximen Qing in these terms:

"Ximen Qing, Vice-Captain and Deputy Magistrate, is also an efficient officer. He is renowned for the subtlety of his judgments, and, being a wealthy man, he does not accept bribes. He is attentive to his duties and carries them out satisfactorily. He has never received a penny that is not justly his due. He maintains the dignity of the law and the people respect him. His promotion to the full rank of Captain is suggested, and he should be confirmed in his appointment as Magistrate." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1763–1765)

[21] Yushi, an official title, is the supervisor sent by the central government to inspect the local authorities. Zhuangyuan Cai later becomes Yushi Cai.

[22] *Ding* was a type of vessel in antiquity. It was a symbol of power and later was also an instrument to burn incense.

[23] In chapter 74:

Song was impressed by the magnificence and convenience of Ximen Qing's house. The books, pictures and furniture were all the best of their kind. In front of the screen stood a gilded tripod with the figures of the Eight Immortals. It was of very fine workmanship and several feet high. Incense was burning in it, and the smoke came out through the mouths of deer and storks. He went and examined it more closely.

"This tripod is beautifully made," he said to Ximen Qing. (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1889)

In chapter 75:

The next day, she rose first, opened the door and lit a fire. Then she helped Ximen Qing to dress. He went to the front court and told Daian to send Ben the Fourth with two soldiers to take the golden tripod with his card to Gensor Song's place. "When they have delivered it," he said, "they must wait for a return card." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1907)

[24] Song asked about the local dignitaries. "Prefect Hu is very well liked," Ximen Qing said, "and District Magistrate Li is most conscientious in his work. I have not had much to do with the others."

"You know Major Zhou," Censor Song said. "What do you think of him?"

"He is an experienced soldier," Ximen Qing said, "but I should hardly say that he is so efficient as Jing of Jizhou. Jing passed the military examination when he was still quite young, and he is as capable as he is brave. Perhaps your Excellency will keep an eye on him."

"Are you speaking of Jing Zhong? Do you know him?"

"He is a friend of mine," Ximen said. "Yesterday he brought a card and asked me to speak to your Excellency on his behalf."

"I have heard that he is a good officer," the Censor said. "Is there anyone else?"

"There is my wife's brother, Wu Kai. He is a Captain here and in charge of the alterations to the granary. He is due for promotion, and, if your Excellency helps him, I shall be involved in his honor."

"As he is your kinsman," Song said, "I will not only recommend him for promotion, but see that he gets an appointment worth having."

Ximen Qing bowed and thanked him. He gave the Censor the two men's records of service. Song handed them to one of his officers and said they were to be brought before him when he prepared his report. (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 1957–1959)

[25] Meanwhile, presents and visiting cards came to his house in shoals. (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 937)

[26] Fortunately, Cui Ben had not gone away. He kowtowed to Ximen Qing and handed him the accounts.

"The boats are at the wharf," he said, "and I need money to pay both freight and duty. We set off together on the first day of the month and separated at Yangzhou. The others went on to Hangzhou. I stayed a couple of days at Miao Qing's. He has spent ten taels of silver on a Yangzhou girl for you. She is sixteen years old, the daughter of a captain there, and her name is Chuyun. I can't tell you how beautiful she is. I can only say that her face is like a flower, her skin like jade, her eyes like stars, her eyebrows like the new moon, her waist like the willow, and her feet hardly three inches long. She is so beautiful that the fish when they see her sink to the depths of the river, and geese fall stricken to the ground. She is pretty enough to make the moon retire in shame and the flowers hang their heads. She knows three thousand short songs and eight hundred long ones. At the moment she is at Miao Qing's house, and he is getting ready ornaments and clothes to send with her. He is going to send her with Laibao in the spring, in the hope that she will amuse you when you feel the need of amusement." (Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 2008: 2019–2021)

[27] The content of imperial examination in premodern China heavily emphasized Confucianism.

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THE SIMIOTS OF CATALAN FOLKLORE: NEITHER ARE REMINISCENCES SO OLD, NOR ARE THEY SO STRANGE BEINGS

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Abstract: The simiot is a creature in the Catalan Pyrenean mythology. The term can be translated as "a kind of ape" or "similar to an ape". According to a medieval legend, around the tenth century, these wild beasts terrorized Arles, a Catalan village in the Vallespir region. Up until now, the number of scholarly studies dealing in depth with these beings is very small. Books and papers by several twentieth-century folklorists, such as Joan Amades, have not contributed to clarifying their origin. By and large, authors propose that simiots are remnants of an ancient and pagan religion, perhaps linked to canid cults or forest deities. However, considering their probable etymology, their origin can be traced to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.

Keywords: belief narratives, Catalan folklore, Catalan folklorists, Catalan medieval history, Catalonia, folk beliefs, hagiographic legends, supernatural folklore

INTRODUCTION

Simiots are creatures of the Catalan Pyrenean mythology. First, naturally, a clarification of the meaning of the non-English term *simiot* (plural *simiots*) is necessary.

The translation of the word *simiot* is not immediate, because of the presence of the suffix -ot –from latin *ottus*-, together with the term *simi* (ape). Nevertheless, although this suffix provides different meanings to the matrix term, *simiot* can be translated as "a kind of ape" or "similar to an ape".

According to a legend, around about the tenth century, simiots terrorized Arles, a Catalan village in the Vallespir region, currently under French rule. A reference to the simiots appears in the legend of the translation or transfer of the relics of the saints Abdon (Abdó, in Catalan) and Sennen (Senen) from

Rome to Arles. But as descriptions offered by tradition are not detailed, beyond what the term evokes, it leaves us a very large margin to the imagination.

Saint Abdon and Saint Sennen were twin brothers, princes and natives of Persia, adopted by the Church of the West as a result of their martyrdom in Rome in 254. In the days of Constantine, at the beginning of the fourth century, they appeared to the emperor and told him where they were buried. The Christians exhumed their bodies and moved them to the Pontian cemetery, where they did many favors for the population.

Since the fourth century their feast has been commemorated on July 30 and a basilica was dedicated in their honor, which became a pilgrimage center. The chronicles of the two saints were written mostly by the Dominican Jacobus da Varagine in his *Golden Legend* (*Legenda Aurea*).

According to Roman tradition, their bodies were moved to the Basilica of St. Mark the Evangelist of Rome in 1474, as is testified by a scroll found in a sixteenth-century chest under the main altar in 1948. From Rome their cult expanded and several towns such as Florence, Soissons, and Arles are presumed to host their relics, although there is no historical proof of their existence, so they are no longer included in the Roman Catholic calendar of liturgical saints, even though the worship is allowed in places where it is traditional.

In the Catalan Countries – Catalan-speaking territories – they are also known as patron saints of farmers, gardeners and peasants, Saint Nin and Saint Non, Saint Non and Saint Nen, or Saint No and Saint Ne, the saints of the stone and the storm. The variety of names received is a consequence of the great popularity that these saints enjoyed, which was still notable in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a period from which we have had several *goigs* (*gosos* or *goccius*, devotional and paraliturgical songs), as well as a short theatrical play. However, little by little it was displaced by new devotions introduced by the religious policy emanated from the Council of Trento, such as Saint Isidore the Laborer, which the Spanish absolute monarchy strongly favored because of their interest in imposing centralizing Castilian cults and culture.

It is necessary to point out that the number of scholarly studies dealing in depth – not a simple mention or reference – with simiots is very small. Chronologically speaking, the first text is a paper by Rossend Serra i Pagés (1927) about the forgetfulness of the simiot in the mythological Catalan memory. We need to wait until 1995 in order to find a communication by Jean-Louis Olive, who proposes that simiots are remnants of an ancient religion. Other authors, for instance Martí Gelabertó Vilagran (2003, 2011), who deal with the issue in passing, also observe remains of paganism. More recently, the etymological proposal offered by Olivier Rimbault (2014) to *Demond et Merveilles du Canigou* which, in fact, was already pointed out by Joan Coromines in his etymological

dictionary (*Diccionari Etimològic i Complementari de la Llengua Catalana* (DECat) 1980–1991).

The reasons for this scarcity of further studies are a consequence of various factors. Firstly, as will be seen, the mentions of simiots are extraordinarily concise. On the other hand, these beings are located in a very small area of Catalonia. Finally, the Catalan tradition had almost forgotten them, at least until the arrival in the twentieth century of Joan Amades, an autodidact folklorist adopting non-scholarly procedures, who reactivated popular interest in folklore but was not careful enough in collecting and publishing field data. The influence of this author has been decisive in the contemporary recreation of these beings, which cryptozoology has related to wild men and bigfoots (Eberhart 2002; Gil 2010). On the other hand, cryptozoology has revitalized the transmission of narratives about simiots.

LEGEND AND SOURCES

The legend places us in the tenth century at the village of Arles, which suffered the scourge of great storms, strong winds, and frequent hailstorms. The land was barren and provided no fruits. Wild beasts – bears, wolves, wild boars, and simiots – decimated the population. The latter frightened the villagers, attacked the peasants, and robbed their children to eat them. In order to placate the wrath of God on the population, numerous processions, fasting and abstinence were carried out with no positive results.

Abbot Arnulf[1] (or Arnulphus in Latin), a very pious man with a reputation for holiness, dwelt in Saint Mary's Abbey in Arles. Faced with this situation, he decided to go to Rome to seek the help of the Supreme Pontiff. After staying in the holy city several days and performing deep prayer, he suddenly had a vision that two Persian saints, Saint Abdon and Saint Sennen, until then ignored by the Christian world, could conjure the scourge that ruined their land.

At the same time, the exact place where their bodies were hidden was revealed. The Pope, admired for the heavenly revelation, granted the abbot the custody of the relics of these saints, who were transferred to Catalonia, on a journey full of miraculous events. The holy bones were deposited in the abbatial church of Arles and, almost instantly, the unclean beasts fled the region.

Once the legend has been summarized, let us see what the oldest sources tell us. The first text to which we need to refer is the *Narratio de translatione reliquiarum sanctorum Abdon et Senen ad monasterium Arulense*, a manuscript of the monastery of Santa María de Arles, which would confirm that the story of saints' relics was set in writing between the twelfth and fourteenth

centuries. According to Molina i Figueras (1996), the story is from the Lower Middle Ages, perhaps inspired by an earlier text, or in the oral tradition itself. However, this document is not preserved, and we only know the transcription by Pierre de Marca (1688).

This is the fragment about simiots:

> *Insuper erat in dicto loco & valle alia non mediocriter aspera tempestats sive pestilentia; quoniam de die & nocte videbantur bestiae silvestres & feroces, & signanter cati & etiam simiae & multae aliae species bestiarum sylvestrium, quae non timentes faciem hominum per loca sita in dicta valle intrabant, & pueros rapiebant de cunabulis & suffocabant & etaim devorabant & comedebant non in modicum terrorem & horrorem omnium tam clericorum quam laicoreum habitantium in dicta valle…* (Marca 1688: col. 1449–1450)
>
> In addition, misfortunes and severe epidemics also occurred in the village and in the valley. Wild and fierce beasts appeared both day and night, such as, and this is true, wild cats and even apes, as well as many other species of wild animals that, not fearing human presence, penetrated through certain points of the valley and took the children from the cribs, suffocated them, and even devoured them and ate them, with great terror and horror of all the inhabitants of the valley, both the clergy and the laity.

The author uses the word *simia*, feminine, which in Latin can usually refer to primates with tails (monkeys), as well as larger ones without tails (e.g., chimpanzees), this instance rather as a second option. In Latin there is another word, *simius*, masculine, which usually refers only to large primates without tails, and is more anthropomorphic.

The oldest preserved documentary source dates to the fifteenth century. This is *Processus translationis SS. Abdon et Sennen* from the year 1428, which belonged to the brotherhood of gardeners of saints Abdon and Sennen, in Barcelona. The text is written in Latin, except for a final colophon, which is in Catalan, in which we are informed, among other things, that the story has been copied from a previous document. The text is very similar to that of Pierre de Marca, with some minor differences due to transcription errors, spelling, and the form of abbreviations, which would virtually prove the existence of an original document in the fourteenth century. The Latin text is transcribed here, but equivalent translation is avoided.

> *Insuper erat in dicto loco 7 valle alia non mediocriter aspera tempestats sive pestilentia; quoniam de die et nocte videbantur bestiae silvestres 7 feroces, et singularit quati et etiam simye nec et multae alie speties bestiarum sylvestrium, quae non timentes faciem hominum per loca sita in dicta valle intrabant, et pueros rapiebant de cunabulis 7 suffocabant 7 etaim devorabant 7 comedebant non in modicum terrorem 7 horrorem omnium tam clericorum quam laicoreum habitantium in dicta valle…* (Vida de Sant Abdó i Sant Senén 1428: 6v)

Two writings in Catalan of theologians of the sixteenth century confirm the remarkable roots of the two saints, Abdon and Sennen, in the Catalan Countries. The first one, by the Valencian priest Joan Baptista Anyes, *La vida, martyri y translacio dels gloriosos martyrs e reals princeps sant Abdon y Senem*[2] (1542), is a devotional book. The second one is a descriptive volume by Professor Miquel Llot de Ribera, at the University of Perpinyà, titled *Llibre de la traslació dels invencibles i gloriosos màrtirs de Jesuchrist Abdon i Senen* (1591). However, it is interesting that while Joan Baptista Anyes, who writes from an area far from Arles does not mention simiots, Miquel Llot, who writes from 40 kilometers away and has personally been to Arles, differentiates simiots from the mere enumeration of beasts or wild elements. With this action, he contributes to enlarge the importance of the myth of these beings.

Joan Baptista Anyes writes:

> *Per les causes a Deu paleses y als homes secretes ... permete en aquells antichs anys, en dita vall hi vehins termens, que cascun estiu al temps de cegar-se se movien tants temporals, y ab trons y llamps y tanta pedra, que no solament tots los forments y grans y fruytes destruya, mas les vinyes de rayms fins els pampols despullava. Y no sola esta persecució cascun any sentien, mas tants y tan feroces llops, raboses y altres feren indòmites tots aquells termens vexaven, que no solament bestiars y altres domestichs animals, com son rocins, mules y bous de llauro mataven, mas los chichs mordien y sen portaven*. (Anyes 1987: 139)

> For obvious causes to God and secret to human, ... He allowed in those old years, in this valley and neighboring places, that every summer when it was harvest time there were so many storms, with thunder and lightning and so much hailstone, which not only destroyed all the wheat, grain and fruits, but also the grapes from the vineyards and even the vine shoot. And not only did they feel this persecution every year, but fierce wolves, foxes, and other wild beasts harassed them in all those places, and not

only killed cattle and other domestic animals, such as horses, mules and plowing oxen, but they bit the children and took them.

Miquel Llot lengthens his description:

La qual terra y vila d'aquesta manera edificada, castiga lo senyor, en tanta manera, que ya quasi estaven totalment perduts y destruïts los habitadors de aquella terra. Perque eren tantes les tempestats, los trons y llamps que de les montanyes de Canigo, y altres del redador baxauven, que moltes vegades los aparexia que un momento tenien tots de preterir y acabar aniadint tanta pedra, aygues y altres tempestats amb tanta fúria, y impetut que quan hauien los pagesos llançat lo gra sobre la terra no havien fet res. Y si algun camp sembrat algun tant prosperava y escapava de les ordinàries tempestats, ere tants los animals silvestres, los llops, ossos, porcs senglars y cervos i altres que ho devoraven y consumien. De tal manera que no y havia sperança que cosa alguna de fruit de la terra vingues a total perfecció. Pero era no res aço, en comparació de altre açot i castic, que lo senyor tenia ordenat y provehit, que era altra manaera de animals silvestres, a manera de mones, que aparexian de nit y de dia los quals perdent lo temor y respecte als homens moltes vegades los mataven y menjaven. Y en particular entrave ab tanta destreza y primor a las casa, axi de Arles com circumveïnes a la montanya, que sens poder ser remediats, prenien los minyos petits y los ne aportaven al desert en lo qual los menjaven cosa que spanta, y jo nou creguera sinó estiguera contingut en lo procés de la translació dels invencibles Maetyrs SS Abdó y Senné. (Llot 1591: 20v–21r)

That land and village built in this way, the Lord punished them, with such intensity that the inhabitants of that land were almost completely lost and destroyed. Because there were so many storms, thunders and lightnings coming down from the Canigo and other mountains around, that many times it seemed momentarily that they had to avoid the area, but finally they ended up dropping so much stone, water, and other storms with such fury and impetus that the sowing of the peasants was useless. And if any sown field prospered and escaped from ordinary storms, there were so many wild animals, wolves, bears, wild boars and deer and others that devoured and consumed everything. So, there was no hope that anything would bear fruit. But none of this is comparable to the other scourge and punishment, which the Lord had ordered and provided, which was another form of wild animals, like monkeys, which appeared night

> and day, and, having lost fear and respect for men, these animals often killed and ate them. And, in particular, they entered the houses with such skill and delicacy, both in Arles and in the surrounding mountains, that without being able to remedy it, they took small children and carried them to the uninhabited lands where they ate them, which was scary. And I would not believe it except because it is contained in the process of the translation of the invincible Holy Martyrs Abdon and Sennen.

Llot recounts the journey of Abbot Arnulf to Rome and his return with the miraculous relics, a source of various wonders. After these passages, he writes again about the simiots, now apparently collecting oral tradition. It should be understood that Llot was personally in Arles, even locating the possible funeral slab of Abbot Arnulf (Llot 1591: 51). Therefore, he could access the document of the translation conserved in Arles, but also what was orally recounted.

> *Aquest felicíssim si sonc y conclusió que lo omnipotent Deu dona al seu fervent lo Abat Arnulfo, per a reparo de la tormenta y tribulació tant gran de les tempestats y tronadices y de les besties salvatges en particular de las mones, vulgarment dites los symiots, que tants anys havia patit la terra y vall de Arles. De la qual tribulació totalment foren deslliurats per sempre, com los mateixos animals en los deserts ho senyalaren y significaren. Perque arribats que foren los sancts, los sentian hulular los de la vila, a grans veus despedint se de tal manera que may pus han aparegut. Per ha memòria dels quals ne feren gravar dos de pedra picada, a la porta de la yglesia dels monsatir dels quals vuy en dia estan pintats ab unes criatures en les mans com qui las esta menjant. Y per lo discurs gran del temps, y per la pluja que sobre de ells cau han perdut ja de la ferocitat y braveza ab la qual los pintaren. Ab tot no deixen de admirar aquí considera el modo y manera de com estan pintats.* (Llot 1591: 50v–50r)
>
> This is a very happy solution and conclusion that the omnipotent God gave to his servant, Abbot Arnulf, to end the tribulations so great of the storms and thunderstorms, and of the wild beasts, in particular of the monkeys, commonly called simiots, that for so many years the land and the valley of Arles had suffered. From this tribulation, they were totally liberated forever, as the animals themselves, from the uninhabited lands, pointed out and made it clear. Because when the saints arrived, the villagers heard them howling, due to their loudly farewell in such a way that they have never appeared. To remind them, they did engrave two stonework simiots on the door of the monastery church, which today are

> portrayed with children in their hands as if the kids were being eaten. And because of the enormous passage of time, and because of the rain that falls on them, they have already lost the ferocity and fierceness with which they were painted. However, we do not stop admiring them here and consider the way and manner of how they are represented.

Llop refers to the representations above the main door of the church of Saint Mary's Abbey, where two animals devour men. The monumental façade of this temple is one of the most archaic examples of Catalan Romanesque and is dated to the eleventh century. The sculptures look more like canines, felines, or even rodents, rather than apes. These beasts are most likely psychopomps, so that the devoured character enters the hereafter, where they are expected to be reborn into a new life. On the other hand, leonine figures that subjugate or devour animals which represent evil indicate the triumph of good over sin[3] (Benton 1992; Durliat & Ponsich 1993; Ponsich 1996).

A few years later, Dominican Antoni Vicenç Domenec, based on the text of Llot, mentions simiots in his book about saints and holy men of the Principality of Catalonia, published in Barcelona in 1602.[4] He does not add anything new.

Gerónimo Pujades, historian and jurist of Barcelona, also mentions simiots in his *Crònica universal del Principat de Catalunya* (Universal Chronicle of the Principality of Catalonia). The first part of the study was published in 1609. On the other hand, the second part remained unpublished until 1829–1832. And it is in this second part where he writes about Arles and the monsters of Vallespir. Pujades tells us the following, translated directly:

> *The Lord punished intensely that land that they call Vallespir (already described in times of the great fire of the Pyrenees), so its inhabitants were almost lost, destroyed and about to leave the desolate land to move to other places; because in addition to the frequent shrill and fearsome thunder and furious storms, dreadful rays descended from the steep and unfortunate Canigó, so that seemed to have opened some mouth of the overwhelming hell, and that everybody had to perish with those scares and great terrors.*
>
> *A plague never seen among those suffered by the Egyptians in their time was added to so many evils, since some wild animals had been born and ran through the face of the earth. These devoured the fields that had avoided hail, stone, water and storms. And having lost the fear of men, very often, by day or night, they entered the villages and killed and ate the children they could catch and carried them in the arms to the mountainous forest, in order to feed their offspring, and other similar beasts. This would seem incredible, unless explained by people who have truly seen the*

> *process of translation of the bodies of the saints Abdon and Sennen; and for not having seen anything like that in the first part of this Chronicle, where we deal with the fierce beasts that, at that time, attacked throughout the* [Iberian] *Peninsula. But as there are testimonies and examples, we must believe that it was so. And those who write about this, they say that they were wild animals like apes or monkeys, and the evidence is given by certain figures of animals in relief or bulge that are on the door of the temple.*
>
> *But I saw the same shapes on the occasion that I will explain further on,*[5] *and I have also seen some animals called cynocephalus, so I claim that, with the simiots, we are also dealing with cynocephalus*. (Pujades 1829: 196–197)

Pujades, unlike the previous authors, believes that he can identify simiots as cynocephali – literally, "dog-head" in Greek – a type of primate with an elongated nose head such as the mandrill, the baboon, or the monkey of Gibraltar. There are no historical records of apes in Vallespir, but we do know about their gluttony and ferocity.

The historian who explicitly cites Miquel Llot and Antoni Vicenç Domenec as sources, summarizes the journey of Abbot Arnulf and ends up explaining that with the arrival of the relics "the apes, monkeys or cynocephali" (Pujades 1829: 198) came out shrieking and fled forever.

Although much of Pujades's chronicles remained unpublished for two centuries, Pierre de la Marca, among others, consulted the manuscript and made use of it for his *Marca Hispanica*, although he never cited this source (Villanueva 2004). I have already pointed out that *Marca Hispanica* – in fact completed and edited by Ëtienne Baluze – contains the transliteration of the manuscript from the abbey of Arles with the simiots' reference. And at least, as far as simiots are concerned, we have also seen that this text corresponds perfectly with the manuscript of Barcelona that we keep from 1428.

In 1869, theologian Josep Tolrà de Bordas got back on track of the simiots issue in the *Histoire du martyre des saints Abdon et Sennen*. He cites Llot de Ribera and Pierre de la Marca and reproduces the text about the saints contained in *Marca Hispanica*. Tolrà de Bordas also mentions Pujades and takes seriously the hypothesis that simiots were some kind of cercopithecidae or old-world monkeys, although he sees the difficulty in making it compatible with their habitat.

In the second part of the nineteenth century and especially during the twentieth century, simiots appear briefly cited in various texts on art and archeology, in geographical and tourist guides, in books about traditions and customs, and

also of the paranormal and occultism; however, always without deepening or worrying about the possible living folklore.[6]

FOLKLORIST AND SCHOLARLY APPROACHES

Regarding Catalan folklore, the most abundant and popular contribution has been made by Joan Amades. It has already been said previously that his procedures were not accurate enough. However, the large amount of data he collected cannot be neglected.

In 1927 he wrote in a monographic article about Catalan fantastic beings:

> *It is a difficult being to define. Its memory is quite erased from popular imagination. It was excessively hairy, and its vision is disgusting and frightening.*
>
> *It seems that these kinds of apes, which could be taken for both a man and a beast, lived in trees of the forests of the high mountains of the Pyrenees, and did as much damage as they could; they caused strong storms, which came from the top of the Canigó, from which strong floods were derived, which devastated the crops. They stole small creatures. Faced with this scourge, the year 1072, a priest of Arles named Arnulf went to Rome in demand of protection from the Pope, against the misdeeds of those wild beings that devastated the country*. (Amades 1927: 53)

Amades continues to summarize the episode of the visit to Rome and the translation of the relics of the saints Abdon and Sennen to Saint Mary's Abbey in Arles. Once the bodies arrived, wild and fierce beasts fled scared, giving loud howls and bellows, leaving the forests where they had their lairs, and disappearing forever. As for the saints, they soon enjoyed a great reputation in the country, being chosen as patrons of gardeners. And the author continues describing the characteristics that had been collected about these beings:

> *The few shepherds and forest dwellers who know how to give some information of the simiots speak as if their extinction was something relatively modern. There was no one to say that they had been, and to speak of them as a contemporary fact, but they all say that they have existed, without having a notion of time, and without realizing the eight centuries that have passed from the fact, according to what the legend transcribed.*
>
> *Through this long period of time, although very blurred and half erased, the representation of the elusive and fierce being stays alive, hairy from*

> *head to toe, creepy and wild, difficult to define, that it could be both an ape and a man, and that it was the king of the forest, where people could not enter without fearing his fury; and that it could attract storms that ruined the country, and robbed creatures.* (Amades 1927: 54)

Amades (1949; 1950; 1953: vol. 1) collects several versions of a folktale on simiots, which would prove the greater intelligence and moral heights of the humans compared to simiots. However, this author makes a major mistake in his *Costumari Català* (Description of the Catalan traditions) when he says:

> *The belief in simiots in the environs of Canigo must have been widespread in the Middle Ages; so much that one of the followers and imitators of Aesop's fables, Rinuccio d'Arezzo, and the Aragonese Jew Pere Anfos de Poggio dedicated a fable to them in the seventh book of Aesopic apologues. As it is known, this fable was written in the Middle Ages and added to Aesop's text as if it had been composed by the great Greek fabulist himself. It is assigned number 21 and is entitled "On the Satyr and the Walker"; in this fable such creatures located in a semilegendary land that was intensely cold and mountainous, towards the zone of Llíbia, in the mountains of Arles*. (Amades 1953, vol. IV: 644)

In fact, the satyr fable is situated between the inhabitants of Libya and the Atlas, in North Africa. As Eulàlia Miralles (2017) has pointed out, Amades reads in the Catalan version reproduced by Ramon Miquel Planas, who emphasizes Arles in italics and adds, in brackets, "Atlas". This error becomes providential for Amades, who uses Arles instead of the Atlas Mountains. However, Amades goes one step further and changes Libya to Llívia in the Catalan Pyrenees.

Another folklorist, Rossend Serra i Pagès, wrote in 1927 that "the simiots or semiots, as they are usually named, are the memory of the ancient Silvanians, that is, geniuses of the forest" (Serra i Pagès 1927: 81). We can observe that Serra i Pagès thinks that "semiot" is a vulgar expression that would stem from "simiot", the cult form.

Serra i Pagès (1927: 81) mentions the difficulties of finding informants on the subject: "We could not extract anything clear. Very few people who were asked knew what it was," and adds the scarce and uninformative testimonies of shepherds that he had collected.

The paper also summarizes the legend of Arnulf and the relics, and continues with references to the satyrs and fauns and the subsequent assimilation of the geniuses and other pagan figures to demons. The article ends by mentioning

the disappearance of these beliefs and being replaced by Christianity, and the impact of greater human colonization of the territory.

On the other hand, among the unpublished materials left by this folklorist, today in the Historical Archives of the City of Barcelona, there is a folktale from Perpinyà,[7] in which the protagonist is a simiot that enters and leaves a house through the chimney. Simiots show little intelligence and can easily be deceived.

Archaeologist Joan Abelanet, a good connoisseur of Catalan folklore from the north of the Pyrenees, also collected explicit references to the use of chimneys as an entry point in the Albera region. According to his notes, simiots are "a type of monkeys that penetrated houses like witches and, going down the chimney, ... they took the children and devoured them quietly in the forest." (Abelanet 2008: 179)

The issue of chimneys should not be overlooked, because linguist Joan Coromines, a specialist in the etymology of Romance languages, clarifies that the origin of the term *simiot* is not from Catalan *simi* or Latin *simia*, but it is derived from *xemeneia* (chimney), through variants like *semeniot*, because the simiot appears precisely going down the chimney, from which the name was borrowed (Coromines 1987: 924).

Jean-Louis Olive, sociologist and anthropologist at the University of Perpignan Vía Domitia in Perpinyà, presented a lecture focused entirely on simiots in 1995. The author argues that these beings are associated with water sources, citing the *Font dels simiots* (Fontain of simiots) located in the vicinity of La Roca d'Albera, in Rosselló, or *Santa Tomba* (the holy tomb) of Saint Mary's Abbey in Arles. According to the legend, when Arnulf brought the holy relics of the two saints from Rome, he put them into this sarcophagus. Since then, the tomb has been filling with water with miraculous properties, except in periods of severe drought, because the main origin of the fluid is rain.

On the other hand, Olive uses folklore references and toponymic aspects and makes some etymological conjectures – for example, a possible canicular origin for Mount Canigó – to propose that simiots are remnants of an ancient religion linked to the cult of the canids. In Olive's words:

> *Therefore, the cult of the simiot, evangelized by father Arnulf in the 10th century, is most likely the mark of an ancient religion of which we already know other traces in Europe. They worshipped the bear, the deer, the wild boar and, of course, the dog, associated with the dog days [canicule] and the fountains in summer. The elimination of the simiots from Arles, which were banished,*[8] *may be a definitive clue to the possible old sacrifices of dogs in Vallespir. There is little information about the*

> *dog days' rituals, a probable legacy of the Roman Lupercalia* ... (Olive 1995: 64–65)

This idea of the survival of ancient cults is also maintained by historian Gelabertó Vilagran (2003), who considers these mythological figures difficult to classify, but he links them with the evil spirits that inhabited European forests according to ancient beliefs and to which the Church ended attributing a demonic character.

The author places simiots within a group of Pyrenean beings described as tall, covered exhaustively with hair, and with a very atrocious appearance, something like relatives of the yetis. However, later, Gelabertó Vilagran (2011) observes the discrepancies in the moral nature of these creatures. While simiots are fierce beasts that caused great damage to the inhabitants of Arles, the other simian beings of the Pyrenees, such as the *basajaun* or *baxajaun*[9] and the *iretges*[10] or hairy men of Arièja (Ariège), are not negative characters; they are sometimes even protective, rather shy, and not very violent.

Naturally, in Arles, as also in other places, the proximity of the forests to the settlement favored the attacks of wild beasts, especially during periods of lack of food. Some authors, for example Reus Planells, have supposed that the predatory action of these animals could have given rise to the legend of the simiots (2012). In contrast, Ponsich (1996) considers that it could have originated from the monsters on the eastern facade of the church of Saint Mary's Abbey in Arles. Both are possible, but neither of them specifically explains the use of the term "simiot", which does not appear anywhere else.

The point of view by Olivier Rimbault (2014) is very different. He establishes a certain equivalence between the simiot and the *pesanta* – a Catalan legendary being that oppresses people during sleep, as a nightmare – and the *breixos* (witches or sorceresses) of Arièja, since all of them can enter through a chimney; in fact, the only entrance of a house that was not closed.

Rimbault wonders about the etymology of the term "simiot" and considers that it must be derived from spoken language and the links with beliefs that have survived in this geographical area and its surroundings. Therefore, he thinks that the word was a deformation of the French term *cheminé*, which has given rise to *xemeneia* (chimney) in standard Catalan. In this sense, it is necessary to remember the presence of Catalan dialectical forms, such as *ximeneia*, *simeneia* or *simineia*, which show us the similarity with "simiot". In the words of Rimbault, "the simiot or, rather, the ximiot, was simply the name given in Vallespir to the creature that enters or exits through the chimney" (Rimbault 2014: 178).

THE FACTS

Legends are typically monoepisodic narratives that reflect on a more or less symbolic representation of folk belief and collective experiences, being therefore connected with social beliefs and serving as a reaffirmation of commonly held values of the group within which they are generated (Tangherlini 1990; Dégh 2001).

Unlike folktales, legends are discursive narratives tied to external reality, making specific allusions to historical personages or real topographic landmarks. In fact, these mentions contribute to the believability of the narrative, which is highlighted by the supposed historicity of the account, despite the fact that the historic core of a legend is often hard to find, even if it exists (Hodne 1973; Tangherlini 1990).

The narrative that concerns us, at least in written form, seems to have appeared in the period of maximum strength of the monastery of Arles, between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when it received important economic contributions from the counts of Barcelona, coinciding roughly with the very long abbacy of Ramon II Desbac, between 1261 and 1303, as Ponsich (1996) and Molina i Figueras (1996) point out.

Its purpose would have been to maximize the prestige of the monastery, taking advantage of some relics stored in it, with the hope of strengthening pilgrimage, which should allow the coffers to be filled thanks to the contributions and other donations that the patients offered in order to recover, or as a later thanks for the miraculous intercession of the saints. The members of the Benedictine community themselves were the main beneficiaries of the increased devotion to Saint Abdon and Saint Sennen, and it must be assumed that they were responsible for compiling and recreating the translation. We would face one more case in which the drafting of the documents responded to the will to produce evidence to certify the relics preserved in the monastic church. In addition, it also served to demonstrate the thaumaturgical properties of the remains of the saints (Molina i Figueras 1996; Reus Planells 2012).

There is no doubt about the autochthonous origin of the translation legend to Arles, since it does not appear in the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus da Varagine, a collection of hagiographies compiled around the year 1260, or in any other previous hagiography.

Nor does it appear in the oldest Catalan adaptation of the *Legenda Aurea*, *Vides de sants rosselloneses* (Lives of saints from Rosselló), a work from the second part of the thirteenth century, which was written at a short distance from Arles. This fact probably establishes a very significant chronological limit when talking about the martyrs, because it says absolutely nothing about their translation to this area of Catalonia. This means that, at that time, the legend had not yet been generated. Therefore, it has been suggested that it is precisely

at the time of the reconstruction of the chapel of Arles, in the fourteenth century, when the story took shape and so it could not appear before in any versions of the *Legenda Aurea* (Yarza Luaces 1994).

However, simiots had to exist within the Catalan Pyrenean imaginary before or at the same time that the legend of the saints appeared. It is absolutely unlikely that the narration tries to prove the thaumaturgical powers of the relics by mentioning the ability to scare away some unknown monsters. The Christian miracle had to necessarily consist in putting an end to feared beasts well known to the inhabitants of Arles. Therefore, we can affirm that around the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries the simiots were present in the imaginary of that area of the Tet Valley. But we do not find them anywhere else. In this sense, we have to consider that sometimes one of the most difficult aspects of classifying legends is the abundance of specific allusions relevant or understandable locally or to only a relatively small group of people (Tillhagen 1969; Tangherlini 1990).

The first document in Catalan in which the term *simi* (simian) appears is Fèlix or *Fèlix o Llibre de meravelles* (Felix or Book of Wonders, 1288–1289) by Ramon Llull, although the term competed with *bujia* or *bogia* and the augmentative *boïgot* – the name of the animals that were embarked in the port of Bogia (Bejaïa) in Algeria – and, from about 1460, with *mona* (monkey), abbreviation of *mamona*, of the Arabic *maimun* (happy), linguistic forms much more popular. However, we have already seen that there are no monkeys in Vallespir and that from the point of view of both linguistics and folklore, the term *simiot* most likely derived from *ximiot* or from any other form closer to dialectal forms of *cheminee*, such as *ximeneia*, *simeneia* or *simineia*. The term would have become *simiot* at the time of writing it down in a manuscript from learned forms, which were the expressions used by the ecclesiastics.

But, according to Coromines (1991: vol 9: 496), the term *xemeneia* appears for the first time in a text in Catalan in 1409, from French, where it existed already in the twelfth century, in turn from late Latin, *caminata* (way). The French term was spread to numerous European languages along with the chimney, a construction technique from northern France that appeared in the eleventh century, and allowed better smoke management, replacing the central chimney without an outlet duct.

Nevertheless, the use of the chimneys did not really extend until the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries; they were first built in abbeys and castles, and then installed in big settlements and finally in villages and less populated areas (Napoléone 2003). Therefore, should the origin of the term *simiot* be related to the chimney, in the case of the mountainous and remote areas of the Pyrenees, it seems difficult to go back much further than the thirteenth or fourteenth century to claim a sufficient generalization of the term.

The openings of the houses were considered dangerous because they served as access whereby the evil could be introduced,[11] so they were related to the action of the spirits and witches and, as a result, they were protected by witch-scarers[12] and pairs of home utensils forming crosses. As is known, likewise, laurel, olive, and other plants were placed at the doors, as well as bouquets and palms blessed on Palm Sunday on the balconies, a habit meant to protect all the openings, which in rare occasions has even reached the present day.

CONCLUSIONS

First, we need to consider that apart from Arles, no primary documentation has been found that relates a specific place to the simiots. On the other hand, within the scarce scholarly bibliography, some authors have opined that it is a sample of survival from pagan beliefs. Olive (1995) has been inclined to presume that it would be an old canine cult, while others, such as Martí Gelabertó (2011), argue that they are simian forms related to other mythological beings of the Pyrenees such as the *basajaun*.

This is related to the possible physical appearance of the simiots. There is no old text to describe them. What we have is, on the one hand, the tradition of having simiots on the imposing entrance of Saint Mary's Abbey in Arles and in other places, as we have already seen. In this case the appearance of the simiots has been assimilated to a feline or a canid. Another orientation is to give simiots a simian or ape aspect, inferred from the term with which they are identified, a trend that Pujades started up.

Even so, most authors have not paid much attention to the term *simiot* itself, thinking that the word roughly described the shape of the beings. However, the use of the term *simiot* invites us to think that its origin is a cult, an adaptation by an ecclesiastic made to a known term from a new and local expression. Related to this, Coromines (1987) and Rimbault (2014) opined that the etymology had to be sought in dialectal forms of *xemeneia* (chimney), from which the term would have evolved to *ximeneia*, *simeneia* or *simineia*, and finally *simiot*, when it was set in learned texts. The word would be an ontological metaphor of the fear that generated an open access of smoke outlet or chimney. The simiot would be nothing more than a zoomorphic representation of these fears.

However, as chimneys appear in the eleventh century, and are not popularized in northern Catalonia at least until two or three centuries later, the concept should have appeared at that time, around the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

We know that the Catalan legend of Saint Abdon and Saint Sennen must be at least contemporary with the Catalan version of the *Llegenda Aurea* from the

second part of the thirteenth century, and been written near Arles, since when it comes to our saints there is no reference to the transfer of relics to Catalonia. That is to say, the narration is approximately contemporary with the time of reconstruction of the chapel of Santa María de Arlés, in the fourteenth century, being most likely fixed in written form during the same period, coinciding with the maximum splendor of the monastery.

Therefore, if the etymology of *simiot* must be sought in *simineia* – a Catalan dialectal form for chimney – the simiots, as preternatural beings, appear almost at the same time that the hagiographic legend of the transfer of the relics is created. We would not be facing a surviving element of ancient cults, but of a contemporary element from Arles, from where it extended further south along with the legend of the saints. All the characteristics that have been attributed to the simiots later would be loans inspired either by the various sculped forms of lions from Arles, in which people believed to see simiots, or ape-like forms derived from what evokes the term *simiot*.

Naturally, the *simineies* – plural of *simineia* in Catalan – "dwelt" also in other areas near the Pyrenees. The term would be replaced over time by *simiot*, although the witches ended up being the main "users" of the chimneys.

NOTES

[1] The existence of Abbot Arnulf is documented in the year 963 and there is a funeral tombstone that could be his, which, by epigraphy, cannot be later than the eleventh century (Tolrà de Bordas 1869: 63; Ponsich 1996: 82).

[2] Juan Bautista Anyés, *La vida, martyri y translació dels gloriosos martyrs e reals Princeps sant Abdon y Senem: e la vida del gloriós bisbe e martyr sant Ponç advocats dels llauradors contra la pedra y tempestad,* València: Joan Navarro, 1542. The manuscript has been published in a trade edition by Max Cahner (Anyes 1987).

[3] If we refer to the iconography, it is necessary to mention the closet of Saint Mary's church, in the Arles abbey, where the supposed relics of the couple of saints are guarded. In one of the sixteenth-century friezes there is a painting depicting a simiot, apparently inspired by the figures at the church entrance. Two elements on the facade of the church of Sant Andreu de Sureda, in Rosselló, have also been popularly considered representations of the simiots, although we have not known since when. In this case the lion form is quite clear.

[4] *Historia general de los santos y varones ilustres en santidad del Principado de Cataluña compuesta por el R.P.F. Antonio Vicente Domenec Theologo, y Predicador de la Orden del Padre Santo Domingo, Catalán de nacion, natural de San Gabriel de Grions en el Obispado de Gerona, y hijo de habito del convento de Santa Catherina martyr de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Emprenta de Gabriel Graells y Giraldo Dotil. There is a second posthumous edition published in Girona in 1630 by the printer and bookseller Gaspar Garrich.

[5] Pujades (1829: 201) let us know that he visited Arles in July 1607, probably on the 30th, in coincidence with the feast of the saints Abdon and Sennen, according to a specific reference.

[6] References are always related to Arles, with one exception that places the simiots in Santa Pau, in the Comarca (region) of Garrotxa. Francesc Caula i Vegas mentions in his book *Parròquies i comuns de Santa Eulàlia de Begudà I Sant Joan les Fonts* (1930) the existence of a fifteenth-century document citing the simiots. This document (ACGAX, Notarials, Santa Pau, Pere Mas, Manual 1416-1417 [reg. 125], f. 37v-39r (13-VII-1417) is currently kept in the Garrotxa Comarcal Archive. It is a notarial protocol related to the construction of a chapel of Saint Abdon and Saint Sennen and in which the simiots – named *somiots* by Caula – apparently do not appear (Fumanal et al. 2008).

[7] Document AHCB 5D.61-25/C8-60.

[8] Olive refers to the "cimiots desterrats" (banished simiots) that appear in the devotional *Goigs en alabança dels gloriosos martyrs S. Abdon, y S. Sennen, las Relíquies dels quals se veneren en lo noble Monestir de Nostra Senyora de la Vila de Arles, Ordre de Sant Benet, Terra de Vallespir del Comtat de Rosselló*, Perpinyà: Casa de Joseph Francisco Reynier, 1778.

[9] Literally, "the lord of the woods" of Basque country, also known as Basaharau, Bonharau or Bosnerau in the Aragonese Pyrenees.

[10] Occitan term derived from the time of the Cathar "heresy".

[11] In fact, this is the motif G249.3, "witch enters and leaves house by chimney", in the classification by Stith Thompson (1966: 296).

[12] *Esfuriabruixes*, in Catalan. They are carved figures with a roughly human face. Placing them at the top of the house, they were a way to protect them from attacks of witches, demons, and spirits. It is a type of apotropaic protection typical of the Pyrenees and the rest of the north of the Iberian Peninsula.

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FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING IN ỊJỌLAND: CONTEXT, PERFORMANCE, AND SONGS

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Abstract: Female genital cutting is a vexed issue which has generated a considerable body of scholarship in both the humanities and the sciences. In this study, I focus on the ritual[1] among the Ịjọ of Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region. The paper is purely a cultural analysis of the practice and not one where an argument is put forth, as it were. As such, it gives detailed attention to the performance of the tradition. It also examines some of the reasons why the practice was held in high esteem. The paper further considers some of the subjects of the songs associated with the ritual, including love, sorrow, education, identity, and the supernatural, among others. Data for the study was gathered through observation and interviews.
Keywords: female genital cutting, ibe mọ, Ịjọ, kolokuma ibe, marine spirits, Niger Delta

INTRODUCTION

Female genital cutting, noted by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons" has been noted as a firm practice in Africa, the Middle East, and to a lesser extent, Asia (WHO 2008: 1; see also Parker 1995: 506; Slack 1988: 443; Barrett 2014: 20). In this paper, I carry out a purely cultural analysis of the ritual among the Ịjọ. In other words, this study is a presentation of how and why female genital cutting was practiced. It is important to state that the paper is neither an examination of power dynamics in the ritual nor a historical investigation of the factors that caused the decline of the practice. Moreover, it is also not concerned with how the tradition bred sexual immorality in Ịjọland (these are all subjects for other days). For all this, some may be disappointed to find that I do not put forward an argument or make a counter-argument, as it were, in the paper.

The data for the research was gathered from observation and interviews. I first collected the songs in Gbarantoru, Gbarain ibe,[2] in 2016. At that time, I was researching Ịjọ funeral dirges at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, for my MA thesis. I further collected the same songs in Igbedi community, Kolokuma ibe, in 2018, when I was in Nigeria for fieldwork while studying traditional Ịjọ poetry for a PhD at the School of Languages and Literatures, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. The respondents were a mix of young and old women. The videotapes of the songs are deposited at the Institute of Niger Delta Studies, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Nigeria.

The Ịjọ, whose ritual of female genital cutting is the concern of this paper, are also referred to in the anglicised form Ijaw or Ịzọn. They are the predominant ethnic group in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region and the fourth largest in the country (Ukeje 2010: 25–26; Ukiwo 2007: 591). They are concentrated in the states of Bayelsa, Rivers, Ondo, Delta, Akwa Ibom, and Edo. The people are neighbours of the Urhobo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Bini, Ibibio, Ikwerre, Etche, Ogoni, and some riverine Yoruba communities. Due to the nature of the physical environment – a terrain of rivers, creeks, swamps, and lakes – in which the Ịjọ are located, their main occupations are fishing and farming. It has been said that the ecosystem of the Niger Delta region contains at least 150 species of fish and that it is one of the largest collections of fish in the world (Nyananyo & Daminabo & Aminigo 2009: 19). Internationally, the people are known for youth restiveness. Since the late 1950s, when crude oil was discovered in the Ịjọ community of Oloibiri, it has been the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. Unfortunately, the Ịjọ and other minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region who own the product have not seen much of the money that is taken from their land. Rather, it has bred pollution, suffering, and underdevelopment. For decades, Ịjọ youths, together with those of other minority groups, have been fighting the Nigerian government for proper compensation for the wealth taken from their region (for insightful studies of oil politics in Nigeria, see Anugwom 2011; Ejobowah 2000; Ikelegbe 2001).

Perhaps, I should also point out in this introduction the belief of the people about water spirits since some of the songs used for this study make reference to it. The spirits who live in the rivers, lakes and creeks in Ịjọland are called *bini otu* (water people). Of importance is the belief of the people that this human world with its cars, skyscrapers, and aeroplanes is replicated in the rivers and lakes. It is for this reason, according to the people, that some fishing nets are torn when fishing. It is said that the kind of life they live in there is better than the life humanity lives on land (see, for example, Horton 1962: 201–202 on the beliefs of Kalabari ibe). In the past, altars were erected and food was provided on them for the marine spirits. It is further said that they teach the womenfolk

of the community dance patterns, different hairdos, songs and attire in dreams. Put differently, it is these water spirits, the people claim, that are "associated with contemporary invention and creation" (Horton 1962: 201). Women copy them when the marine spirits carry out shows on sandbanks.

Moreover, it is the belief that some of these water spirits have earthly husbands and wives, which makes it difficult for such men and women to have partners in real life. In addition, these water spirits are more beneficent than their land counterparts, as the saying goes. As such, they are approached for children. Furthermore, they have children who come to be birthed by women on land. As noted by Benjamin Okaba & S.T.K. Appah, they are also the source of an "abundance of fish" (2013 [1999]: 152). They are said to be beautiful: they have long hair and are fair in complexion. For this, they are offered food that is seen as foreign, such as coconuts, eggs, biscuits, sugar, and sweet drinks. There are many tales about people who were thought drowned coming back after days in water to regale them with amazing events in the abode of the marine spirits. This is reflected in the traditional music and oral literature of the people, such as songs, folktales, and proverbs, among others. I now turn to the concern of this paper: female genital cutting among the Ịjọ.

FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING IN ỊJỌLAND

In the past, female genital cutting was a highly-revered practice among some Ịjọ ibe mọ before it collapsed some years ago. However, based on what was said to me by some of my respondents, it was not every ibe that practiced the ritual. For example, my respondents from Igbedi community told me it was not practiced in Egbema, Apọị (West), Gbaranmatu, and Arogbo ibe mọ. Obviously they had people from such places in the community who told them their ibe mọ did not observe such a practice. Mrs Stella Prince, a middle-aged woman from Egbema who used to sell fish in Arogbo, Apoi (West) and Gbaranmatu, in an interview in June 2020, corroborated in strong terms the statement of my earlier respondents. Regarding age range, in Oyakiri, Buseni, Ogboin, and Bumo ibe mọ, female genital cutting was sometimes done even before the child was a year old. In such ibe mọ as Epie, Oporomo, Mein, Seimbiri, Nembe, and Tuomo, a girl was cut when she had got to her teenage years. In contrast, in Tarakiri, Gbarain, Ekpetiama, Kolokuma, and Opokuma ibe mọ, and as noted of Kabowei by Marida Hollos and Philip Leis, it was done when a young woman was already pregnant (2009 [1989]: 64). Unlike infibulation or Pharaonic, which was practiced in the Horn of Africa, the Ịjọ practiced both Type 1 and Type 11 female genital cutting, although Type 1 was, by far, the more popular form (AAP

2010: 1089; Kouba & Muasher 1985: 97; Mackie 1996: 1002; for a description of the various types, see WHO 2012: 1).

Why was the ritual held in high esteem in some ibe mọ? The overriding reason was that the ritual curbed excessive sexual desire in the woman's pre- and post-marital lives. Similar comments have been made by some researchers in regard to the practice in other places in Africa (see, for example, Onadeko & Adekunle 1985: 182; Gordon 1997: 25; Mackie 1996: 1004; Althaus 1997: 132; Slack 1988: 445–446; Freymeyer & Johnson 2007: 71). In fact, one of the respondents in Kolokuma ibe (personal communication 2018) puts it this way: "Even in this community those who were not cut are more fidgety – for want of a better English parallel – than those who were cut." The Ịjọ word *ụsịa*, which I have translated as "fidgety", refers, especially in sexual context, to a scenario whereby a woman does not stay in one place, as it were. Such a woman has a high sexual drive and cannot be easily satisfied. She finds a way to derive pleasure from others even in her husband's house. In the next part of this section, I shall go on to examine the ritual as practiced in Kolokuma, Opokuma, Gbarain, and Ekpetiama ibe mọ.

I have chosen these four ibe mọ as my case study here because I am from Kolokuma and was exposed to the ritual when I was younger (up to my high school days; in fact, it has been about fifteen years since the last ritual took place in my community). In addition, the ibe mọ had identical rites concerning female genital cutting. When I was in Gbarain collecting songs of the ritual in 2016, I was asked to go back to my ibe because the two ibe mọ did exactly the same thing. I insisted, and when they started singing, I heard, apart from one or two songs, the ones that I was very familiar with. Moreover, their (the ibe mọ) settlements are close to one another.

In the past, it was unthinkable not to carry out the ritual on a young woman who had become pregnant in those four ibe mọ (a young woman could also be cut if she had not been impregnated but was judged by her mother to be getting old, as it were). She would not be told of the day she was going to be cut because she would run away from the house because of the pain. It was her mother who would meet her fellow women and tell them that she would want her daughter to be cut on such and such day. The women would never let anyone know about it. The mother of the young woman who was going to be cut would ensure that her daughter did not go anywhere on that day. She would ensure that all her daughter's appointments were cancelled but the daughter would never know what her mother had in mind. She could simply say they would leave the house at about five in the morning of that day to go to their farm. In the morning, before even the day had broken, the women would come to where the young woman was sleeping. They would grab her, take her to where she would be cut

in the compound and bring her back. There was nothing the girl could do. She could move neither her legs nor her arms: the women were too powerful for her!

When a young woman had been cut, her female friends would leave their homes to go and stay with her. It could be more than twenty girls. They would stay with her until her wound was healed properly. That means their period of stay depended on how fast the wound healed. But it was not more than a week or two. In Tarakiri and Epie ibe mo, the girls and young women would leave after a week. During their stay, it was the practice for all of them to go and farm for a few days with the mother of the one who was cut. No woman would ever think of that as an opportunity to complete work on her farm because she would undoubtedly become the centre of gossip among the womenfolk. The money for the sustenance of the girls and young women was provided by both the male lover and the mother of the one cut (just the mother if the daughter had no lover or the lover had no money). But a single person feeding several girls or women for days, especially in rural areas, was and still is no easy task. So it was the norm for relatives on the side of the lover and the one cut to cook food in big pots and take it to the home of the one cut.

Of the girls and young women, one was called *ịselegberearaụ* (literally, the one who mixes camwood). She had the responsibility of mixing camwood and rubbing it on the body of the one cut and the *komọtọbọụ* (literally, the pet child) anytime they took a bath. In many instances, she came from the side of the male lover. *Komọtọbọụ* was a little girl who was always beside the one cut. Sometimes, the two lovers had quarrels about from whose side the *komọtọbọụ* should come when she would be cut. The duties of the *komọtọbọụ* were, among others, carrying a kerosene lamp at night and walking in front of the one cut anytime the need arose, and the soap can when the one cut was walking to the riverside to take her bath.

Female genital cutting became so strong that a young man who had not impregnated a young woman, had her cut and paid the fees was not considered a *man* at all. In fact, in Kabowei ibe, in the words of Hollos and Leis, "to deliver a child without the mother being circumcised was an abomination. An uncircumcised woman cannot be buried in the village because the fertility of the earth would diminish. If the operation was not performed, it is believed that the child will be devoid of human status and will bring harm to the village" (2009 [1989]: 65). If a young woman had not been impregnated by someone and had not been cut, her mother too would become the target of insults from other women. In addition, if the younger sister of a young woman had become pregnant, then her elder sister who had not been impregnated must be cut first. The younger one would not be cut before the older one. The mother knew what

to do in situations like that. Before the younger one's pregnancy grew to the level where everyone would know, she already had the older one cut.

In the first part of this section, I pointed out that female genital cutting later became a celebration like a proper traditional marriage in Kolokuma, Gbarain, Ekpetiama, and Opokuma ibe mọ. In the beginning, when a young woman had been cut, the lover would buy a few pieces of clothing – a towel, a wrapper, some underwear, among others – which she would use for the period of the ritual. After some time, some relatives on both sides would also provide such items of clothing for the one cut. Somehow, at a point in time, something came up, known as the female genital cutting list, which contained all the things that the would-be-husband would buy for his lover (in the anthropological study by Hollos and Leis, reference is made to the lover buying "specified presents" for the one cut in Kabowei ibe (2009 [1989]: 64)).

The list was provided for the man by his in-laws. Later, a day was set aside when the lover was expected to show to the entire community whether he was able to procure all the items on the list. It was a day everyone in the community looked forward to. On the day, seated on one side of the arena were the relatives and friends of the one cut while those of the lover would sit on the other side. The one cut would sit in the middle of the two sides. After the normal oratories between the spokesmen on both sides, the friends and relatives of the lover would take the items that he had bought to the place where the one cut sat. It got to a time when the lover would not only buy all the items on the list but also things that were not on it. In fact, he would buy double each item because people would always say so-and-so got the largest of presents in the community. It became so competitive that the family of the man would ensure that their child outperformed all the previous ones. Relatives on the side of the one cut would also buy many things to give to their daughter on that day. In such a situation, it was only natural for girls and young women to envy those who became the recipients of such things. Fortunately, the way was opened for them too: just become pregnant and be cut. In this way, female genital cutting came to breed immorality as a means by which young women exploited men in those four ibe mọ. Some women, who were not ready to live in a man's home, left their lovers after the first child.

In some ibe mọ such as Tuomo, Seimbiri, Mein, and Oporomo, the ritual, especially how it was celebrated, took a different form from the manner it was done in Kolokuma, Opokuma, Gbarain, and Ekpetiama. First, more than one person was cut on a particular day. It could be from 2 to 20 girls, depending on the capability of the father. A wealthy man could add the girls in his extended family to those of his daughters and have them cut on the same day. When all the girls had been cut, they would be in a secluded room in the man's house

for three days. The first thing they were given to eat was roasted plantain. In those ibe mọ, there was a day fixed by the father when he would show to the community that he had cut his daughters.

On that day, the whole community, as well as those who heard and came from other surrounding communities, would gather to see the *ayoro mọ* (the girls newly cut) in town. The father was the one responsible for all the drinks and food on that occasion which started at night and ran through the wee hours of the following day. In the ceremony proper, all the cut girls, dressed in the proper traditional Ịjọ way, would sit in the middle of the arena with the members of the community standing or sitting on both sides. In front of each girl was a table that had a bowl on it. Their parents, elegantly dressed too, would sit somewhere between the girls. Thereafter, the husbands of some of the ones cut who had already got married by then would put money in the bowls. The money in the bowl of each girl belonged to her and not her parents. At some point in the night, all the ones cut would dance round the community. The ceremony was enlivened by dancing, singing, and drumming all through the night. I am very sure Olodiama ibe (not Olodiama West ibe) also followed the tradition of Mein, Oporomo, Seimbiri, and Tuomo by gathering several girls and cutting them on a single day. For example, Hollos and Leis point out that seven girls died on a single day after they had been cut:

> *…individuals say they heard from elders that the operation [clitoridectomy] was once performed in the village long ago, but no one in memory has done so. According to legend, seven girls died following the surgery, and this was interpreted as a sign from the water spirits that they did not want females to be circumcised*. (2009 [1989]: 64; see also Leis & Hollos 1995: 106)

The incident in Olodiama ibe in which the seven young women died is not fiction. It is still popular among the Ịjọ. In what follows, I shall consider the performance of songs of female genital cutting in Gbarain, Kolokuma, Opokuma, and Ekpetiama ibe mọ.

THE PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING SONGS

Female genital cutting songs in the four ibe mọ were divided into two groups. One group was sung by the girls from the home of the one cut when they were going to and from the forest to peel the bark of the two trees they used in treating the wound of the one cut. The songs in this group are lighter and

mainly on the theme of love. The subject of love is not a major concern in the other group. Songs in the other group express deeper concerns and Ịjọ religious beliefs. They were sung by young and adult women when they were going to say thank you to anybody who cooked something and brought it to the home of the one cut. When it was time for the thank-you visit in the night – at 8 pm or so – the procession of women would move out from the home of the one cut to the main road of the community. As pointed out earlier, the Ịjọ are a riverine people. Most communities are situated in places that overlook a river. In most cases, there is some distance between where the river makes contact with the sides of the community and from where houses start. Canoes are anchored on the community waterfront. The major and most important thoroughfare in the community, called tumubọlọụ in Kolokuma Ịjọ, is the one that directly overlooks the river. Very often, this main road has houses on both sides. It is a very long, spacious thoroughfare that equals the length of the community. In some instances, you will have to walk past it to get into your canoe and go to farm. It is on this road that some of the performances of oral literature genres (including female genital cutting songs) take place, in the public glare. When performances happen on the road, those whose homes are far away run to watch.

The procession would start formally on this main road. The one cut would stand in front of the women. Due to the wound in the opening of her legs, she would not stand in a position of attention. She stood in a way that the thighs would not touch each other. She also used a piece of wrapper to wrap herself from the legs to the chest. The wrapper covered her breasts. She used her right hand to hold a walking stick (until her wound was properly healed, the walking stick was always in her hands every time she stood to walk). The one cut also had camwood rubbed all over her body. Moreover, she wore beads round her ankles, wrists, and neck. Standing just in front of her in the procession would be the *komọtọbọụ* (the pet child). The little girl or pet child held a kerosene lamp that provided light in the home of the one cut. This was the lamp that provided light for the procession in the night. Then the grown-up girl, the *iselegberearaụ* (the girl who mixes camwood), with the big pot that was used to cook the food for them on her head, stood in the middle of the women, behind the one cut. They walked at a slow pace because of the one cut; she would not be able to walk fast due to the wound between her legs.

More women would join the procession as it moved on. There was no one designated as the lead singer among them. They had three to four elderly women who, in addition to having in-depth knowledge of female genital cutting songs, knew how to sing well. As they were moving, one of them sang a song. When the woman (the lead singer at this time) finished her song, the procession stopped and sang the song that was just finished by the woman. When

they were through, they moved on as another woman began singing. Anywhere they stopped to take over the song, as it were, from the lead singer, the people standing or sitting where they had got to on the road would say, "*ọ boboma-a*" or "*ọ nụa-oo*", greetings meaning "you are welcome". The procession would respond *ee* (yes) to the audience. Somebody in the procession could also say these greetings and everybody in it would respond. People neither clapped hands nor beat percussions. The procession moved slowly. The women would move in this way to the home of the person who cooked for them. While there, all of them would keep chorusing "*nụa-oo*" (thank you) several times. As expected, children were always at the back of the procession.

On the return to the home of the one cut, they would not stop at any place again, but the songs were continued to be sung. The interaction between the procession and the audience adds beauty to the performance. For example, sometimes, before the lead singer at that moment took up a song, you would hear somebody in the audience asking a woman in the procession how it was possible for her to be in the procession when she had earlier said she had a headache. One would also hear in-laws greeting their in-laws. Moreover, some would ask after the welfare of relatives and friends who were neither in the procession nor in the audience. In addition, a woman would tell another woman that her cassava farm had been submerged by the flood or the bunch of plantain she had been looking forward to cutting and giving to her in-law had been cut by a thief. From the manner in which female genital cutting songs were performed, especially the interactions between the audience and the procession, one can understand why some folklorists and anthropologists sought a performance-based definition or approach to the study of folklore (see, for example, Malinowski 1926: 29–30; Hymes 1971: 42–43; 1975: 13; Abrahams 1968: 157; Ben-Amos 1971: 4; Bauman 1975: 290). In the final section of the paper I examine some of the subjects of the songs.

FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING SONG SUBJECTS

There were many songs that people sang during the period a young woman was cut. As noted earlier, some of the songs deal with the subject of love. Others, as with most Ijọ song-poetry, express the beliefs of the people. Few express the unpleasant experiences of the unfortunate in the hands of the privileged. For example, the following song is on the subject of love:

In' agbaịowei bẹịn bo ị saị-oo-ee	My lover, come and take me
In' agbaịowei bẹịn bo ị saị-oo-ee	My lover, come and take me

Timi fa ba Ebiere bụnụgha-oo-ee	Whenever Timi is not around, Ebiere won't sleep
Timi fa ba Ebiere bụnụgha-o	Whenever Timi is not around, Ebiere won't sleep
Pabara weleke	*Pabara weleke*
Ebiere fa ba Timi bụnụgha-o	Whenever Ebiere is not around, Timi won't sleep
Pabara weleke	*Pabara weleke*
Ebiere fa ba Timi bụnụgha-o	Whenever Timi is not around, Ebiere won't sleep
Pabara weleke	*Pabara weleke*

(Armstrong 2020: 454–455)

I have used 'Timi' and 'Ebiere' in the song to represent two lovers. These two names shall be used throughout this paper. The song was sung by the girls from the home of the one cut when they were going to and coming from the bush to peel off the bark used to treat the wound in the clitoris of the one cut. As is obvious from the song, the lovers cannot be separated. Another subject expressed in the songs is melancholy, as in the song below:

In' agbaịowei Lagosị ọ mu ya ma dein baị kpọ waị bugha
In' agbaịowei Lagosị ọ mu ya ma dein baị kpọ waị bụgha
O kẹnị fị kị fị kpọ fị lẹta kpọ gẹ nị yaragha
O kẹnị dọn kị dọn kpọ dọn lẹta kpọ gẹ nị yaragha
Ị wẹnị mu bẹdị ọ koro ya bẹdị sẹ kpọ dọ dọ
Ị finmọ na kị kẹnị anga pou ya bịsa anga kpọ dọ dọ
Ị yangi opuru floụ tụọ-o
Ị yangi opuru floụ tụọ-o
Opuru floụ tọụ kpọ ị mọmọ tiẹ
Ere 'wọụ mọ bo ị barị youwo
Ere 'wou mọ bo ị barị youwo
In' agbaịowei wẹnị mu fadọụ

My lover went to Lagos but hasn't come back after two days
My lover went to Lagos but hasn't come back after two days
Even if he has died, he hasn't written a death letter to me
Even if he's sick, he hasn't written a sick letter to me
I went to lay on the bed but it's cold
I shifted to one side, but that side too was cold
My mother in-law, please cook crayfish soup

My mother-in-law, please cook crayfish soup
Cook crayfish soup but it will stand with you
Oh! weep for me, my fellow girls
Oh! weep for me, my fellow girls
My lover has gone away
(Armstrong 2020: 455–456)

In this song, the lover of the young woman has gone to a distant place, Lagos, in southwestern Nigeria, perhaps to look for money in order to cater for his family back home. In the past, Lagos was a city for which Ịjọ men often left their rural areas. Some would leave their wives or lovers and children with their parents. In Lagos, they would venture into sand business (the work involves entering the water and bringing out sand). This is one job Ịjọ men know how to do very well because the rivers in their communities have lots of sand beneath them. But they would have to go to Lagos because it required the use of much more sand than their rural communities, which meant much more money. The young woman has not heard from her lover for just two days, yet she cannot contain herself. Is her lover sick or has he died? She does not know because he has not written a letter to her to that effect. She is unable to stay in one place. Everywhere is cold for her. She is fidgety. At such times, the mother-in-law would do everything to calm her daughter-in-law. She would want to cook the daughter-in-law's favourite food, crayfish soup, as in the song above. Many Ịjọ prefer crayfish soup to any other. It is what some of them serve their guests. Unfortunately, it is seasonal, meaning you only cook it during the flood season and when the flood is beginning to recede. The daughter-in-law might be the one to tell her lover's mother what to cook, as in the song. Sometimes the young woman would tell her mother-in-law she would not eat after the food had been cooked. At other times, before the food was even ready, the young woman had told her mother-in-law that she did not have the appetite to eat, as in the song. It is as if her lover had gone away completely. She calls on her fellow girls to weep over her misfortune. The subject of sorrow of the one cut is further expressed in the song below:

In' amaran yaịndọụ nị ịn'	Ay me! my walking stick hurts me
amaran kị dọnmo!	because it's been broken!
Ine gịdẹ seidọụ nị ine	Alas, my basket hurts me
gịdẹ kị dọnmo!	because it has been damaged!
Bịbị finigha gịdẹ deri	Oh woman who weaves a basket
araụ bo tọlọmọ youwo!	without opening the mouth, weep for me!
Akparan 'wọụ wo!	Oh daughters of the home of the one cut!

Ị daụ o!	Oh my father!
Akparan ‘wọụ wo,	Oh daughters of the home of the one cut,
akparan ‘wọụ wo!	daughters of the home of the one cut!

(Armstrong 2020: 456–457)

This song expresses the excruciating pain the young woman goes through during female genital cutting. It also brings to the fore one aspect in the life of the Ịjọ: not calling the organs directly by their names and not using taboo words. Instead, euphemisms are used. To date, parents and older people do not discuss the organs of the body in the presence of children and teenagers even though this group knows these things better than their elders. Since these songs were performed in the open, other terms had to be used. *Amaran*, walking stick, refers to labia minora while *gịdẹ*, basket, is clitoris. Moreover, the mention of labia minora and clitoris in the song tells the reader the type of cutting that was done, which is Type II.

Many of the songs express the subject of sorrow, some in different ways. Some songs are on the experiences of what people pass through in the hands of others. For example, in Ịjọland, when a husband has died, it is the norm for the widow to be given to a man among her in-laws as a wife. Sometimes the family of her late husband has not taken a decision on this because there is no capable or free man, as it were, among them. During this period, different men will make advances to her, perhaps telling her they will marry her and take care of her children. However, they will not marry her; what they want is to have relations with her and dump her. She knows this. However, sometimes she may feel one of them is genuine about his intentions. She eventually gives in and is ditched, as in this song:

Ị ba bo teki mịẹnga-a?	What will I do again?
Ị ba bo teki mịẹnga-a?	What will I do again?
Duere-o!	Oh, a poor widow!
Ị ba bo teki mịẹnga-a?	What will I do again?
Orukụmọ ị nọ tuu kpọ numugha timi	For long, I wasn’t known
Wo ị lẹlẹmọ bo tuu numudọ nị	But now he has tricked me into knowing me
Wo ị dịnịmọ na bụrụ indi	I’ve been pushed by him to float
tẹịn bara tẹịn o	like rotten fish

(Armstrong 2020: 457–458)

This song also served the purpose of educating women, especially the one cut who would soon go on to live with her husband, about the ways of Ịjọ men. Any

of them could become a widow suddenly and so they needed to be wise and careful. So, it was appropriate that a song like this was sung during the period when a young woman was married. Here is another song that expresses sadness:

Mu da ị bo ye mo kị gba-a	"I shall go and come back," he said
Yọụ mu odi kiri bọ dein ya mesi-o	He has gone to Odi and stayed forty days
Mu da bo ye mo kị gba-a	"I shall go and come back," he said
Odi kiri ịn' ama-o	"Odi is my community"
Mu da bo ye mo kị gba-a	"I shall go and come back," he said
Yọụ mu odi kiri bọ dein ya mesi-o	He has gone to Odi and stayed forty days

(Armstrong 2020: 458–459)

This is one song that expresses the shame and sadness the one cut feels. It is natural for a community to have non-indigenes. Such men would impregnate a young woman of the community they are living in, and this young woman too would be cut. It may be that the man did not have the money to pay the fees and provide money for some of the things needed in the home of the one cut. In a situation like that, he would inform his in-laws that he would go to his community, get some money and come back for the ritual. When he left the community, he would not be seen again. The mother of the impregnated young woman would have to have her daughter whose lover had run away cut before she gave birth. The whole shame would be on the mother, her daughter and their relatives and friends. There were also times one would have an understanding with one's mother-in-law that she should use the little money she had or go to anyone who could lend her money and start the ritual. The lover would say he would go to his community to get some money, buy the other remaining items on the list of female genital cutting, come back and pay the debt. He would leave immediately and not be seen again, having fled as in the song above.

The subject of sadness is expressed in another way. One imagines how life would have been if it were so-and-so who gave birth to one. In most cases, the family one was born into is poor. Life is so difficult compared to the life one's friend enjoys. Such thoughts are not uncommon in Ijọ rural areas. Often you sleep in hunger, unlike your friend. When you are born into a poor family, you must learn how to behave too. There is nothing for you to brag about, as in this song:

Bọụ kị 'zi wẹrị ya dengịtimo	If it were *bọụ* fish that gave birth to me, I would be boastful
Bọụ ki 'zi wẹrị ya dengịtimo	If it were *bọụ* fish that gave birth to me, I would be boastful
Epelepele ị zidẹị nị	I won't be boastful because *epelepele* fish gave

ma degha-o	birth to me
Ụya-o ụya-o	Oh what suffering, what suffering.
I kiriki bini ama bo i dau	But I was my father's favourite,
komotọbọụ-o, komotọbọụ-o	favourite underneath the waters.
(Armstrong 2020: 458)	

This song also applies directly to the one cut. Female genital cutting, as noted earlier, was a big festive time if the parents or in-laws of the young woman had money and numerous farms. In the case of the young woman in the song above, it was a simple one. Ironically, she was the darling of her father in the land of water. The *bọụ* fish is more highly regarded than the *epelepele* fish. They are used in the song to contrast the two families. Note also the belief regarding water spirits in the song, something that was pointed out at the beginning of this paper. Here is another song that expresses belief in water spirits:

In' ẹfẹrẹ kọnmu kaịweremi-o	My breakable plate was taken and locked
Bini bolou ịyọrọaraụ ịn' ẹfẹrẹ	The woman of the water took my
kọnmu kaịweremi-o	breakable plate and locked it
Ẹfẹrẹ bị barasin-o	Free the breakable plate
Ẹfẹrẹ bị barasin-o	Free the breakable plate
Bini bolou bo tọrụ ịmgbọ mọ ya	Why can't the money in the water be used
kị ẹfẹrẹ fẹgha ya	to buy a breakable plate?
(Armstrong 2020: 459)	

The above song concerns the life of somebody whom a woman in water has locked up. She is told to release the life of the person. As claimed by people, once someone's life has been locked up, they will not be able to live a satisfying life until death. Perhaps any person they marry will die. Moreover, the money they look for in life never enters their hand. Life becomes miserable for such people. For a young child, as noted above, people say the baby is dying and coming back to life because the marine spirit has not released the life of the baby entirely to live on earth. The Ịjọ poet and playwright J.P. Clark-Bekederemo has made use of this phenomenon – a baby dying and coming back to life on a regular basis – in his poem "Abiku". In many instances, and because of the matrilineal nature of the Ịjọ, it is the mother who will look for a solution. It is also the belief of the people that not every marine spirit has a child. Therefore, it is probable that the marine spirit has locked up the life of the woman's child because she is childless or has no other one. It is no wonder the mother of the child asks the marine spirit whether she could not use the money she has to buy a child.

Furthermore, there are some songs that give the reader an idea of some of the things required for the ritual, as in the following:

Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Kasa kana subo bo	Bring a basket of palm kernel chaff
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Kasa kana subo bo	Bring a basket of palm kernel chaff
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Ị ta biri bi nagha-a?	Did you not hear that your wife has been cut?
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Ị ta biri bi nagha-a	Did you not hear that your wife has been cut?
Abị Timi waị boo	Come back, Timi
Isele tini kpọ fẹ bo	Buy a tin of camwood too
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Isele tini kpo fẹ bo	Buy a tin of camwood too
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Towelị kpọ fẹ bo	Buy a towel too
Abị Timi waị bo-o	Come back, Timi
Towelị kpọ fẹ bo	Buy a towel too
Abị timi waị boo	Come back, Timi
Ị ta biri bị nagha-a?	Did you not hear that your wife has been cut?

(Armstrong 2020: 459–461)

In this song, the lover was not in the community when the young woman was cut and so he is told to come back. However, he should not forget to buy the things that are required throughout the period of the ritual such as camwood, a towel, and palm kernel chaff (used as firewood in traditional Ịjọ society).

Moreover, the ritual afforded members of a community the opportunity to know the identity of the lover of the one cut. Some young men and young women chose to keep their affairs secret in the early stages. This was why sometimes, even when the protruding stomach could no longer be hidden, people would still not know the identity of the young man who was responsible for the pregnancy. Unfortunately, the ritual would reveal something that had been a secret for months, as in the following song:

Timi mọ Ebiere mọ bụnụwarị	No one knew of Timi and
kịmị kpọ naa wẹrịmo	Ebiere's relationship
Otungbolowarị dọ	Silence was the mosquito net
Dọ, dọ, dọ	Silence, silence, silence
Otungbolowarị dọ	Silence was the mosquito net
Muguru-muguru-muguru	*Muguru-muguru-muguru*
Otungbolowarị dọ	Silence was the mosquito net
Bẹdị	Bed?
Wịnkị	*Winki*
Otungbolowarị	Mosquito net?
Yankiri-yankiri	*Yankiri-yankiri*

(Armstrong 2020: 461–462)

As shown in the song, there was silence in the mosquito net, as it were. The reduplicated onomatopoeic words *muguru-muguru* and *yankiri-yankiri* suggest the kind of sound the bodies of the lovers made in the act. *Winkị* is another onomatopoeic word that refers to the sound iron bedsteads make when one lays on the mattress, especially when making love. In the past, they were the kind of bed in vogue among the Ịjọ.

One obvious characteristic of the songs associated with the ritual is that they foreground the geographical location of the people. Expressed differently, the songs make reference to the fauna and flora of the Niger Delta region, such as the different species of fish, palm trees, and crayfish. In addition, figures of speech and sound are employed in the songs. For example, a widow who has been abandoned by a man after having relations with her is likened to rotten fish that floats on the water, something that is a common sight in the local lakes, streams, and rivers. And as earlier noted, euphemisms are used instead of calling the clitoris and labia minora directly by their names.

CONCLUSION

Female genital cutting, despite its obvious negative consequences, was a respected and popular practice among some Ịjọ ibe mọ in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region before it succumbed to pressure from Westernisation. The major reason why a woman was cut was that it controlled her sexual life before and after marriage. Even among those ibe mọ that practiced the ritual, there were some differences with regard to age, typology, and the attendant celebration. As a result of its hold on the people in the past, it would be hard to imagine the majority of women who went through the ritual telling someone that it

was a bad practice. Rather, many women still happily recall the time when it thrived. Because the ritual is no longer practiced, the attendant songs are no longer performed. As pointed out in the preceding paragraphs, some of the subjects expressed in the songs are sorrow, loneliness, the supernatural, and identity. Other songs give an idea of the items required for the ritual.

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NOTES

[1] This ritual was briefly discussed in my paper entitled "Traditional Ịjọ Poetry" in *The Literature and Arts of the Niger Delta* (Armstrong 2021).

[2] The term is normally rendered in English by the people as "clan". The plural form is ibe mọ. An ibe comprises a group of smaller communities that share strong kinship. The communities in an ibe, often thought to speak the same dialect of the Ịjọ language, are commonly founded by a man's male children (see, for example, Alagoa 2005 [1972]).

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TATA LIBA CEREMONY FOR RECONCILIATION AND HEALING (PALU'E ISLAND, EASTERN INDONESIA)

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Abstract: This article examines the Palu'e *Tata liba* ceremony with the help of multimedia research documentation, participant observation, and comparison with other local ceremonies. The form and performance, including reasons and effects, are described and analysed. On Palu'e, a person who is ill, or who has tried medicines without results, wonders if he/she has done something wrong according to custom or toward fellow human beings, and can request one of several ceremonies or healing genres. *Tata liba* is integrated into a holistic system of general health and can also be performed preventively for good feelings and the maintaining of good relations. The ancestors are called upon with ritual language, shown to exhibit semantic parallelism, to heal the participants' suffering relations and possible ill health. The overcoming of negative feelings is symbolically displayed by wiping the participants with water, throwing rice grains behind the back, and spitting in a coconut bowl. The main objective is to achieve harmony within or between families, and there is no argumentation or chronological issues producing a win-win situation.

Keywords: ancestors, folklore, healing, medical anthropology, Palu'e, reconciliation, semantic parallelism, traditional ceremony

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the Palu'e *Tata liba* ceremony and analyses how it is used to resolve conflicts or heal relations, and reveals how it forms part of a holistic system of general health and wellbeing. For an outsider it might seem odd or superstitious to use a ceremony for conflict resolution, but with the allegedly high success rate due to time-honoured cultural roots there is reason to consider the approach seriously. A successful method of conflict resolution should preferably, whether in theory or practise, be beneficial for all sides of the conflict. That traditional or cultural approaches can be useful in dealing

with conflicts is no news; studies from around the world have shown that customary approaches to conflict resolution have positive outcomes. For example, Rajesh Choudree (1999: 11) reports for South Africa the importance of social relations and that the conflicting parties strive "to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate disputes" – in short, to mend relations rather than to win or lose. Wolff and Braman (1999: 45) write in a similar vein about Micronesia: "Generally, a traditional Micronesian settlement results in a genuine closure, whereby two disputants become friends and are able to coexist again. These settlements often involve restitution..." Geographically closer to this investigation, in Papua, Undinus Kogoya (2013: 11) finds that disputants tend to be unsatisfied with court settlements, and prefer settlements based on customary law: "settlement of conflicts between individuals that can satisfy both parties needs to be considered. … initially tribal wars occurred because of conflicts between individuals."[1] Kogoya's sources all provide examples of the function of ceremony and wiser elders or ritual officiates in reconciliation.

This account of *Tata liba* builds on the author's 2014–2016 research documentation of the Palu'e language (*Sara Lu'a*) and oral traditions,[2] which covers a wide spectrum of sources and narratives. The local beliefs correspond to what Pickering (2017) refers to as 'islands of stability', where the Palu'e culture forms one in a multitude of knowledge system constellations (ontologies) and the classical Western science paradigm forms another. The latter has, after the challenges from developments in quantum physics, been forced to take an ontological turn toward an acknowledgement of multiple worlds, which in short means that there is more than one paradigmatic way of understanding the world. Nevertheless, the discussion of *Tata liba* situates the ceremony within the larger system of Palu'e belief and ritual in the hermeneutic-semiotic way, mostly comparing from within because this is a first study. The method is ethnographic, qualitative, and linguistically informed (see Danerek 2019), using primary sources and verifiable data in the form of recordings with interlinear annotations produced with the methods and underpinning theoretical considerations of documentary linguistics (see McDonnell & Berez-Kroeker & Holton 2018) and made available at the Kaipuleohone Digital Ethnographic Archive.[3]

I was first made aware of this ceremony and how it is used to reconciliate quarrelling families/parties by my former assistant and local partner Ratu. He contributed an audio recording (handphone) he had made for his own records in 2012 and provided contextual notes. The first time I witnessed *Tata liba* myself was during a short visit to Palu'e Island in 2018, and on the most recent visit in April 2021 I requested to have the ceremony performed at my former host's house. Both occasions were video recorded. Another recording of the ceremony was made in 2019 by my host Pitu Sopune, a Palu'e man who kept the previous

project's sound recorder and DSLR camera. Pitu's own recent experience of the ceremony was also audio recorded. The mentioned recordings are the primary data, together with field notes and participatory observation. To understand *Tata liba*, the following working questions were used: What form(s) does the *Tata liba* ceremony take? For what reasons is it performed? Who leads the ceremony and who participates in it? What materials or ritual agents are used? What is spoken and how (semantics of form and content)? What is the function of the ceremony? Is *Tata liba* a shamanistic ceremony?[4]

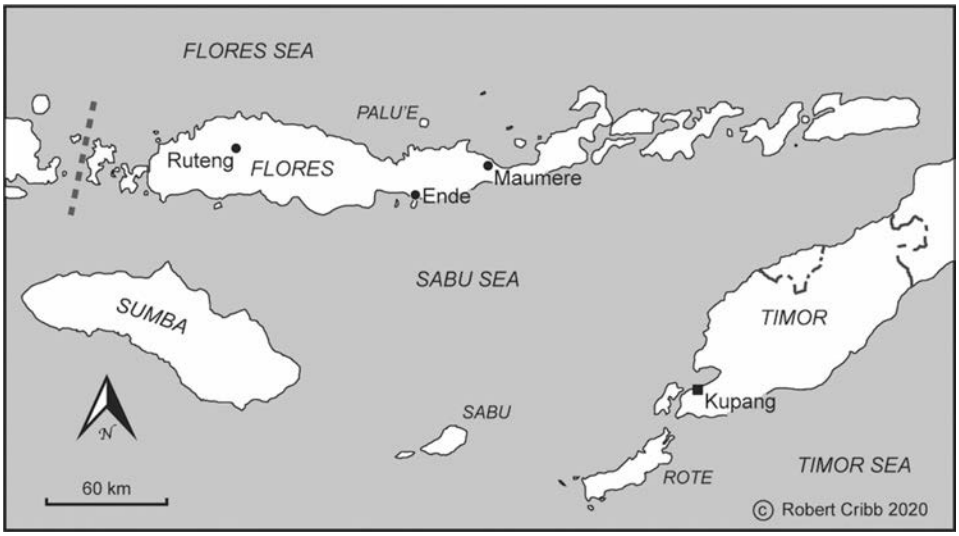

Figure 1. *Map of the eastern Indonesian province Nusa Tenggara Timur.*

PALU'E AND CEREMONIAL HEALING

Palu'e (*Lu'a*) is a small volcanic island, approximately seven kilometres wide in each direction, located near the coast of north-central Flores, the land of the Lio (Ende regency), a cultural-linguistic group who are closely related to the Palu'e. The island's approximately 10,000 inhabitants are traditionally horticulturalists, but the men often fish and do seasonal work outside of the island and, since the 1980s, have migrated to Batam or Malaysia for work. There are limited work opportunities for both men and women in the eight local *desa* (village) administrations and health care clinics on the island, which is a municipality under the Sikka regency (Maumere). On Palu'e, the local language *Sara Lu'a* is spoken more often than the national language, Indonesian (Ind. *Bahasa Indonesia*).

Catholicism was introduced to Palu'e during the 1900s and by the end of the century almost 100% of the population was converted. Palu'e ancestral customs, *adha* (Ind. *adat*), are still practised alongside religion, particularly the water buffalo ceremonies and the dowry system that ties houses, families, and alliances together in reciprocal exchanges of masculine and feminine goods between wife-givers and wife-takers. The ancestors belong to a category of 'metapersons' (Graeber & Sahlins 2017) who are at least as feared as the one (or those) of the so-called modern religion.[5] Palu'e consists of a dozen 'ceremonial domains', lands with borders under a politico-ceremonial authority, of which seven, more interior, 'domains of buffalo blood' adhere to five-year agricultural cycles (cf. Vischer 1992).[6] The cycles begin with a large-scale ceremony where a young water buffalo is brought to the island. About five years later, depending on which domain, the full-grown buffalo(es) are sacrificed as atonement and for fertility at the ceremonial centre for the benefit of the entire domain. The Palu'e worldview emphasises fertility, ancestors, and descendants, and is characterised by dualism, particularly between male and female forces, such as the instable category of heat (male) and cool (female).[7] Excessive heat is negative, and a main theme or aim of ceremonies is to get rid of that heat (*puna melu* 'to cool') and return a harmonious condition. The most potent cooling agent is the blood of the water buffalo, followed by the blood of pigs, goats, dogs, and fowl. Coconut juice, money, unhusked rice grains (called *siwe*), and eggs are also common cooling agents.

Palu'e culture is polite and hospitable, with strong ties between families, which must be maintained also when family members work faraway, often for several years. The Palu'e believe that acting and speaking wrong to fellow human beings will impact negatively on the self, which like the breaking of customary rules may invoke the wrath of the ancestors, who can strike with disease, accident, withholding of livelihood, or even death. There is also the concept of *dhura* 'pact', a pact or a peace agreement between larger groups, clans, or cultural groups. For instance, violence between the allied Ndéo and Kéli domains is strictly prohibited by such a pact, and people believe it would bring disaster to assault a person of the other domain. In everyday life there is ancestral intervention. For instance, once (in 2015) when a baby, a grandchild of my hosts in the hamlet Nara, had been crying continuously for a couple of hours after sunset, the grandmother remembered that she had forgotten to 'give food' at her mother's grave located near a neighbouring house, which she normally does every evening before supper. After she had offered the food, the baby stopped crying immediately. Was it coincidence, an anthropological social fact, or was it an intervention by the deceased ancestor (the child's great-grandmother), an active agent in the local 'island of stability' reality paradigm?

Local medicine and healing practices live side by side with modern medicine and a rudimentary healthcare system. The Palu'e venerate the deceased, the ancestors. The ancestors are invoked with the binary word pairs *Hina hama* (lit. 'mother father') – *Pu mori* (lit. 'grandparent great-grandparent'). The supreme being, *Hera Wula Watu Tana*, is rarely and primarily invoked by the *lakimosa*, the domain's ceremonial-political leader(s), in ceremonies pertaining to the whole of the land, or in curses. The head *lakimosa* are also shamans, according to common definitions, although their capacities differ; the *lakimosa* influences the world of spirits, practices divination and healing, and enters a trance-like state (without hallucinogens) during the buffalo sacrifice. *Lakimosa* is a hereditary office on the male side and the chief *lakimosa* is the one who is entitled to cut the throat of the buffalo.

The following rituals provide a comparative context for the *liba* rituals and represent traditional beliefs. *Ka tara* (lit. 'eat illness') is a common ritual performed for somebody who suffers from a chronic disease or who cannot be cured with other treatments. It is usually performed on the level of the (lineage) House for a member of the larger family. A pig is consumed communally, and it is implied that the disease is transferred to the pig or that the patient's health is returned through ancestral mediation in exchange for the blood. *Ka toi dhubu* is basically the same ritual as *Ka tara* but performed at the ceremonial centre (*dhubu*) by the *lakimosa*. Traditionally it is believed that diseases, and even accidents, result from the transgression of ancestral rules, and a person who feels that he or she has done something wrong, perhaps cut a tree during the period of *bhijie* ('prohibition'), can ask the *lakimosa* to perform *Ka toi dhubu*. The body and mind of the patient are then said to 'be put back in place' (*bati* or 're-tightened'), a word that is also used to describe the effects of *Tata liba* on the participants.

Ngiru huru is the most common ethno-medicinal genre. *Ngiru* (lit. 'to spit') here means to apply areca nut and piper betle fruit, masticated with other plant material, on a patient who is afflicted by *huru*, referring both to symptoms and a type of curse that protects crops from theft, which causes the same symptoms. Often, the practitioner of *ngiru huru*, generally of *Wai walu, hana halo* 'society (commoners)', utters *Bhulu wa'o*, a type of prayer which is also used in the *Liba* and *Ka toi dhubu* ceremonies. The two words carry the same meaning, 'to call upon', and can serve as an example of the binary dualism and parallelism of ritual language, called *Pa'e*, the speech genre to which *Bhulu wa'o* belongs. The full pair reads *bhulu pu, wa'o mori* (lit. 'call on grandparent, call on great-grandparent'), where *pu* and *mori* stand for *Hina hama pu mori*. To mention the one invokes the other. The ancestors play a role in every ceremony and the linguistic-magic component is crucial; without it there is no ceremony, and ceremonial authority derives from the ability to *Pa'e*.

TATA LIBA

The word *liba* means 'to unite' or 'to make whole', which describes what the *liba* ceremonies do. *Tata* means to sprinkle or splash (water). *Liba* is the generic name for the type of ceremony. The most common name is *Tata liba*, but the term *liba lae* is also used in some contexts, which should be more large-scale and involve the *lakimosa*.[8] But, generally, any trusted elder who is able to speak sufficient *Pa'e* can take the place of the officiate. *Tata liba* cannot be performed without the necessary language skills.

Tata liba can be performed for several reasons, mentioned as 'because of wrong X', which fall within the following categories:[9] 1. the breaking of the domain's customary rules (requires the *lakimosa*); 2. speaking wrong or denying human relationships; 3. disturbances from ancestors in the matters of dowry; 4. denying eating fish or eating them the wrong way (special for Hona village in the south of the island); 5. incest. Within or outside these categories one can also *liba* with nature, specifically the Sea, and for similar reasons as in the Hona area. The above reasons may also correspond with the following: inter-domain border warfare (has not occurred since 1989), political conflict (new, modern phenomenon), quarrels between settlements/villages, quarrels within the family, or domestic violence. It is also common, as will be shown, to make relations harmonious before departure from the island (usually work migration), or upon returning after a long period away from one's family and neighbours, without any specific quarrel being the reason to initiate the ceremony.

A *liba* ritual is usually initiated by someone who feels that he/she has done something wrong, perhaps the person is ill and thinks that it is because he or she has acted wrongly to another person or family. The steps leading up to the ritual are:[10] 1. Prior mediation, a person from one side of the conflicting parties, often the person who feels he/she has done something wrong, visits a person/family from the other side, and invites them to make peace. If the intention is to *liba*, chronology does not matter after this step; there is no more arguing about who began the dispute or why. 2. A person from the side who feels they have done wrong (or from any side if this is unclear) request the *lakimosa* or another able person to lead the ceremony. 3. Preparation of the needed materials and cooling agents.

Liba ceremonies are not unusual, performed several times a year in each domain, and are neither complicated nor costly. The author has found no reason to believe that the materials or the language employed, or other aspects of how the ceremony is performed, have changed for many generations. *Tata liba* is a living tradition, with fixed elements in a flexible verbal structure. In principle it can be performed by anyone, but few people are sufficiently fluent in ritual

language, so the task befalls either the *lakimosa* or an elder who is versed in ritual language. The materials used are: 1. water (fresh water unless the problem is with the Sea); 2. a coconut bowl; 3. cotton; 4. long piece(s) of bamboo, depending on the number of participants (not needed when the problem is with the Sea); 5. *siwe*, ceremonial rice grains; 6. an egg and rice grains are offered at an ancestor stone immediately after the ritual. 1–5 are essential if the *lakimosa* performs the ceremony; eggs and rice can be offered at the ceremonial centre.

***Figure 2**. Four participants throw rice grains behind their backs at the closing of the* Tata liba *ceremony. Two persons are symbolically present with their clothing, on the lap and in the arms of the two women (left). Facing them is the officiant,* Sosu du'a*, a trusted elder from the village. Nara, Palu'e 2018. Photograph by the author.*

Tata liba is led by a trusted elder or the *lakimosa*. The participants, both parties, sit in a line (or more than one if the participants are many) on a bamboo pole, facing east with their hands open. If a person cannot be present, their clothing can replace the person (Fig. 2) and be treated with water and spoken to as if they were there. The officiant takes the rice grains from a coconut bowl and distributes them into the hands of all the participants, who remain seated with their hands open throughout the ceremony. Speaking *Pa'e*, the officiant takes cotton, dips it in the water of a coconut bowl and wipes each participant on the forehead (five times), and then the shoulders, hands, knees, and the feet. After all the participants have been cleansed, they throw the rice grains in their hands behind them, an act called *siko*, toward the setting sun and the

west, without looking back. Next, each person spits saliva in the coconut bowl. The officiant discards the contents of the coconut bowl. Further, in *Liba lae*, the *lakimosa* offers money and/or rice and eggs to an ancestor stone. He will also oversee the slaughtering of a pig for a communal meal, normally provided by the party who sought mediation. There is a small, unfixed fee for the service of the officiant, especially if in some cases the *lakimosa* (from the *lakimosa* family) is the officiant and performs offerings at the ritual centre.

As extra or alternative material, the leaf of the *hule mila* plant may be used, at least to keep the rice grains. The participants kick the bamboo backward with their feet, standing up, after they have thrown the rice grains behind their backs and spat in the coconut bowl, which is obligatory. The officiant or a participant offers an egg and rice grains at the *rate* (a symbolic gravestone and ancestral dwelling) of the House. Water is, to the author's knowledge, only a cooling agent in this ceremony. It is called *wae rita,* referring to the water of the *Rita* tree (a large, yet unidentified tree species), but metaphorically meant, the water does not have to be taken from the roots of that tree. *Wae rita* is also a nickname for the ceremony.

The disposal of the rice grains behind the back, without ever looking back, and the spitting in the bowl are obvious symbolic gestures, which remove the negativity from the participants, caused, among other possible reasons, from coarse behaviour or harsh words uttered toward fellow human beings. West was the direction the original ancestors came from in the origin myths, and the direction everything negative is disposed toward in ceremonies, to disappear with the setting sun. The closing communal meal is also part of the reconciliation process; eating together is always important. The main, active part of the ceremony only takes a few minutes. Afterwards, if there has been a conflict or long neglect, people may hug each other.

Pa'e is another essential, non-tangible, component of *Tata liba*. It is part of the language's sign system, consisting of meaningful, metaphoric form and content. Only a few people master *Pa'e*, but the majority can grasp the meaning, which per design is never as clear as in everyday communication. The vocabulary itself is not separate from everyday language, only a few words have more archaic forms, but the word order of phrases is often different. *Pa'e* is an ordered form of speech with rules, uttered according to a certain rhythm, phrase by phrase, with elements of assonance and rhyming. Like mantra, *Pa'e* sounds different from everyday speech and bestows a sense of magic because of that, and it is understood that the ancestors listen to *Pa'e* – meaning that there is a referent beyond both the system of signs and the participants. Utterances in *Pa'e* are poetically composed of binary word pairs in semantic parallelism, full of metaphor, as is common in the ritual speech genres of eastern Indonesian

cultures, for which there already exists a substantial body of work: "[P]aired correspondences, at the semantic and syntactic levels, result in what is essentially a dyadic language – the phenomenon of 'speaking in pairs'" (Fox 1988: 1). The structure of phrases and couplets builds on fixed sets of binary word pairs (nouns, verbs, or adjectives, split over phrases) and parallelism between phrases and couplets. For instance, if a phrase or sentence mentions *wiwi* (lips),[11] the following, corresponding phrase must mention *lema* (tongue). Both words relate to speech or the speaker; to be influential is to have 'big lips' and a 'long tongue' (*wiwi ca lema lawa*). The two parts of a couplet often express the same thing semantically. Literal or word-by-word translations therefore make little sense, because the phrase or couplet forms one semantic unit, which is used in the ritual context and may have been chosen as tailored content for the participants.

In the recorded *Tata liba* ceremonies the ritual speech is a little bit different in each session. There is a component which refers to the specific participants and their problems, and another, the dominant part, the *Bhulu wa'o*, which is universal and almost a formula, but also this part is performed slightly differently by different officiates, and the same officiate does not necessarily utter *Bhulu wa'o* the same way every time, which the recordings show. The following is the transcript and free translation of the ritual speech act at a *Tata liba* ritual performed in 2012 in kampong Ndeo, Ndéo domain, recorded by Ratu (SD1-302). The example is highlighted because the ceremony was larger, involving more people than the other three ceremonies which were video recorded with a DSLR camera. The background to the ritual was an ongoing quarrel between the Pio Ware and the Ngaji Mude families. When after a few months a member of the Pio Ware family fell ill, the family made the decision to try to make peace with Ngaji Mude through *Tata liba*. The ceremony was led by Ndéo's *lakimosa* Ropi, but the traditional prayer was delivered by Sosu *du'a*,[12] an elder from the nearby Nara hamlet, because Ropi had only recently began serving as *lakimosa*, after a long stay on Java, and was not yet sufficiently fluent in *Pa'e*. Further interpretation follows the translation.

> *A'e te, pé'e hera sa hera wai cewi, meré wai rua a'e. Miu nu'ane wo tei lau nua e Nitu. Miu wo tei lau woga e Noa. Pé'e wiwi a'e leka ére meké u no'o weta. Lema ére bila u no'o naja. Leka a'e leka tembo tara lo peti. Ha'e téna, miu wo tei lau nua e Nitune. Miu wo noto lau woga e Noane. Aku ha'e wae ko aku ha'e rita u. Dhe wiwi hé'e weta, wiwi e weta, ka'a ngala... ka'a ngala bila no'o ata wiwi naja. Naja keli wiwine ka'a ngala bila no'o ata weta. Lae sepu seru a'e nununе. Pé'e leka.. naja leka dhengune dhaga u. Ana a'e leka limane dhali u. ... Sepu seru a'e nunu. Pé'e wiwi*

cala u leka ére dobho, leka no'o.. leka téki dobho leka ére.. leka ére lé. Kaju leka ére balu u. Cala ha'e te. Cepu seru. Hera a'e téna, weta no'o naja bo wiwine lele ha. Lemane bo ére wara, dhéne weta te cu'u palu no'o naja. Ata naja, bama lalane. Naja keli bo lau cu'u palu no'o ata weta. Ata weta dibho hojene. Wati kepa wai rua kami weta no'o naja dhu ko dhaga, lima ko dhali, kami mede weki no'o ata weta, bama lalane, tama dhibo hojene. Ére ke'é keli, pé'e lau mai ata weta, pé'e no'o cepu seru ko ha'e nunu. Ko pé'e dhengu dhaga lima dhali, ko pé'e tembo tara lo peti. Mede weki ata naja bama lalane, ata ama dibho hojene. Hera a'e téna, miu nu'ane, pé'e po kuri no'o kami u, bo tei lau ata dhanane, noto lau ata watune. Wae ha'e pa u. Liba melu u. Ko ha'e téna, weta no'o naja wiwine bomo ere lele. Lemane bo ka'a ngala bila u. Téki wo kaju, langa wo dhali, bu'u a'e téna tembone tara lone peti u. Wetane téki kaju e najane, langa dhali hanane. Hamane. Ére ke'é keli, naja u keli dhe téki kaju wetane, langa dhali hanane. Ha"e téna sago miu lau nua noto, lau nua e Nitune, lau woga e Noane. Mai dhi'o dhega no'o kami wo tei tetune a'e dhana wolone. Bhulu, wo pu a'e te tembone ére céwo, dhe tio lé Wae Rio, (nangu lé Nangu Nanga).

Here, perhaps the day since before yesterday, two nights ago. You elders who live in the house of Nitu.[13] You who live in the home of Noa. Perhaps these lips have split with the siblings (*weta* 'wife-takers'). The tongue has split with the siblings (*naja* 'wife-givers'). So now the body is ill, the person is sick. Now, you who live in the house of Nitu. You who live in the house of Noa. I am here with water, I am here to 'rita'. So that the lips of the *weta*, lips of the *weta* cannot… cannot split with the *naja*. The lips of the *naja* also must not split with the *weta*. In conflict here by the banyan tree. Perhaps so... *naja* then his neck was tied. The child here, then his hands were tied. ... Conflict by the banyan tree. Perhaps the lips have wronged, so took a machete, then with… and picked up the machete, and... and threatened. The wood has struck. Error here. Conflict. Today, *weta* and *naja* will have one pair of lips. Their tongues will be joined, so that our *weta* knows *naja* again. *Naja*, heal the path. *Naja* too will know *weta* again. *Weta* watch over the canyon. Tomorrow or the day after we *weta* and *naja* our knees tied, or hands tied, we hope for *weta*, heal the path, enter, watch over the canyon. Like that too, if from the direction of *weta*, if there is conflict here at the banyan. Or if the neck and hands are tied, or if the body is ill, the person is sick. Hope only for *naja* to heal the path, the father people watch over the canyon. Today, you great people, perhaps fed up with being behind us, will stay in another land, stay in

> another land. This water has made wet. United and cool. And now, the lips of *weta* and *naja* will be one. The tongue will not be able to split. Pick up the wood, roll up the rope, because now the body is ill the person is sick. *Weta* pick up the wood of *Naja*, roll up the rope of the child. The father. Like this too, *Naja* also pick up the wood of *weta*, roll up the rope of the child. Here and now at once, you live in the house, in the house of Nitu, in the home of Noa. Come all of you to us who live at the flat area here on the hill. Bless us descendants that we are healthy and harmonious and will bathe in Wae Rio (swim in Nangu Nanga).

In short, this is an appeal in *Pa'e* to both the participants and the ancestral spirits to make them aware that they should not be in conflict and must be reconciled. A person is ill because of the conflict, and the ancestors are asked to intervene and cure the victim. The participants are there to make peace, aware of their actions, some of them have spoken bad things about people from the other family. But from now on they will not repeat their harsh words or wrongdoings. They have been reunited: *Liba melu u* 'united (through ceremony) and cooled', makes it explicit that the excessive heat is being removed. The last sentence, beginning with *Bhulu*, is a request or prayer that the participants, especially the ill, be blessed by the ancestors to become healthy and harmonious. The word *pu* can signify both grandparent and grandchild. Here the author interprets it as 'descendants'. *Bhulu wa'o* always ends with the couplet *Tio lé Wae Rio; nangu lé Nangu Nanga*; the second part, which is invoked by the first, was not captured in Ratu's recording.

Both the second and third phrases invoke the ancestors. *Nua* and *woga* is a binary pair, *nua woga* means 'the home of a family'. *Nua e Nitu* 'the house of Nitu' and *woga e Noa* 'the home of Noa' are ancestral dwellings where the deceased reside.[14] Together the phrases constitute a couplet, always mentioned together in that order, which calls upon the ancestors. The ancestors are addressed three times with 'You who live in the house of Nitu. You who live in the home of Noa', not directly with *Hina hama pu mori*.

Meké and *bila*, both meaning 'to share, to split', here have a negative meaning in the context of previous speech, metaphorically mentioned with *wiwi* 'lips' and *lema* 'tongue'. These words are used in the three recordings together with *weta naja* (siblings, or the wife-taking and wife-giving sides of the family), who are the participants in the ritual and who by being addressed in this way are reminded of their relations. *Sepu seru* means 'conflict' and the terminology is only used in ritual language. Here it refers to the feud between the two families, and so do *dobho* 'machete', *lé (ngao)* 'threatening with machete', and *kaju ére*

balu 'hit with wood', which are most likely metaphorically meant, although one of them may have occurred; Ratu did not go into such detail.

This ceremony resulted in peace between the quarrelling parties. A few weeks later, the person of Pio Ware's family who had been ill for a long time recovered. The two families became aware of their mistakes and regretted their actions, because wrong actions have implications in the form of illness, if not accidents. They are no longer in conflict (at least as of a few years after the ceremony).

Sosu also officiated a *Tata liba* ceremony recorded in 2018 (SD1-303) at the house of my former host family. It was performed for at least six people, with four of them present physically and at least two symbolically, with their clothing, while all of them represented their families (Fig. 1). Head *lakimosa* Ngaji Pione conducted the ceremony at the same house for only four people in 2019 (SD1-304). The ceremonies were carried out in the same way, and for similar reasons, aiming more at the maintenance of good relations while a family member was working in Malaysia and a good feeling before departure, by reminding the participants that their family ties had to remain firm. *Pa'e* was different on each occasion, but Sosu's speech acts were largely the same, using the same metaphors, with one part adjusted for the purpose. Ngaji, who is fluent in this speech genre, used a partly different vocabulary with similar metaphors.

Figure 3. *Lute Wongga's (Lute, wife of Wongga) turn to be wiped with water on her forehead five times by* lakimosa *Ngaji. The amount of water was a bit excessive, therefore the laughter. Nara, Palu'e 2019. Photograph by the author.*

One can also come in conflict with nature, particularly the Sea in the land of the fishing village Hona. SD1-305 is a short recording of Paji, a woman from Hona, who speaks about the custom of *liba* in Hona. As mentioned, the local customary rules there concern primarily the consumption of fish, more precisely, the denial of it, which is prohibited by the ancestors. As Paji explains, a person who has eaten even the smallest portion of fish and later denies it, or has thrown away fish, falls ill and must *liba* with the land, *Liba dhana Hona*. The transgressor/patient must come to the local officiate (Lelu), or an able person like Paji, who will reconcile them with the Sea and the Hona territory. Hona does not have a *lakimosa* and a ceremonial centre of its own; there it is senior women like Lelu and Paji who are versed in custom and ritual language and conduct the ceremony. *Liba dhana Hona* is basically the same ritual as *Tata liba*, but it can be performed also for only one person. The ritual speech is similar, but with some specific content for Hona. The *Bhulu wa'o,* after the participants have been wiped with water, can begin like this: *Kau leka putu leka peké. Pé'e mo kau ka cala, ninu cala lae dhana Hona* (You have become ill and hot. Perhaps you ate wrong, drank wrong in the land of Hona). The ritual request asks that the ancestors cure the transgressor and bless him or her with health.

A transgressor of the Hona ancestral rules must not necessarily perform *liba* in Hona. Pitu Sopune, who recorded Paji in 2016, was asked by the author in early 2019 to record a *liba* ceremony. It is with some irony that a few months later he spent several days in the south of the island, doing work and eating plenty of fish with relatives and friends (recorded interview, but not uploaded to the collection). Pitu also did work and ate fish in the land of Hona. Soon after he returned to his village in the Kéli domain he fell ill with recurring heavy headaches and was unable to do any work in spite of taking medicine. After a couple of days, it dawned on him that he had in some way denied eating fish in Hona on his way back home. Pitu went to the Kéli head *lakimosa* to ask for help. Ngaji confirmed the cause, denying eating fish in Hona, and the ceremony, using sea water to reconcile Pitu with the environment and ancestors of Hona, was carried out as soon as possible. Pitu became healthy immediately after the ceremony, and the headaches did not return. A month and a half later Pio recorded the *lakimosa* officiating the mentioned *Tata liba* ceremony at his parents' house (SD1-304).

Although *Tata liba* is essentially a ritual of reconciliation, it can also be done preventively, as two of the mentioned recordings suggest; to my knowledge there had not been any specific quarrel, but we all know that human beings can be annoying to one another in daily life. On a five-day visit to the island in early April 2021 I requested to have *Tata liba* performed. This was after I had submitted this article and I was not there to research *Tata liba*. It had been

a long time since my last visit, about 1.5 years, and my leg had been severely wounded from cellulitis (the medical diagnosis) and mistreatment, and the scars kept annoying me; I was not fully healed. Some locals had even thought that I was already lost or dead; add to this the WHO global corona pandemic, which was keeping us all in a limbo, and that it is unsure when we will meet again. In early 2020 local friends had asked a 'wise man' (Ind. *orang pintar*, or *dukun*) for divination, based on a photograph of my wounds. The man saw that I had done something wrong according to the custom of one of the Palu'e domains (unspecified), which seemed unplausible to me, who think I know the medical reasons. Anyhow, I wanted to make good with the environment and my local hosts and friends, and the ceremony can be performed preventively for the maintenance of good relations. I had never quarrelled with my hosts about anything, but there had been times when I felt that the host family was a bit annoying, and the reverse, but that was all.

The location, the house of my former hosts Wongga and Lute, was chosen because I had stayed there during my first field trips; my local 'origin house', so to speak. The first morning of my visit I went to Lena Lue Paso, the wife of the deceased *lakimosa* Paso (1927–2005), who hereditarily had been second in charge and had wielded considerable authority, until this day.[15] Lue is one of the persons who performs this ritual in the Kéli domain, and I was recommended to go to her, if not the head *lakimosa*, Ngaji. The authority of the third person, Sosu *du'a*, does not reach the domain's ceremonial centre. I could also have chosen to have the mentioned *Ka toi dhubu* ceremony performed, and through Lue I would reach the ceremonial centre too, as she has the authority to make a post-ceremony offering there. In addition, Wongga, the former host and father of the house, and his younger brother Pitu, were suffering from arthritis at the time and had been staying in bed for over two weeks. They were planning to request the *Ka toi dhubu* ceremony because the medicines and herbs they had consumed had not made them recover. Another reason was that a couple of weeks earlier, before the onset of debilitating pain, they had done some renovation and moved the House's *kuku lolo*, a box containing bundles of cut hairs and nails from the deceased of their family. The family had neglected to ask permission, by way of a simple cooling ritual, whether sacrificing a chicken (blood) or uttering some *Pa'e,* and offering an egg and ceremonial rice. They saw this error as a possible reason for their current state of unhealth. Three days after the *Tata liba* ceremony *Ka toi dhubu* was performed for them by the same Lena Lue. She offered an egg and rice grains at the ceremonial centre, and a young, yellow chicken was set free there, while at the house a young pig was slaughtered, grilled, and consumed by the family and some neighbours-relatives.

Tata liba was performed in the late afternoon of 8 April 2021 (Fig. 4) like the previously mentioned ceremonies, same ritual materials, and similar *Pa'e-Bhulu wa'o* with equivalent metaphors and a little tailored content, noticeable with the mentioning of my local name (Cawa). The ceremony was recorded on my handphone by Flory, Wongga Lute's youngest son (SD1-320). Sitting on the bamboo facing the east are Pitu Sopune (Flory's elder brother), Lute, Lebi (Wongga and uncle Pitu's younger sister), the aunties-neighbours Meli, Punga, and Nona. Wongga and uncle Pitu were symbolically present on my lap in the form of two shirts. A few other neighbours and children observed the ritual, commenting and joking. When a rooster crows (*manu koko*) during the ceremony it is a good sign that the ancestors receive the request/ceremony, and the rooster crowed several times.

Figure 4. *Lue Paso wipes the author's limbs with water (*wae rita*) during the* Tata liba *ceremony. Nara, Palu'e 2021. Still image by the author from SD1-320.*

Tata liba is often followed up with an immediate offering of egg(s) and ceremonial rice, and a little money, on the ancestor stone (*rate*) located outside of the house. But here, Lue spoke and offered to the ancestors by the *kuku lolo* inside the house just prior to the ceremony. After the ceremony I accompanied Lue

to her house in the adjacent village where she spoke *Pa'e* and offered eggs and ceremonial rice by the *lakimosa* family's *kuku lolo* and inherited ceremonial artefacts, which is equivalent to an offering at the ceremonial centre. As for the results, I had a happy, smooth stay and managed to do what I wished to do, and left the island with a lasting good feeling, but it did not noticeably speed up the healing process of my scarred leg. Also, while I cannot say that my local relations were improved, because they were never in a poor state, that good feeling surely had something to do with the mutual support and display of care through the participation in the two health-related ceremonies and spending time together.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this article is on describing and understanding the *Tata liba* ceremony in its local paradigm, drawing on other health-related local ceremonies, particularly *Ka tara* and *Ka toi dhubu*, where a patient's illness is cured by sacrificing a pig and eating a communal meal. The latter involve offerings at the ceremonial centre by the *lakimosa*, just as the *lakimosa* can do after having officiated *Tata liba*. The two ceremonies have similar value or effects, and in some cases either of them is appropriate, but *Tata liba* pertains more to human relations and *Ka toi dhubu* more to the customs of the land.

Traditional ceremonies can be used as viable alternatives to modern institutions for conflict resolution, and the introduction mentions a few shared enabling traits. *Tata liba* is a time-proven ceremony oriented towards reconciliation, including the maintenance and improvement of familial and social relations. The main objective is harmony, to *liba* means to become one, and *Tata liba* restores peace and harmony in families and communities by overcoming animosity and negative feelings. Reconciliation is not achieved through argumentation or chronological issues, but through the ceremony itself, which aims at a better future together. The mutual relationship is emphasized, with *weta naja* ('family' in its wide sense) in the quoted examples, and the participants are reminded to not become separated by quarrels. What unites and reconciles the participants is the belief in the living dead, which also invokes a shared past. The informal context, which is understood by the community, enables participation and the resolution of the problem. The atmosphere is relaxed and the ceremony neither takes much time nor does it need much preparation, unless the participants are many as in the first example. The traditional structure is familiar and the approach is less frightening than a court or any institution or approach which focuses on chronology and right or wrong. Furthermore, there is no issue of restitution, but a win-win situation for all sides or participants. The resolution

mechanisms based on the principle of mutual respect, internalised by the community, produce positive results. The main function of *Tata liba* is to heal the impaired bonds between people, removing feelings of revenge or anger. In the villages of the small island the border between friend and family is blurred, and alliances exist between families to help each other with the continuous dowry exchange. Life becomes difficult under such close conditions if there is tension and potential conflict.

Tata liba is simple, the only difficult ingredient is *Pa'e*, a poetic speech genre characterised by semantic parallelism, with rhyme, allusion, metaphor, and salient features of mantra. The meta-human persons called upon (*Bhulu wa'o*) interfere in the ceremony and daily life, and they listen more to *Pa'e* than to common language. *Pa'e*, a bit strange and archaic, has a noticeable sublime, mantra-like effect on the participants, but the metaphors are understandable and remind the participants of who they are and how they should live together.

Tata liba is neither a shamanistic ceremony, if shamanism must involve an ecstatic state of the officiate, nor must the officiate of *Tata liba* be a shaman, which the head *lakimosa* is, unless any officiate can be defined as a shaman. The main requirement to officiate is linguistic ability, and that is how a non-*lakimosa* can perform the ceremony. Spiritual forces influence and sustain Palu'e social life, also through *Tata liba*, in which the deceased are called upon to heal the participants' suffering relations and consequential ill health, and this is the shamanistic element.

Tata liba, mainly a ceremony of reconciliation, is also a healing ceremony for health. The healing or improvement of social and familial relations has a positive effect on human health, just as the reverse can be detrimental. Palu'e medicinal practises and healing are holistic, like they are in indigenous cultures around the world; neither the individual nor the solutions to health problems are set apart from the community and the Universe. The elaboration shows that the Palu'e believe that the human's behaviour toward fellow human beings or the land influences their health, including that of the family's. The values of social cohesion, harmony, openness, peace, and humility flow through the mediation and the ceremony. After the conflicting parties have had a ceremony, perhaps hugged one another, and shared a meal together, they feel relieved and happier. In the Palu'e universe, and likely elsewhere, this can cause the ill to recover. The feel-good, and even recovering from illness, is understood also by people with modern ontologies, which acknowledge the link between psychological and physiological wellbeing. What is more difficult to understand from that perspective is the ancestral intervention, which like the rest is understood as placebo, because it occurs in another paradigm. On Palu'e, people often take both herbs and modern medicines for various symptoms, and if it does not

help, there is the option of the ceremony, which reveals a pluralistic health system. Pitu, according to the culture's 'island of stability', had transgressed the ancestral rules of Hona and had to make peace with the environment and the ancestors of Hona. This case and others mentioned confirmed that when neither pharmaceuticals nor herbal remedies bite, the cause of pain or illness is sought in one's actions or behaviour, and the solution in a ceremony.

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ARCHIVAL SOURCES

SD = Stefan Danerek Collection Palu'e Audio. Kaipuleohone Digital Ethnographic Archive. Honolulu: University of Hawaii. Available at https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/38830, last accessed on 17 February 2022.

NOTES

[1] All translations are by the author.

[2] The Indonesian definition of 'oral traditions' (*tradisi lisan*) is similar to Western definitions of 'folklore'. It refers specifically to non-written traditions which have existed for several generations, or at least 50 years (see MPSS 2015). The study of oral traditions (*kajian tradisi lisan*) is an academic field/study program at Indonesian universities.

[3] Items in the Stefan Danerek Collection Palu'e Audio typically consist of a WAV-file, an EAF-file with annotations, sometimes one or more JPG-files. Video clips are compressed to MPEG (MP4). EAF annotation files open with the computer software ELAN (2022). Items are numbered consecutively upwards from SD1-000.

[4] A shaman is a "person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits ... . Typically such people enter a trance state during a ritual, and practise divination and healing" (OUP 2021).

[5] "Human societies are hierarchically encompassed – typically above, below, and on earth – in a cosmic polity populated by beings of human attributes and metahuman powers who govern the people's fate. In the form of gods, ancestors, ghosts, demons, species-masters, and the animistic beings embodied in the creatures and features of nature" (Graeber & Sahlins 2017: 2).

[6] Michael Vischer's dissertation about origin structures in the Palu'e domain of Ko'a includes a wide ethnographic description of Palu'e.

[7] See James Fox (1989: 44–48) for comparisons with other eastern Indonesian peoples.

[8] Personal communication. Ropi, *lakimosa* of Ndéo, 2014.

[9] Personal communication. Mangge, a Kéli elder (Nangahure, November 2019).

[10] Ratu interviewed *lakimosa* and elders of Ndéo in 2014.

[11] *W* should be pronounced /v/.

[12] *Du'a* is honorific for elders.

[13] The word *nu'a* is a respectful form of address (lit. 'rich'), here given as 'elders'.

[14] The genitive *hé'e* is shortened to *e*.

[15] A folkloristic anecdote: At Lena Lue I was greeted friendly, had coffee and chatted in her kitchen. I stated my intentions and went to her husband's grave, next to her house, to light a candle, a Palu'e tradition. I spoke some improvised *Pa'e* according to my humble ability, explaining that I wanted *Tata liba* performed by his wife and that I wished my own and my local family's and friends' good health. After this I returned to Lue's kitchen, leaving behind my host Pitu and a grandson of Lue's by the grave, sitting chatting. A few minutes later Pitu ran to Lue's kitchen and reported that the grandson had seen the fire of the candle extinguish, then chatted with Pitu again, and when he looked behind his back a minute or so later, the candle was burning again. He swore, crossing his chest to Pitu that it happened. A good sign.

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FICTIONAL FOLKLORE: ON THE PAREMIOLOGY OF *A GAME OF THRONES*

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Abstract: In this article, the first work in the fantasy literature series, titled *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones*, by George R. R. Martin will be analyzed in relation to the author's use of proverbs, in order to determine the role that these play in the narration and what their features are. This choice seems appropriate for the analysis of folklore elements, such as proverbs, given the popularity of the series and its presumed contribution to the spread of phraseology.

In the analysis of this text, a rather interesting approach to proverbs emerges, one in which the author makes use of proverbs existing in the real world, as well as creates his own, *ad hoc*, for this literary composition. These occurrences seem particularly interesting and will be analyzed in detail to determine whether they produce the desired effect and whether they follow the expected use of proverbs in real life.
Keywords: *A Game of Thrones*, fiction, fictional folklore, paremiological creativity, paremiology, proverbs

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are ancient pieces of wisdom that have traditionally been handed down orally from generation to generation. This is unquestionably the primary way in which proverbial knowledge has spread for the better part of history. However, in the last few centuries, particularly from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, with the appearance of new modes of communication and media, the diffusion of, and access to, human knowledge has been greatly impacted. This phenomenon has affected all sorts of cultural elements but possibly even more those belonging to folklore as they are no longer reduced to a certain social group or geographical area but, in some cases, have acquired a much larger reach than ever before, contributing to an unprecedented cultural globalization. This applies to multiple cultural manifestations, and paroemias are a clear example of this occurrence. Therefore, the existence of well-known proverbs across different linguistic realities, a well-documented and acknowledged phenomenon that

has been studied by multiple scholars particularly in the context of European languages (see Morvay 1996; Paczolay 2002 [1997]), may lead us to sharing a global set of values that manifest in proverbs of universal application. This affirmation, in spite of its boldness, seems plausible as communication among peoples of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is more common now than it has ever been. Consequently, whereas for most of our history we could only rely on oral transmission, and later on written texts for the spread of knowledge, nowadays we have a myriad of audiovisual means for the sharing and attainment of knowledge. Some of them, for example literature, films, TV, social media, videogames, etc., have even made a global impact and have contributed to the spread of ideas, supporting Matti Kuusi's thesis that folklore "has become poplore" (1994: 105).

Even though, as stated above, the amount of media nowadays is unprecedented, this study focuses on the most traditional one: literature. However, the popularization of this particular literary piece, *A Game of Thrones* (Martin 2011 [1996]), could have hardly reached the heights it has without the HBO hit series. An example of this is the fact that such relevant personalities as former US President Barack Obama are among the self-proclaimed fans of the series (Simmons 2015). Another piece of evidence of the popularity of the show is the fact that on the day the series finale aired, Sunday May 19, 2019, 19.3 million people watched it on the platforms provided by HBO (Pallotta2019), which is indicative of how influential the series has become over the years. Yet, the book saga is not necessarily overshadowed by the popularity of the TV adaptation, as the over 90 million copies sold as of 2019 demonstrates (Barnett 2019).

In this paper, the use of proverbs in the first book of the series will be analyzed in order to determine the purpose they fulfill and how they contribute to making the narrative more solid, as well as creating such a well-thought-out universe of fantasy. Furthermore, the reason for the choice of this particular work lies in the realization of the clever use that the author makes of phraseology in general, often adapting existing idiomatic expressions to the reality of Westeros, the imaginary land where the action takes place, and paremiology in particular. In reading this work, one often comes across phrases that have a proverbial sound to them but which are not recognized as such by any authoritative reference work. Yet, it must be pointed out that this is not intended to be a collection of all the proverbs used in the book. Examples that are particularly enlightening will be analyzed in relation to the scope of the present work.

This creativity, together with its unprecedented popularity that causes fans to use expressions or vocabulary from the saga and even name their children after some of the most popular characters, makes the series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, as it is often referred to, possibly one of the most culturally influential

works in the last few decades and one that might have an impact on the proverbial lore of the English language and, by extension, on other languages in the world.

DETERMINING WHETHER SOMETHING IS A PROVERB

Throughout George R. R. Martin's books, even though I will focus exclusively on the first book for the sake of concision, many of the contributions of several of the hundreds of characters presented in each volume have a certain proverbial tone to them, which often sets off the radar of those who may approach any text with a certain degree of paremiological sensitivity. However, determining whether a certain expression is indeed a proverb is no easy task, as any paremiologist or paremiographer knows. The definition of proverb has quite blurry boundaries, which often become blurrier when comparing items across different phraseological categories. This is worsened by the fact that every scholar that has dealt with the issue has provided his or her own definition, all of which may agree on the main defining aspects but which also present diverging features that prevent a consensus for a universally agreed – upon definition of the proverb. Some of the most frequently cited defining characteristics of proverbs are their brevity, anonymous origin, syntactical independence, fixed and memorizable structure, dogmatism, aesthetical inclination, or figurative use, among others.[1] Yet, not every scholar cites the same ones and there may be discrepancies among their definitions. Moreover, the common practice of including items in a dictionary of proverbs that are not strictly paroemias and should be considered a different phraseological category also makes matters worse, often misleading the reader into believing that something is a proverb when, strictly speaking, it is not.

Bearing all of this in mind, different measures have been taken to isolate items that can be unquestionably considered proverbs. This has meant the omission of items that may come across as proverbs, but which do not meet all the requirements. As the intention of this paper is not to reevaluate the definition of a proverb or present a new one, only those items that meet all the requirements will be presented.

The easiest cases are those in which the narrator or the different characters identify their utterance as a proverb. These cases are not numerous, but there are some instances in which this happens, like the following:

1. "You know the saying, about the king and his Hand?" Ned knew the saying. "What the king dreams," he said, "the Hand builds." (Martin 2011 [1996]: 47)
2. "Dark wings, dark words," Ned murmured. It was a proverb Old Nan had taught him as a boy. (ibid.: 254)
3. *Dark wings, dark words*, Old Nan always said, and of late the messenger ravens had been proving the truth of the proverb. (ibid.: 399)

These are the three cases in which the author identifies an expression as a proverb and, remarkably, two of those cases correspond to the same proverb, "Dark wings, dark words".[2] Unsurprisingly, though, when one resorts to a dictionary to check whether those are indeed proverbs, there is no mention of either of them in any of the most relevant reference works in the matter. This means, therefore, that they are a creation of the author, who by doing so reaches a further level of linguistic complexity. The creator has taken into consideration even seemingly minor aspects of the text, in order to present a believable universe.

It is also true that quite often the person who uses a proverb includes a sort of introduction to it, which, on the one hand, helps identify it as a proverb and, on the other, reinforces the sententiousness associated with them. In the words of Wolfgang Mieder (2004: 132), "proverbs often are quoted with such introductory formulas as 'my grandfather used to say,' 'it is true that,' 'everybody knows that,' and even more directly 'the proverb says'." An example of this is when Lord Varys states,

4. And yet, it is truly said that blood runs truer than oaths. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 549)

Once a phrase has been identified as a proverb, we can see how it presents characteristics that are commonly attributed to paroemias. In this regard, all proverbs do not follow a pre-established structure. However, there are indeed structures that have a certain proverbial resonance to them or which manifest in multiple proverbs. An example of this is the preference for an impersonal construction introduced by a clause with 'it' as the subject. The reason for this preference might be to make the scope of application of a proverb wider, thus making it more general and reinforcing its figurative aspect and sententiousness. Examples of such proverbs found in the book are:

5. It is no good hammering your sword into a plowshare if you must forge it again on the morrow. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 591)
6. It's a poor wine merchant who drinks up his own wares. (ibid.: 795)

As stated in the introduction to this paper, and as the items of folklore they are, proverbs are expected to spread by word of mouth. Thus, we may learn a proverb that someone utters in conversation and add it to our own collection, thereby furthering our own paremiological competence (Sevilla Muñoz & Díaz 1997). This is indeed observed in the book in a number of significant instances. On the one hand, the proverb "Dark wings, dark words", as seen at the beginning of this section, is used by various characters throughout the book. The first character to use it is Eddard Stark on page 254, repeating it later on page 480. Additionally, the narrator uses it on page 399 and Maester Aemon, an intellectual and healer, on page 664. Therefore, the fact that different characters express the same idea in the exact same terms is indicative of a fossilized item and, hence, susceptible to being a proverb or other type of phraseological unit.

Another remarkable example of such an occurrence has to do with an item that includes the very title of the book under analysis: "If you play the game of thrones, you win or you die" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 488, 509, 629). This item, unlike the previous one, is not identified as a proverb anywhere in the book, but several reasons justify its inclusion here. If we take a look at the definition of the proverb provided by the most relevant paremiologist in the world, Wolfgang Mieder (1996: 597), we learn that proverbs are "concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk. More elaborately stated, proverbs are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorizable form and that are handed down from generation to generation".

According to this definition, nothing seems to prevent its inclusion in the catalogue of Westerosi proverbs. Moreover, the fact that it is repeated several times in the book by different characters literally, or by allusion to it, alluded to directly (Cersei, pp. 488, 629; Narrator, p. 509) or indirectly (Ser Stevron Frey, p. 794), seems to justify its consideration as a proverb here. All the other conditions proposed by Mieder, i.e., apparent truth, currency, elaborateness, shortness, wisdom/truth/morals/traditional views, fixed and memorizable form, are met by the utterance.

However, there is another characteristic of proverbs that is not included in Mieder's definition: the possibility of them being modified at different levels, despite their fixed character. Continuing with the previous example, this modification of proverbs appears in Maester Aemons' use of it, when he states, "My ravens would bring the news from the south, words darker than their wings" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 664), in clear allusion to the paroemia mentioned above.

Another occurrence of this phenomenon is to be found earlier in the book, when, on page 47, King Robert Baratheon is visiting Winterfell with all his entourage and at a dinner he asks Eddard Stark, who Robert wants to become

his main advisor or "Hand", if he knows "the saying, about the king and his Hand". To which Eddard, or Ned, replies that he indeed does, the proverb being "What the king dreams, the Hand builds". The conversation goes on and Robert explains how he once met a fishmaid who knew a different wording for the proverb: "The king eats, and the Hand takes the shit," which is accompanied in Robert's account of the episode by one of those introductory formulae mentioned earlier, "they say".[3] Thus, despite the difficulties that arise when assessing whether an utterance is a proverb, it is possible to find certain clues, like the addition of an introductory formula, which point towards it indeed being a proverb.

Apart from proverbs, G. R. R. Martin shows great craftsmanship when including other sorts of phraseologisms, many of which are the fruit of his imagination, creating an item that makes perfect sense in the context in which the action takes place. He achieves this by including references to entities that only exist in that world, such as animals, e.g., "to be stubborn as an auroch" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 352); occupations or pastimes, e.g., "to take the black" (ibid.: 66, 91, 262, 268, 561, 635, 726); or addressing beliefs and values of the peoples that inhabit Westeros, e.g., "seven hells" (ibid.: 156, 188, 258, 307, 342, 412, 555, 689).[4] Martin is equally detailed in the proverbs he includes. This is perfectly consistent with the notions of Matti Kuusi, one of the fathers of modern paremiology and one of the most remarkable folklorists of the last century, about the creation of proverbs, explaining how "[t]he composer of a proverbial saying naturally derives his symbolic images in part from his close everyday surroundings. But almost as important a source is the imagery of earlier proverbs; one could almost say that the folk aphorist saw his everyday surroundings through the window of traditional symbology" (Kuusi 1994: 142).

Among the proverbs found in this book, three distinctions can be made: first, we find real life proverbs that can be found in any well-known dictionary of proverbs; then there is a second group – that of real life proverbs that have been modified and adapted to the reality of Westeros; and finally, there are new proverbs that have been created by the author expressly to endow his fantasy world with a richer linguistic reality and what is referred to as 'fictional folklore' in the title of this paper. It is this last group that provides the most interesting insight into the author's creative process.

REAL LIFE PROVERBS FOUND IN *A GAME OF THRONES*

Finding proverbs in any work of literature would hardly surprise anyone. Depending on the author's fondness of proverbs and his or her paremiological competence, one might find them in varying amounts, depending on the piece under scrutiny. As might be expected at this point, G. R. R. Martin seems to indeed be quite fond of proverbs and uses them quite profusely. In this regard, even though the main point of this work is to analyze the new and creative uses of proverbs, we cannot overlook those everyday paroemias which exist in real life and which we would expect to find in any reference book.

The number of proverbs found in the book is vast. This is so not only due to Martin's supposed liking of proverbs, but also because the book itself is quite long, at around 800 pages. Consequently, listing all the proverbs included in the book would be tedious and would hardly make a contribution to paremiology. Nevertheless, completely omitting them is also not practical and, for this reason, a handful of examples will be provided to illustrate the kinds of proverbs that may be apt for use both in our universe and in the fantasy world created and portrayed by Martin:

7. Wisdom oft comes from the mouths of babes. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 626; Speake 2008 [1982]: 218)[5]
8. They taught me that each man has a role to play, in life as well as mummery. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 633; Wilson 1970: 918)
9. For fifteen years I protected him from his enemies, but I could not protect him from his friends. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 634; Wilson 1970: 176)
10. Expect nothing of Walder Frey, and you will never be surprised. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 639; Wilson 1970: 66)
11. Four eyes might see better than two. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 764; Speake 2008 [1982]: 123)

The first example is a canonical use of the well-known proverb "out of the mouths of babes", which means that children oftentimes provide insight into a matter despite their presumed lack of knowledge or boldness.

In the second example, Lord Varys, the Master of Whisperers in Kings Landing, makes an allusion to the proverb, "This world is a stage and every man plays his part". The same character makes another allusion to yet another fairly well-known proverb on page 634 in allusion to the proverb, "God defend me from my friends; from my enemies I can defend myself".

Catelyn Stark, Eddard's wife, advises her son Robb on page 639: "Expect nothing of Walder Frey and you will never be surprised", in clear allusion to the

proverb "Blessed is he who expects nothing for he shall never be disappointed". In this case the first part of the proverb as included in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* has been omitted. Yet, this does not prevent the inclusion of this passage in this section for two reasons. On the one hand, it is widely accepted that any item of folklore may manifest in slightly different ways, given their primarily oral inclination, which often causes them to be misreproduced or transmitted with small differences. According to Alan Dundes (2007: 58), one of the most relevant folklorists of the last few decades, "[f]olklore is passed on by means of person-to-person contact. And an item of folklore may be changed by different individuals in accordance with their own individual needs, the demands of a particular social context – the make-up of the audience – is it boys and girls, just boys, children and grown-ups, etc. or the requirements of a new age. So it is that each item of folklore is passed on through time, sometimes remaining the same, sometimes changing".

Thus, it is to be expected to find the same item of folklore with slight differences. These should not be considered completely different items, but as variants of the same. This can be observed in dictionaries of proverbs where the author includes different alternatives, usually in brackets, for some of the headwords under which the proverb has been sorted.

Another reason why this particular use of the proverb is interesting in the context it is being employed is the omission of the first half that says "blessed is he who". The reason why the author may have chosen to do this is the inevitable association of the wording used in the proverb with the Judeo-Christian tradition, which is completely alien to the world of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Thus, Martin succeeds in presenting a work that avoids nearly all obvious references that might hinder his portrayal of a world with its own folklore, including its own mythology, religions, beliefs, and traditions.[6] So much so that the author uses the expression "the apple of his neck" on two occasions (Martin 2011 [1996]: 436, 534) to refer to what is commonly known as "Adam's apple", in order to avoid making a reference to Christian mythology. Nevertheless, the omission of part of a proverb is a generally accepted characteristic of proverbs that does not affect their phraseological categorization.

Finally, the last example of a proverb existing in reality, included in the book, is that of "Four eyes see more than two", a proverb that due to the general character of the idea expressed in it and its overt simplicity, would not seem far-fetched to find it in equivalent terms in multiple languages, apart from the fact that it seems more suitable for use with a literal meaning, contrary to the general belief that "most [proverbs] are figurative" (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen 2005: 52).

Thus, as has been seen, it is not rare to find proverbs in this text that we would use in our daily communication, though they are sometimes subjected to subtle modifications that allow them to be coherent with the world portrayed in the book. These proverbs make up a significant percentage of the proverbs found in the book, clearly demonstrating the author's attention to detail and the care with which he creates his fictional folklore.

Apart from including real, verified proverbs in his work, Martin resorts to another clever technique: adapting proverbs to the language, context, and reality depicted in the book. In normal circumstances, this phenomenon often takes place within a culture and, as Kuusi (1994: 142) puts it, "the great majority of proverbs and sayings originate as analogical forms of earlier proverbs". However, Martin takes advantage of this acknowledged practice and implements it in his creative process. A few examples of this proceeding are the following:

12. The old courtesies die hard. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 285)
13. Listen to the crow call the raven black. (ibid.: 445–446)
14. And yet, it is truly said that blood runs truer than oaths. (ibid.: 549)
15. They knew times may change, but men do not. (ibid.: 663)
16. The hard truths are the ones to hold tight. (ibid.: 781)

In the first of the examples presented, we encounter a proverb quite similar to the well-known paroemia, "Old habits die hard" (Wilson 1970: 236). It must be pointed out, though, that the idea between the two versions is quite close and in some cases it may be interpreted in the same manner. Consequently, it may be adduced that what is happening here is a character, Ser Rodrik Cassel, making a modification on an already existing proverb. In order to prove this, other uses of the proverb in its canonical form in the book would be needed, which have not been found. Therefore, and knowing that it is a fairly common practice by the author, it would be a fair assumption to state that this is the usual wording for that proverb in Westeros.

The second example is possibly one of the funniest and cleverest adaptations commented here. Here, Pyp, a steward in the Night's Watch and therefore one of the few characters that uses proverbs and is not of a notable lineage, uses a proverb that sounds similar to a widespread saying found in several European languages, "The kettle calls the pot black" (Wilson 1970: 421). References are also made to "crows" as metaphors in other languages, such as Chinese or Mongolian (Paczolay 2002 [1997]: 321–322). It seems clear that Martin is knowledgeable of a wide variety of cultural and linguistic traditions and incorporates the components that serve his purpose. It is also interesting to note how proverbs from different linguistic origins may share some elements. Kuusi

(1994: 143) describes this phenomenon as such: "It is a question of a *formula*, a form, into which can be poured as many aphorisms that stress the shared fates of opposities [sic] as one wishes." Here the author manages to keep the main idea and part of the picture represented by the proverb, substituting the cooking utensils that are most readily used in the proverb for "crow" and "raven", black birds that play a major role in the society of Westeros, both as mail carriers and as a nickname for the members of the Night's Watch, who are often referred to as "crows" due to the black cloak they wear as their uniform. This is a clear example of the author's dedication to creating a realistic, credible, and linguistically salient world for his characters.

In the third example we find another proverb that seems to be inspired in a real-life counterpart, in this case, "Blood is thicker than water" (Wilson 1970: 69). This proverb teaches the importance of family ties over other types of relationships that we may have with people who are not our kin. In *A Game of Thrones*, however, Lord Varys, one of the most paremiologically prolific characters in the book, employs the formula, "It is truly said that blood runs truer than oaths". Here we come across two pieces of evidence that point towards it being a proverb that is either based on an existing one or expresses the same idea in similar terms. To begin with, the introductory phrase "it is truly said" is one of those items added to proverbs to heighten their sententiousness and authoritative character. Additionally, both paroemias use a comparison around the noun "blood", which is a symbol for kinship. Furthermore, what the modification over the original wording does is make the phraseme more apt for the values that we see represented in the society being portrayed, which is a feudal one in which allegiance to the right lord may prove to be capital, and where treason and plotting revenge are a common practice.

On page 663, we find a different kind of adaptation. Here, the author seems to have chosen the proverb, "Times change and we with them" (Wilson 1970: 825), and has modified it so that it actually means the exact opposite of the original paroemia. Here, Maester Aemon, who has already been quoted earlier, states, "They knew times may change, but men do not" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 663). Again, as happens with the first example in this section, it cannot be determined whether this is the proverb in its presumed canonical form or whether the character is manipulating a proverb that corresponds to one with which we are familiar. Be that as it may, there are notable differences between modern society and the society presented in the book, as well as the passing of time and its perception by the inhabitants of Westeros, reasons that may suffice to explain the appearance of a proverb that contradicts an existing one. This is a generally accepted characteristic of proverbs, as Wolfgang Mieder (1997: 410) observes, "it should not be surprising that there are such contradictory proverb

pairs … After all, proverbs are not universal truths but rather limited pieces of folk wisdom which are valid only in certain situations."

In the last example that will be commented here, we observe a case in which the author does not modify an existing proverb to adapt it to his narrative needs but, rather, uses the proverbial idea expressed in paroemias such as "All truths are not to be told" (Wilson 1970: 11) to embellish a rather bland saying, making it more literary. This happens when Jeor Mormont, Lord Commander of the Night's Watch, affirms that "the hard truths are the ones to hold tight" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 781), a sentence that due to the choice of words and the effect produced by the alliteration of /h/ and /t/ sounds make it come across not as something impromptu, but rather something corresponding to a fossilized use of language. This, together with the textual independence and the teaching purpose associated with proverbs, seems to justify its treatment as such.

As has been shown, G. R. R. Martin seems to have a liking for proverbs and uses them quite frequently. Yet, he does not limit the use of proverbs to widely accepted ones, or even to modifying them to the reality of his narrative and the necessities of the characters partaking in its development. As can be seen in the following section, he goes as far as to create his own original proverbs, unique to Westeros.

WESTEROSI PROVERBS

Even though some interesting uses of proverbs in the novel have been pointed out in the previous section, this is where the author surprises the reader, at least the reader with a paremiological interest, with the inclusion of original proverbs that do not exist in real life, or have any close connection to, or inspiration in, existing ones. I have chosen to name them 'Westerosi' proverbs after the demonym of the people of Westeros, the imaginary land where the action develops. Another reason for this choice is that it seems an inclusive enough term to encompass all the different nations represented in the book, from the northerners of Winterfell to the southerners of King's Landing and beyond. With a careful approach and through the analysis of clues, such as the origin of the characters using the proverbs, we might be able to draw some conclusions as to the alleged region where the proverb originated. However, it would be just mere speculation, impossible to prove, and may simply not be a relevant enough subdivision worth encumbering our analysis with such unfounded assumptions. Therefore, the analysis remains focused on the general use of proverbs by the different characters in the book, regardless of their origin or upbringing.

Regarding the linguistic items that appear in the book, which seem to be creations of the author, and which allow for classification as proverbs, we find the following:

17. The king dies … and the Hand is buried. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 628)
18. The king eats and the Hand takes the shit. (ibid.: 47, 628)
19. You're asking a lame man to teach a cripple how to dance. (ibid.: 213)
20. Dark wings, dark words. (ibid.: 254, 399, 480, 664)
21. When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die. (ibid.: 488, 509, 629, 794)

The first two examples presented are two variations of the same proverb, the original wording of which corresponds to the first of the two alternatives mentioned, which is originally uttered in the book by Eddard Stark. The coarser version, though, is actually recited by the king himself when he recounts how he "bedded a fishmaid once who told [him] the lowborn have a choicer way to put it" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 47). In spite of the inappropriateness of the anecdote told by the king, it serves to clearly establish one of the defining features of proverbs and folklore, which has also been mentioned at the beginning of the present paper: the possibility for them to appear in multiple variants with slight modifications. In relation to the meaning of the proverb, it seems to indicate the symbolic role that kings in Westeros actually play, whereas their representative, the "Hand", is in fact the person who deals with most of the governing issues. Later on in the book, Petyr Baelish, more frequently referred to as "Littlefinger", king Robert Baratheon's Master of Coin, strings together several such proverbs that depict the relationship between the King and his Hand when he states, "They say the Hand dreams the king's dreams, speaks with the king's voice, and rules with the king's sword", going as far as to ask, "Does that also mean you fuck with the king's–" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 378–379). These examples show the different ways in which proverbs are used in real life, where we may find multiple variants as well as conscious modifications of a certain paroemia.

The third example, "You're asking a lame man to teach a cripple how to dance", is uttered by one of the most popular and likeable characters in the saga: Tyrion Lannister, son of Tywin and brother of Cersei, Robert Baratheon's wife and queen of the Seven Kingdoms. Even though there are no apparent existing equivalents in English, the phrase has a certain proverbial sound to it, and the fact that it seems more apt for figurative use, another characteristic of proverbs, seems to justify its inclusion here, even if it is not directly identified as such in the text. The saying used by Tyrion seems to be reminiscent of

proverbs like "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Wilson 1970: 67), and "In the kingdom of blind men, the one-eyed is king" (ibid.: 428); however, expressed in somewhat more festive terms. Yet, the idea behind all the three seems to be similar: the prospects of relegating a certain task to a person who seems unsuited for it. It may be argued here, though, that the proverb under analysis is indeed based on the two to which it has been compared, or maybe other existing ones. However, the elements that make it up, their arrangement, and the ideas portrayed do not seem close enough as to be able to assert that they are indeed connected. Yet, it is also common to find that some ideas or beliefs manifest in multiple proverbs, both within a language as well as cross-linguistically, and that might be the case here.

The next proverb, "Dark wings, dark words" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 254, 399, 480, 664), is among the most repeated ones in the book, and is used twice by Eddard Stark (pp. 254, 480), as well as by the narrator (p. 399), and Maester Aemon (p. 664). The proverb is indeed identified as such in the book in the first use by Eddard and by the Narrator, both stating that "it was a proverb that Old Nan had taught [Ned] as a boy" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 254). Moreover, the phrase presents the bimembral structure often associated with proverbs as well as a certain rhetorical inclination by the use of an anaphora, with the repetition of "dark", and alliteration with the repetition of the /w/ sound in "wings" and "words", as well as the synecdoche according to which "wings" is actually used to name crows, the birds used in Westeros to transmit messages across the different settlements, crows being more resilient than pigeons. According to this proverb, the appearance of such a bird on the horizon was associated with bad news or, as we would say in the real world, "no news is good news" (Wilson 1970: 572). Nonetheless, the effort by the author to create proverbs that represent a fairly widespread idea but which are expressed in such a way as to include important items of the society and the culture he is portraying, is quite remarkable.

The last paroemia that shall be commented on in this section also appears multiple times and is used by different characters, i.e., twice by Queen Cersei as well as by the Narrator and Ser Stevron Frey, and, incidentally, is the phrase used as the title for the first book in the series, as well as the TV series that came later. Accordingly, the proverb goes, "When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die" (Martin 2011 [1996]: 488, 509, 629, 794). The proverb seems straightforward enough but is illustrative of the tensions and power struggles that act as the motivation for the plot of the book. Indicative of how the author left little, if anything, to improvisation and chance, is that the character of Cersei, the one portrayed as the most cunning and power-thirsty

in the story, is the one that uses it twice, which may have something to say about her paremiological competence.

As has been seen in this section, G. R. R. Martin not only manipulates existing proverbs to adapt them to his narration, as seen in the previous subsection, but he goes the extra mile and creates paroemias that seem to make perfect sense in context and come across as perfectly natural to the reader. This gives the narrative more depth and shows the lengths that he went to produce a linguistically sound piece of literature, as well as demonstrates a presumed proverbial inclination by the author, who, in order to avoid speculation and obscurity, goes as far as making his characters or the narrator identify certain phrases as proverbs, which may otherwise be misunderstood by readers, or pass to them unnoticed as such.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE USE OF PROVERBS IN *A GAME OF THRONES*

An aspect of the use of proverbs in *A Game of Thrones* that turned out to be quite interesting, apart from the author's creativity, is how proverbs are used by the different characters. To begin with, it must be pointed out that in this first book of the series, over 200 different characters speak at some point, of which a remarkable 23 different characters utter at least one proverb, either one that exists in real life or one invented by the author. There are cases, though, in which the same character uses multiple proverbs, something that may have been done deliberately by the author to present said characters in a certain way.

To some, the use of proverbs may be undesirable as they are often "associated with lower cultural levels and social inferiority" (Corpas Pastor 1996: 166).[7] Luis Martínez Kleiser, undoubtedly the most relevant Spanish paremiographer of the past century, affirmed in the preface to his *Refranero General Ideológico Español*, the most ambitious and thorough work published in Spanish to date:

> *Proverbs do not enjoy the esteem they deserve. To some, they are intellectual cheap ware; to others, a trivial pastime; to the latter, plebeian erudition; to the eyes of the former, literary stew from a greasy spoon. … Such contemptuous concepts are born from the scarce credit given to the people, their author.* (Martínez Kleiser 1989 [1953]: XIII)[8]

Jennifer Speake, another paremiographer, states that proverbs "came into disrepute … and are still sometimes frowned upon by the polished stylist"

(Speake 2008 [1982]: X). Finally, Wolfgang Mieder often quotes the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, as an example of this attitude against the use of proverbs in the higher ranks of society. The nobleman, in private correspondence with his son, stated that "a man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms" (Mieder 1993: 28). Despite this being a dated occurrence, and society having changed a great deal ever since, it may be indicative of a certain bias towards proverbs as being "an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; … which are so many proofs of having kept bad or low company" (Mieder 2004: 163, quoting the aforementioned epistle).

This belief is readily discarded by numerous solid arguments from scholarship, the most obvious of which may be the emergence of a subdiscipline of linguistics devoted to the study of proverbs. Another argument that challenges the classist conception that only a high degree of cultivation can allow one to reach the expected degree of refinement is the fact that the most relevant author in the English language, William Shakespeare, had "little or no learning but took his knowledge of the classics and modern languages from English books" (Wilson 1994: 181–182), which, obviously, did not prevent him from reaching the zenith of English literature.

In *A Game of Thrones* this judgment is constantly discredited as it is indeed characters from the highest ranks of society who use proverbs most frequently. This may be indicative of the author being unaware of the aforementioned bias towards proverbs or his willingness to challenge it, presenting a world in which proverbs are a sign of sophistication. Evidence of this is the fact that out of the 23 characters that have been found to use a proverb at some point in the book, only five come, presumably, from backgrounds in which an academic education was not pursued: Will, a ranger in the Night's Watch; Pyp, a steward in the Night's Watch; a wine-seller; Jhogo, a Dothraki warrior; Mirri Maz Duur, a healer and midwife; and Cohollo, another Dothraki warrior. These characters use the following presumed proverbs respectively:

22. My mother told me that dead men sing no songs. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 1)
23. Listen to the crow call the raven black. (ibid.: 445–446)
24. It's a poor wine merchant who drinks up his own wares. (ibid.: 591)
25. You are your brother's sister, in truth. (ibid.: 668)
26. All men are one flock, or so we are taught. (ibid.: 672)
27. We are blood of his blood. (ibid.: 673)
28. A khal who cannot ride is no khal. (ibid.: 678)

Here, except in the cases of Pyp, who is addressing a builder, and Cohollo, who is addressing Mirri Maz Duur, the majority of the uses of proverbs are made in conversations with characters of a presumed education, which supports the thesis of proverbs being a sign of cultivation in the book. Additionally, it must be pointed out that Jhogo makes two proverbial references (#25 and #28), something that may have been done intentionally by the author in order to present him as having a considerable paremiological minimum.[9]

Another feature that is given attention, in relation to the formation of proverbs, is the political and social organization of the different settlements scattered throughout the land. Above, we dealt with one of the most frequently repeated proverbs in the book, "If you play the game of thrones, you win or you die", and the different paroemias portraying the relationship between the king and his "Hand". In this regard, it can be said that the society depicted in the book is a warring one, in which an individual's fighting ability and dexterity with a sword takes precedence over intellect. This is also represented in the following proverbs:

29. Minds are like swords, I do fear. The old ones go to rust. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 251)
30. The man who trusts in spells is dueling with a glass sword. (ibid.: 736)

But the attention to proverbial detail in the book does not stop there and, apart from keeping a careful distinction between the phraseologies used by the characters with different affiliations, Martin also makes Westerosi wildlife the protagonist of different paroemias. Particularly relevant is the symbolism attributed to crows in the book, which are also featured in the following proverbs:

31. Listen to the crow call the raven black. (Martin 2011 [1996]: 445–446)
32. The crow is the raven's poor cousin. (ibid.: 662)

This is another feature of phraseology and paremiology that the author has succeeded in incorporating into his work, making the world around his characters shape the way they speak by the inclusion of phrasemes motivated by the Westerosi reality and which come across as perfectly natural and credible to the reader.

As can been seen, proverbs in *A Game of Thrones* play an important role in the portrayal of the people as the author intends to present them. Thus, apart from including proverbs that we may use on a daily basis, the author has come up with an interesting proverbial lore that contributes to providing its work with a phraseological and paremiological depth that most works of similar characteristics lack, articulating some paroemias around realities and beliefs

that are of major relevance to understanding the idiosyncrasies of the fantasy land where the action takes place. Moreover, and contrary to what seems to be a fairly widespread belief in our society, namely the association of proverbs with lower levels of culture and education, it is primarily characters on the higher rungs of the Westerosi social ladder that use them, which lead us to believe that in their context, the use of proverbs is seen as a sign of culture and refinement.

Finally, the use of proverbs in *A Game of Thrones*, their frequency of appearance and the careful craftsmanship by the author when coming up with them, together with the popularity of the saga and the television series that it inspired, may propitiate some sayings of those found in the book to be given "such currency that many a user forgets the original and assumes it to be proverbial" (Wilson 1994: 184). Going back to the parallelism with Shakespeare, with all due caution, if there was no writer "richer in proverbs than Shakespeare" (ibid.: 176), given his contribution to the expansion of English paremiology, G. R. R. Martin has made a contribution that can only be assessed with the passing of time. This can be seen in the degree of elaboration that the author has put into including proverbs in his narrative composition, going as far as including references to cultural elements that are particularly relevant to the different societies or nationalities that populate Westeros, such as horse riding for the Dothraki, a nomadic tribe inhabiting the Essos continent, which can be seen in example 28 and is repeated on pages 705 and 758. The fact that the same sentence is repeated almost word for word by the omniscient narrator as well as a character and the fact that proverbs, as the "smallest verbal folklore genre" (Mieder 1993: 3) they are, can manifest in various forms with slight differences among them seem to justify the treatment of this sentence as a Dothraki proverb.

CONCLUSIONS

As has been shown, *A Game of Thrones* is a piece of literature that is packed with proverbs and proverbial references, as well as many other elements that shape Westerosi folklore. It was chosen for this particular analysis for its present cultural relevance and widespread consumption, which make it one of the most popular contemporary literary sagas. This is paramount and may be instrumental in the popularization of some of the folklore present in it, which appeared to endow the work with a richer linguistic and cultural deepness, but which may eventually permeate into real life with the popularization of some of the items presented here, something that only happens in a handful of notable cases with literature or TV fiction. In the book we find proverbs that exist in real

life and which can be found in most proverb collections, as well as paroemias that have been devised by the author expressly for his literary composition. In both cases, the use of proverbs enriches the narration and plays an important role in providing the book with an elaborate linguistic and cultural framework.

Importantly, in the cases of existing proverbs, modified proverbs, and even original proverbs in this work, their use mimics the various uses we make of proverbs in our daily lives: from uttering a proverb in its canonical form, to repeating it with certain modifications, or even alluding to a well-known piece of proverbial wisdom. Furthermore, in relation to the characters featured in the book, a certain paremiological evolution can be observed in some of them as they use items that a different character has said to them previously, thus improving their paremiological competence.

Finally, one of the most relevant features noted in relation to the use of proverbs by the author and the characters in the book is the fact that they seem to be used chiefly by "upper-class" characters, thus clashing with the traditional and widespread perception of proverbs as the knowledge of the uncultured that some people have and overlooking their popular and folkloristic side. This paper has dealt with the first book in a series of seven books. An analysis of the following books in the series will provide us with an even deeper insight into the use of proverbs in the world of Westeros.

NOTES

[1] Cf. A. Taylor (1931: 3), B. J. Whiting (1932: 302), S. A. Gallacher (1949: 47), M. Kuusi (1957: 52), A. Dundes (1994 [1981]: 44), Corpas Pastor (1996: 148), W. Mieder (1996: 597), R. P. Honeck (1997: 11–12), or D. Dobrovol'skij and E. Piirainen (2005: 49–50).

[2] This proverb is used as the title for the second episode of season three of the TV series.

[3] This alternative for the proverb is reproduced in thought by Ned on page 628, again providing an instance of a character who has improved his paremiological competence by using a proverb that he learned recently.

[4] Note that different types of PUs have been quoted in this paragraph in order to provide a hint of the phraseological complexity and elaboration of this literary composition. Thus we have, respectively, a stereotyped comparison, a collocation, and a routine formula.

[5] In Matthew 21: 15–16 we read: "Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

[6] Here we may have to obviate the fact that one of the proverbs just mentioned, "Out of the mouths of babes", is indeed a biblical quotation from Psalms 7: 2 and Matthew 11: 16 (Speake 2008: 219).

[7] The original in Spanish reads, "*gran parte de las paremias (no así las citas y algunos tipos de enunciados de valor específico) se asocian con niveles culturales bajos y con inferioridad social*". The quote in the body of the text is my translation.

[8] The original reads: "*Los refranes no gozan de la estimación que merecen. Para unos, son mercadería intelectual de baratillo; para otros, pasatiempo banal; según éstos [sic], erudición plebeya; a los ojos de aquéllos [sic], guisote literario de figón. […] Nacen tan despectivos conceptos del escaso crédito concedido al pueblo, su autor.*" The quote in the body of the text is my translation.

[9] See Mieder (1993: 41–57), Tarnovska (2005), or Zurdo Ruiz-Ayúcar & Sevilla Muñoz (2016).

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PERSONAL SONGBOOKS: IMPRINTS OF IDENTITY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITHUANIAN WRITTEN CULTURE

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Abstract: With the growth of literacy in society, the tradition of personal collections of texts took root among common people in Lithuania in the second half of the nineteenth century. One of the more popular forms of vernacular literacy turned out to be songbooks which included copied texts of poems and songs. The article focuses on historical and sociocultural contexts which shaped the user of songbooks and formed the distinctive repertory of these collections. The main factors which motivated the distribution of songbooks were the growth of literacy and the increase of secular press. The dynamic of these social and cultural areas of life was also intricately connected with Lithuanian national movement. In the current investigation, songbooks are viewed as a form of self-expression of people and as a manifestation of their cultural and national identity. It has also been observed that personal collections of texts reveal the inclination of their compilers towards the content created and existing within the written tradition. Growing competences in literacy encouraged people to pursue and acquire values associated with the written culture as they were identified with modernity, progress, and authoritativeness. Essentially, songbooks created in the written medium and maintained by it reveal the selective approach of their compilers towards the oral folklore tradition and attest to the priority given to the folk literature of a new style.

Keywords: identity, oral folklore, personal songbook, vernacular literacy practices, written culture

INTRODUCTION

Songbooks as manuscript collections of poetic texts intended for personal use were widely used in Lithuania already in the nineteenth century. Initially, they were an attribute of everyday culture among the representatives of the nobility and intellectuals but in the second half of the century they became

popular among the literate members of lower social classes. The comparison of songbooks from different European countries of the same period points, firstly, to their external similarity as defined by analogous, corresponding physical parameters (writing-books, sketchbooks, homemade or mass-produced notebooks, and writing instruments used for making notes), the way of organising the notes, the coincidences in the arrangement and presentation of texts and pictures. The songbooks derive their distinctive national character from the textual content, the circumstances of their compilation and the contexts of their functioning which were influenced by specific cultural, social, and historical factors. A distinctive book culture (here understood as the functioning of the elements of book culture in the informational and social space) and the press situation had a great influence on the nineteenth-century Lithuanian songbook tradition. Personal notebooks reflected society's level of literacy, compilers'/owners' perception of their identity, their search for cultural, aesthetic, national self-expression, and conscious choices.

In the second half of the nineteenth century songbooks became widespread among common people who were traditionally considered to be the true representatives of folkloric culture. This circumstance partially conditioned the attitude that a songbook belonging to a person of peasant origin was a reflection of folkloric culture, while various literacy activities of such people were attributed to folklore and to the field of interests of folklore studies. The preservation of manuscript collections of Lithuanian poetry and songs in the archives of Lithuanian folklore started only at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in the sixth decade of the twentieth century they were made part of the Lithuanian Folklore Archives – the main institution for the preservation of Lithuanian folklore data.[1]

The profile of this archive influenced the attitude of the researchers towards the material selected for preservation. During the inventory of songbooks, their descriptions were made mainly based on the principles of systematisation of oral folklore, thus they were equated to folklore collections compiled for scholarly purposes. Songbooks were viewed as collections of folklore units and this hindered their perception as independent phenomena of written culture having a distinct purpose and a coherent structure. Both literacy in general and personal collections of folklore were considered incompatible with the existence of authentic, archaic folklore, therefore the history of Lithuanian folklore studies contains hints that songbooks were ignored and their value was not acknowledged (Ūsaitytė 2015: 201–202; 2018: 120). The efforts of the folklorists of the first half of the twentieth century to collect and investigate, above all, archaic folklore formed the criteria regarding the value of oral heritage based on such characteristics as old vs. new, oral vs. written, authentic vs. unreliable/

unoriginal, which influenced the priorities of folklore research almost until the end of the past century (Stundžienė 2003: 15–17).

As songbooks were equated to folklore collections, the circumstances of their compilation and use, their purpose, i.e., essentially different attitude of compilers towards manuscripts, was not taken into consideration. The repertory of the earliest Lithuanian songbooks, dated nineteenth century, differs rather significantly from the content of folklore collections of the time. Therefore, if their different nature and genesis are dismissed, a risk of gaining a distorted impression of folklore tradition arises. In other words, today songbooks create an impression that the influence of written, individual literature on oral folklore was especially significant, albeit fragmented.

Songbooks as a coherent, separate object of written culture and vernacular literacy[2] have sparked interest in Lithuanian folklore studies relatively recently – two decades ago, when different aspects of change in folklore tradition were explored (Ivanauskaitė 2003; Sadauskienė 2006) or songbooks were investigated as a cultural phenomenon, with an emphasis on their genre specifics, origin, dynamic, and use in everyday practice (Ūsaitytė 2015, 2018). Even though the value of songbooks is acknowledged in the studies focusing on changes in song repertory and on mass culture, these personal notebooks acquire a more independent value when viewed through the methodological lens of new literacy studies (Street 1993; Barton & Hamilton 1998) with a purpose to evaluate under what circumstances this literacy practice functioned. In this article, the historical and sociocultural contexts of Lithuanian songbooks of the second half of the nineteenth century are explored. In agreement with the attitude that "[l]iteracy is not just about texts but also about actions around texts" (Ivanič 1998: 62), the article discusses the factors which motivated the compilation of these collections and formed their content. Based on the view that songbooks constitute a form of self-expression of people, the paper aims at summarising the profiles of their compilers and at delineating the characteristics pertaining to the identity of different representatives of society of the time as reflected in songbooks.

LITHUANIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE OUTLINE OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Cultural and social processes in Lithuania in the nineteenth century resemble the situation of other European nations who had no or had lost their statehood. Lithuania did not exist on the political map of the time: after the third partition

of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, executed by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, a major part of territories inhabited by ethnic Lithuanians were incorporated into the Russian Empire. Before these events, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania together with Poland had existed as a federal state. In this federation, despite Lithuania's efforts to maintain administrative independence, Lithuanian nobility got absorbed within Polish nobility due to both close political connections and a more advanced high culture. The minor nobility and peasants who preserved the ethnic identity were encouraged to be loyal to the Polish foundation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth through the administrative and educational system and the Church. In Lithuania, Polish had become the language of public life, letters, science, and literature of the higher level, and its use was associated with education and culture. The Lithuanian language "served" exclusively the private domain; it was the language of ethnic culture, while its written form developed mostly in the field of religious literature (Jovaišas 2003; Kuzmickas 1989: 20–51).

In the Age of Enlightenment, in Lithuania, similarly to other European countries, attention to national history, language, folklore, and mythology increased. Following the European interest in the oral heritage of common, illiterate people, it was seen as a source of poetic inspiration, new literary aesthetics, whereas the idea of the "national spirit" was employed to substantiate the concept of an ethnic nation and the tradition of Lithuanian statehood (Aleksandravičius 1994: 11–18; Speičytė 2016). The Lithuanian cultural movement that began in the early 1820s became the first stage of the Lithuanian national awakening. Participants of the movement, which at the time united mostly the intellectuals of noble origin, supported the idea of Polish-Lithuanian union state, yet sought Lithuanian cultural revival, encouraged the interest in ethnic culture, and asserted the suitability of the Lithuanian language for scientific and literary purposes. The process of national emancipation – separation from the Polish cultural field – partially coincided with two uprisings of the nations of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland against the rule of the Russian Empire (1831–1831 and 1863–1864). The repressions of the government that followed had dire effects on Lithuanian culture, slowed down the development of science, education, written language, press, and aimed at changing the linguistic and religious identity of the residents of the country (Aleksandravičius & Kulakauskas 1996; Staliūnas 2009). The programme of "Restoration of Russian Origins", distinctive for its far-reaching effect, was enforced after the second uprising and aimed at decreasing Polish political and cultural influence on Lithuanians in the hopes that the latter would move toward the Russian civilisation. Ethnic Lithuanians encountered the second wave of linguistic assimilation which was implemented through the education

system. Already since the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Russian replaced Polish in schools and became the teaching language as part of the policy of "elimination of Polish origins". Lithuanian was used only in elementary parish and state schools for the children of peasants; however, it was banned in all types of schools after the second uprising.[3] Printed books which were supposed to serve as an important means for Lithuanians to study in their native language and foster their cultural identity were also eliminated from the official culture – since 1864 all Lithuanian publications could be printed only in Russian characters (Cyrillic). After this government decree, the period of press ban followed. It lasted for forty years and gave rise to an exceptional phenomenon in Lithuanian history – book smuggling. Lithuanian publications in Latin and Gothic characters were printed outside the territory of the Russian Empire (mostly in Prussian Lithuania[4] and the USA), then illegally carried over the border and secretly distributed. Regardless of unfavourable conditions, Lithuanian publications increased in number and variety: while religious books were dominant, there was a rise in secular publications – informational, educational materials, fiction. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the intellectuals supporting Lithuanian national awakening, being mostly oriented towards a mass audience, especially that of literate peasants, sought to form and establish its need for reading, to shape its cultural horizon and moral attitudes, and to expand knowledge. Due to their efforts, the ninth decade of the nineteenth century saw the release of the first Lithuanian papers and works of popular fiction which were significant for the growth of Lithuanian national awareness. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the press, especially periodicals, was one of the more important means of communication between the nation and Lithuanian secular intellectuals who, due to the implemented policy of Russification, were forced to seek the source of living in other regions of the Russian Empire or abroad. The opportunity to acquire a higher education in Lithuania was lost as well: Vilnius University was closed in 1832 as a reprisal for participation of professors and students in the first uprising of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The formation of the self-awareness of Lithuanian society in the nineteenth century was influenced by a late, in comparison with other European countries, abolition of serfdom. The majority of Lithuanian peasants were granted personal freedom in 1861, yet they did not immediately experience a considerable change. Meanwhile peasants of state estates and those from the Sudovia region, subordinate to the Kingdom of Poland, were released from serfdom earlier. This circumstance, having promoted the improvement of their economic situation, created more favourable conditions for the rise of national and cultural awareness. It was not a coincidence that many important figures of the national

movement and founders of independent Lithuania originated from the peasants who underwent the serfdom reform earlier.

Despite unfavourable conditions, Lithuanians of various social groups became actively involved in the process of written culture already beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. The written history also incorporated the ego-documents compiled by common people, i.e., written sources witnessing the personal attitude and relationship with the sociocultural context.

THE REPERTORY OF SONGBOOKS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SHAPED IT

The majority of Lithuanian songbooks of the nineteenth century could be more precisely described as commonplace books containing song and poem texts. Such characteristics as the dominance of texts of literary origin and rather stereotypical repertory allow viewing these manuscript collections as a distinctive cultural phenomenon. The material discussed in the article is seen as a link which joins the commonplace book culture in its various forms as recorded in Lithuania since the seventeenth century and the songbook tradition which flourished in the twentieth century (Ūsaitytė 2015; 2018: 110–119). While being adapted according to the changing needs of society, commonplace books underwent an internal genre transformation; for instance, eventually they became "purified" collections of texts unified by a specific theme or literary form. Among the forms of text collections were songbooks[5] which became widespread among common Lithuanians approximately since the middle of the nineteenth century. Taking into account the situation of the region at the time, the dominance of the Lithuanian language in manuscripts is significant not only because of consciously emphasised language priority[6] but in other important aspects as well. In this case, Lithuanianism is related to the general situation of the country, especially the culture of national revival, which served as a background for significant changes in the social and cultural identity of peasants, and the creation of the written Lithuanian language oriented towards the strengthening of national and individual awareness of common people. In addition, the early songbooks compiled in Lithuanian remain relevant for the purpose of determining and noting the cases of interaction between folklore and written literature.

Available manuscript material does not allow for particularly accurate conclusions to be made about either the scale of distribution of songbooks or the specifics of their use. The main reason for this is the lack of metadata and contextual information. A major part of the nineteenth-century songbooks survive

in a poor physical condition – without covers, title pages, provenance marks, and damaged in different ways. Sometimes they are dated based on secondary criteria, such as orthography or characteristic repertory of texts. Regardless of these drawbacks, there is no doubt that this literacy practice was already quite common at the end of the nineteenth century. From the viewpoint of social position, the compilers of songbooks were the representatives of secular or confessional intellectuals and common people who earned their living from farming or crafts. Only approximately half of the fifty songbooks included in the scope of this research had a surviving name of a compiler/owner. However, if a person has not left a noticeable imprint on the local historical and cultural memory, the details of their biography and the factors that encouraged them to take to literacy practices are problematic or nearly impossible to find out. Still, the identified personalities as well as the characteristics of a person's identity implied by the physical parameters of "anonymous" manuscripts allow creating a generalised portrait of a songbook compiler. It was a man[7] of a young age who had studied in an illegal or a state school, secondary school, seminary (specific peculiarities and the manner of handwriting as well as the appearance of a manuscript disclose different levels of education and writing skills), and his literacy was determined not only by his ability to read and write, but also by his openness to the written culture of the time and the changing aesthetics of folklore. The establishment of various forms of personal writing in society is related to the rising status of the written text and the prestige of persons capable of using text (cf. Allan 2010: 4–5; Maskuliūnienė 2005). The press and the written word were gradually acquiring a higher value in the community whose culture was still based on oral communication. Lithuanian songbooks developed in the written medium and manifested the priority of the written culture through their content.

The specificity of songbooks from the discussed period is reflected in the corpus of texts included in them. It was heavily influenced by the cultural and literary context, the peculiarity of which was defined by such factors as the distribution of individual works in the form of manuscripts, a rather late and complicated introduction of Lithuanian secular press, and, finally, the increased orientation of the written culture to the oral tradition. The main sources that nourished the early songbooks were various manuscripts circulating during this period as well as printed secular publications. The supply and especially availability of the latter was highly restricted: the release of secular publications in Lithuanian intended for the mass reader increased only in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, even during the period of the press-ban, a considerable amount of original Lithuanian literature and translated fiction was published as individual books and in periodicals. Notably, the last two

decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise of secular publications. This fact undoubtedly correlates with the active cultural and educational activities of the participants of Lithuanian national awakening in the second half of the century, when the press and writing were employed as some of the most important tools to animate the public consciousness of peasants and other layers of society.

The development of Lithuanian press became one of the main premises for the increase in songbooks.[8] On the other hand, the availability of publications for various social groups was frequently limited due not only to the price but also the supply and demand defined by political and cultural circumstances. These reasons might have encouraged people to copy various texts which were functioning in the field of scribal culture. The comparison of the records in songbooks with the poetry published in the nineteenth century leaves an impression that certain persons strived to record almost any rhyming text they encountered.

For the compilers of songbooks, various written texts were of equal value regardless of their origin. Such an attitude towards the poetic text was determined by the nature of Lithuanian written works. In Lithuanian press[9] tradition of the second half of the nineteenth century, a cultural attitude prevailed that folk songs should be published interspersed with individual poetry because both poetic traditions were considered to come from the same origins. Various reasons influenced this attitude. One of them was related to the definition of fiction genres: in the nineteenth century, not only pieces of singing folklore, but also individual lyrical texts were called songs (Bikinaitė 1996: 209; Ivanauskaitė & Sadauskienė 2000; Andriukonis 2013: 36). Another reason derived from the intentional wish of the publishers to make no distinction between folk songs and individual poetry. Despite the fact that the intellectuals distinguished between these two types of poetry, they followed the concept of a unified national creative work wherein folklore was seen as a preliterate Lithuanian literature – it was a way to validate the old traditions and continuity of Lithuanian culture, as well as the nation's self-worth (cf. Sadauskienė 2021: 92–93). All Lithuanian writings that met the ethic criteria were viewed as capable of fostering the nation's spirit and culture. In popular printed songbooks and newspapers folk songs comprised a minor part. On the one hand, this happened because Lithuanian publications were flooded with individual poetry which, despite its questionable artistic value, was tolerated inasmuch as it expressed national ideals and historical themes (Maciūnas 2003: 4–5; Skurdenienė 2001: 413). This vast amount was not counterbalanced by the scarce records of folklore[10] which reached the publishers; therefore the individual poetry exceeded folk songs by hundreds of times. Similar proportions of folk and literary song texts are observed in many songbooks. Apparently, Lithuanian intellectuals who followed educatory, ethic, and didactic interests viewed the intensifying pervasion

of the folkloric communication field in written culture in a rather favourable light. The copies of various texts gained importance not only as replacements of printed publications, but they were also considered to be the repositories of collective, folkloric memory. Some Lithuanian intellectuals viewed songbooks as necessary and capable of securing the continuity of the singing tradition regardless of the text origin (Ūsaitytė 2019: 117).

Individual poetry included in personal notebooks resists a brief description as it is remarkably heterogeneous in terms of genre (poems, ballads, narrative poems, romances, idylls), theme (historical patriotic, folkloric, mythological, religious, mundane, social, nature-related), and tone (lyrical, didactic, humorous, satirical) – in other words, it reflects almost the whole range of the nineteenth-century poetry. Among the most popular sources of texts incorporated in songbooks are the didactic novella *Palangos Juzė* (Juzė from Palanga) (1869) by the writer Bishop Motiejus Valančius, which contains several folk and literary songs; a collection of poems *Pasakos, pritikimai, veselios ir giesmės* (Tales, Adventures, Humorous Poems and Songs) (1861) by Kajetonas Aleknavičius; various religious and moralistic publications; the first Lithuanian calendar *Metų skaitlius ūkiškas* (Farmers' Calendar) (1846–1864), popular among peasants, edited by the educator Laurynas Ivinskis; also the first newspapers intended for Lithuania Proper: *Aušra* (The Dawn) (1883–1886), *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga* (Review of Samogitia and Lithuania) (1890–1896), *Tėvynės sargas* (The Guardian of the Homeland) (1896–1904), and *Varpas* (The Bell) (1889–1905). The content of calendars and newspapers of the time which had literary sections was frequently copied in popular collections of songs and poems published at the end of the nineteenth century, such as *Graži dainų knygelė* (The Nice Songbook) (1893), and *Lietuviškos dainos, iš visur surinktos* (Lithuanian Songs, Collected from Everywhere) (1893). The variety of both the texts included in songbooks and their sources poses challenges in the assessment of the popularity of individual songs. Still, one of the recurrent songs in personal collections seems to be the romantic ballad "Birutė" by the poet Silvestras Valiūnas who wrote in Lithuanian and in Polish, which appeared in print for the first time in 1823, soon grew into a folk song and became one of the most popular texts to be published (Fig. 1). Among other texts regularly observed in songbooks, the poetry of well-known nineteenth-century Lithuanian poets Antanas Strazdas, Antanas Vienažindys, Ksaveras Sakalauskas-Vanagėlis, Antanas Baranauskas, and Ludwik Kondratowicz (Władysław Syrokomla) should be mentioned (Fig. 2). In addition, poems by numerous other recognised and anonymous poets of the nineteenth century were recorded in abundance.

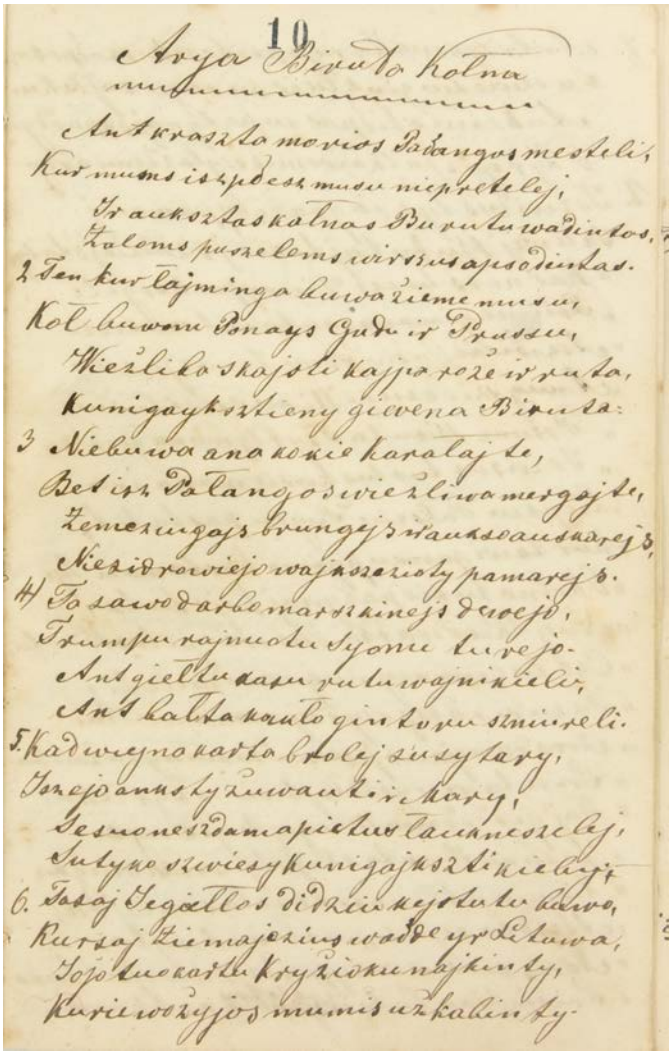

Figure 1. *A copy of the ballad "Birutė" by Silvestras Valiūnas (1789–1831). The romantic ballad is based on a historical legend about the meeting of the duke Kęstutis and a low-born girl Birutė, their marriage, and the birth of their son, the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas. LMD I 767(10), text fragment.*

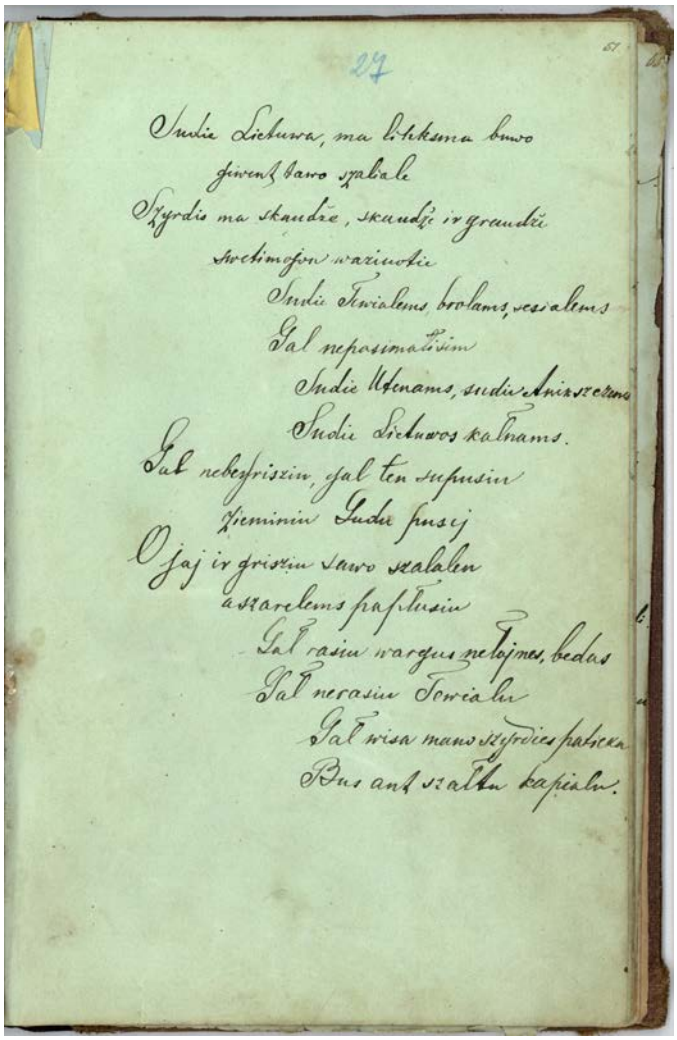

Figure 2. *The lyrics of the song "Sudiev, Lietuva, man linksma buvo savo gyvent šalelėj" (Farewell, Lithuania, I had fun living in my own country) originate from the poem "Kelionė Peterburkan" (A Journey to Petersburg) by a famous nineteenth-century Lithuanian poet, Bishop Antanas Baranauskas (1835–1902). The poem that portrayed a painful parting with one's homeland grew into a song and was included in the repertory of emigrants and deportees. LTR 3124(27).*

Even though for the whole nineteenth century the old songs were an important part of everyday life, both domestic and ritual, in the agrarian Lithuanian society, songbooks reveal the choice of their compilers to, above all, record the written, individual poetry. Next to such "literary" collections, there is a certain number of manuscripts comprising songs of a new style, created by imitating the written literature. Among the latter, didactic songs imbued with Christian ideology and educational intentions, which in an edifying or humorous manner portray mostly mundane scenes from the peasant life and social environment (drinking, slovenliness, relationships of young people, chastity, family harmony, etc.) prevail (Fig. 3).

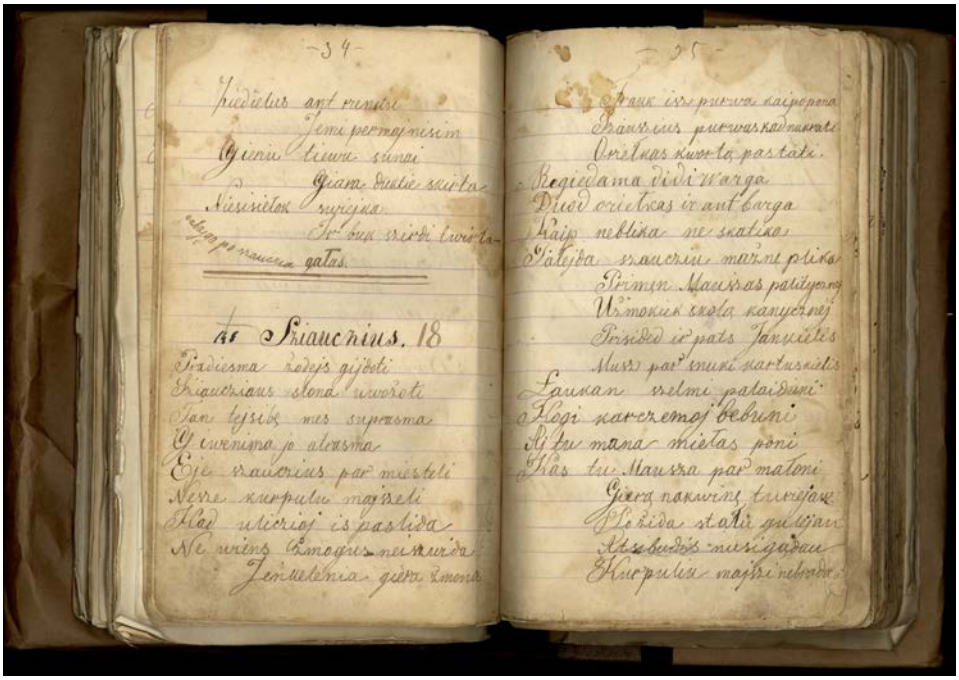

Figure 3. *A widespread didactic humorous song by an unknown author about a shoemaker who lost his tools of trade due to drinking and frequenting the tavern. The song ends with an imperative invitation to mend one's ways to escape the punishment of hell after death. LTR 5577(148), text fragment.*

In the context of traditional folklore, they were deemed appealing due to their relevant content and a different poetic language (Sadauskienė 2006: 126–157). Seemingly, the repertory of songbooks compiled by people who were not socially active and whose everyday life was less influenced by written culture could

be called *folklorised*, oriented more towards the folkloric communication. It is likely that such songs of didactic or romantic style, which intensely replaced the classic repertory, entered the personal collections directly from the living tradition. However, even in this case manuscripts functioned as a separate, "more authoritative" cultural space (Andriukonis 2013: 46).

Nevertheless, the majority of old folk songs usually entered the personal collections not from the oral tradition but from the written sources. Such collections were not homogeneous. Some of them were created by copying an entire printed songbook (LMD I 1) or by selecting separate texts from it (LMD I 374, LMD I 575, LTR 3295). The first printed Lithuanian songbooks – *Dainos, oder Littauische Volkslieder* (Dainos, or Lithuanian Songs) (1825) by Ludwig Rhesa, *Dainos žemaičių* (Songs of Samogitia) (1829) by Simonas Stanevičius, and *Dainės žemaičių* (Songs of Samogitia) (1846) by Simonas Daukantas – which served as the sources of such copies were available only for a small part of educated society. Their replication could be motivated by a professional, scholarly, cultural interest, which arose among Lithuanian educators already in the first stage of the national movement, as well as by the special historical, national, and emotional value which was imparted on the oral tradition at the time. Personal collections in which old folk songs are sporadic, included as if by accident, are much more frequent. They were usually copied from periodicals, the publishers of which did not shy away from copying texts from the first Lithuanian books of songs. On the other hand, the repertory of classical folk songs was expanded in the press of the end of the nineteenth century: following folklore collection campaigns organised by the intellectuals of the national awakening, folk songs representing the singing tradition of various Lithuanian ethnographic regions were introduced into the field of scribal culture.

Nonetheless, today it is difficult to say whether the authority of the written source was the decisive factor in the formation of such repertory of texts or whether it was the efforts of individual persons to distance themselves from classical folklore at least in the written discourse as it might have been associated with the heritage of preliterate, nonmodern culture represented by the older generation. Both the manuscript form of songbooks and the incorporated texts (their content) could have meant an intentional ambition towards contemporary cultural values and an effort to separate from the mundane, traditional, old (cf. Anttonen 2005: 33). Could that not be the reason why the rare old songs in songbooks seem like peculiar inclusions, the quotes from the archaic oral tradition which lend an exotic undertone to the collection?

Copying different rhymed works as a coherent narrative was encouraged by the poetic form of texts: it seemed recognisable due to its closeness to the folk singing tradition considered to be one of the oldest means of cultural self-

expression. The suitability of a text for singing, or its song-like qualities, was not the main reason for its incorporation in a songbook. The popularity of poetic genres in society was maintained by the high social status of songs. In folkloric communication, the sociocultural value of folk songs was determined by their ability to render the main norms of the peasant culture which frequently relied on ceremonial contexts. Meanwhile the representatives of written culture held folk songs up as the examples of literary aesthetics and a distinct morality by emphasising their relationship with nationality and historicity.

In fact, a group of manuscript collections stands out in the array of investigated material, the compilers of which sought to present a more versatile, authentic picture of the folk singing tradition. It was a distinctive type of songbook: they had a communal purpose and were created in order to satisfy the real or implicit needs of its collective addressee. Besides the copies from written sources, they also contain folk songs collected from people. Still, it should be noted that despite the authentic recordings of texts, these song collections are not identical to "genuine" folklore collections[11] which were compiled in response to organised folklore collection campaigns. In the second half of the nineteenth century both these literacy practices already existed separately, clearly differentiated by the compilers themselves. The case of viewing a folklore collection and a songbook as texts of different purpose is illustrated by the written heritage of Matas Slančiauskas.[12] Besides several dozens of folklore collections transferred to folklore archives and the publishers of folklore, he compiled manuscript collections of poetry, folk songs, and religious hymns intended for the common people of his milieu. Folkloric texts were included in them as part of a cultural education programme of a secret society founded by him in 1889, which aimed at collecting folklore, distributing banned publications, awakening national awareness, and raising the culture of common people.

In the nineteenth century, songbooks were compiled not only for singing. They functioned as substitutes for the Lithuanian press which was difficult to access. At the same time, writing and various vernacular literacy practices provided an opportunity for people to perceive and express their individuality (Ivanauskaitė 2003: 17–18). What manifestations of an individual's identity and awareness were "recorded" in songbooks and how do they reflect the social and cultural environment of a specific historical period – the second half of the nineteenth century?

THE SIGNS OF THE CHOICE OF A CULTURAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Collections of texts which served as memory repositories were the object of cultural exchange in society. These notebooks functioned not only in the private space, but also circulated rather widely in various societies: they were shared in the circle of writers, educators, as well as in the gatherings of village people and secret societies; they took root in the subcultures of youths, school and university students (Vanagas 1994: 40–42; Maskuliūnienė 2005; Ūsaitytė 2015: 209–212; Bleizgienė 2019). Even though the content of songbooks and the corpus of texts were essentially determined by the literary (written and oral) discourse, they were also influenced by the social identity of compilers themselves, which was based on the belonging to a group and defined by the performed cultural or social role. Heterogeneous sociocultural environment formed different attitudes, aspirations and aims of people and correspondingly determined the diversity of songbooks.[13]

The collections of poetic texts were compiled based not only on a personal preference and a high regard for the works employing certain themes or poetic expression, but also on account of the target addressee – their social status, education, unspoken needs and expectations. Songbooks helped to develop literacy competences and to expand literary knowledge. Yet the educational purpose did not overshadow the entertainment aspect of songbooks. Functionality and appeal were important conditions for songbooks to exist independently from the number of persons engaged in this practice associated with leisure – a family, a village or a parish community, the members of a specific society, a class of secondary school students, etc. On the other hand, historical context enables us to assign them additional connotations in regard to their influence on the formation of cultural, social, and national awareness. Seemingly, these intentions guided the creation of songbooks which comprised texts about the damage of alcohol consumption and were obviously intended for didactic purposes in the height of the temperance movement (e.g., LTR 3293). A considerable part of collections from the period of the press-ban stand out for their particular effort to accumulate as much verse as possible from available printed sources. Among the objectives of such practice could have been the intention to disseminate Lithuanian national written works which could shape the self-awareness of people from close environments. Characteristic examples of this case include the collection *Knyga dainušky, išrašyta metuose 1887, per visus metus* (A Book of Songs Recorded in 1887, Throughout the Entire Year) by Antanas Samuolis (LTR 5577/46–112/),[14] collections comprising a hundred of records each – *Dainų*

knyga žemaitiška, 1886 m. (Samogitian Songbook, 1886) by Leonas Liutikas (LTR 3295), and the text collection ascribed to Pranas Virakas (LMD I 372). The sociocultural purpose is revealed by the fact that songbooks functioned in the personal libraries of intellectuals and peasants.[15] As a result of the cultural and national assimilation of the country implemented by the Tzarist administration, there was a lack of Lithuanian publications and they could not satisfy all the needs of society, hence commonplace books helped to compensate this deficiency. In other words, the need for the written copies of texts "was based not on tradition but on the unpleasant necessity" (Andriukonis 2013: 45; see also Lohina 1998: 99; Volkova 2001: 71–72).

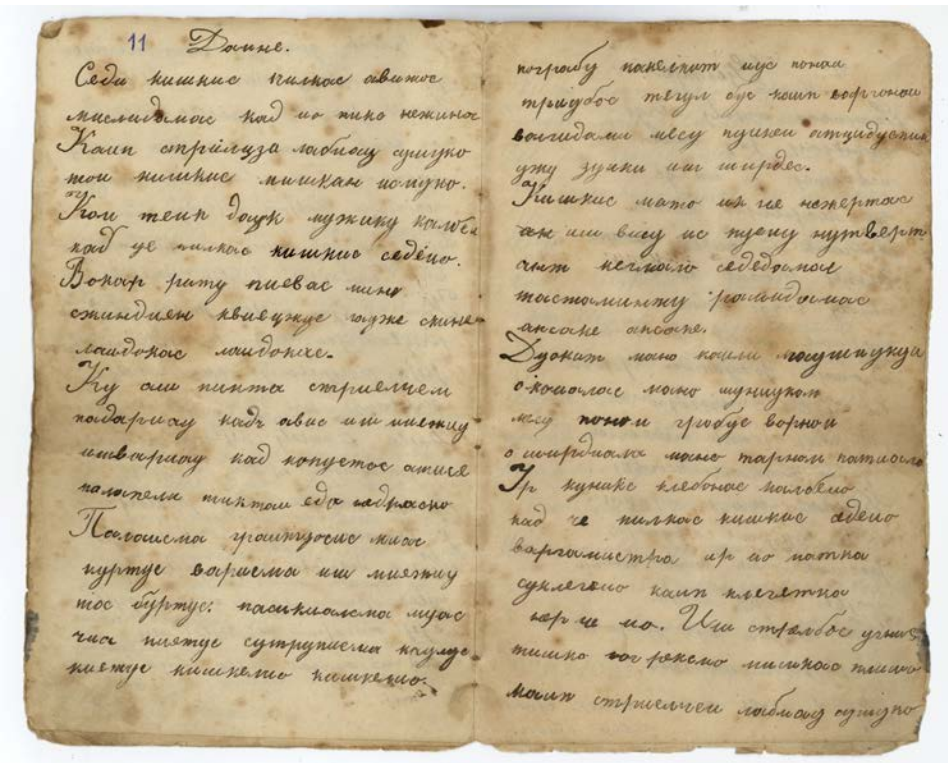

Figure 4. *A variant of the poem "Kiškis" (The Hare) by priest Antanas Strazdas (1760–1833), transcribed in Cyrillic characters. The original poem (first printed in 1814), which portrays a hunt for a hare in a humorous way, was popular and circulated among people in folklorised variants. LTR 3294(11), text fragment.*

The increase of the number of songbooks intended not for personal use but for the collective addressee occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. They were compiled by the active participants of Lithuanian national movement and public figures.[16] The collections compiled for educational purposes were usually titled with the target addressee in mind (*A Songbook for Youths*..., LMD I 376), emphasised Lithuanian songs and verse as a source of national solidarity (*The Verses for Lithuania by the Servant of His Motherland*..., LMD I 1061, 4 notebooks; *Various Songs and Folk-Rhymes as Sung by Rich Men, Priests, and Peasants*, VUBR F119-44/2), or highlighted the balance between entertainment and usefulness (*Songs, Well-Liked and Suitable*, LMD I 763; *A Songbook for Merry-Hearted People*..., LTR 3307). Having reached their addressee, such collections expanded their folkloric repertory and cultural horizon and at the same time increasingly included the oral tradition into public written discourse. The roles of songbooks in the private life and community activities – entertainment, communication, (self)education – correlate with the areas of everyday life identified by David Barton and Mary Hamilton, i.e., *private leisure*, *sense making*, and *social participation*, where people apply their literacy skills (Barton 2001: 22–27; see also Ólafsson 2012: 71–83).

Taking into account the historical circumstances, the practice of songbooks was hindered by the prohibitions imposed on the Lithuanian language. Not only did they severely limit the availability of printed publications but they also impeded the development of literacy. The teaching language in Lithuanian state schools was Russian, whereas in order to Russify Lithuanians during the transitional stage of this process, the Lithuanian language had to adopt the Slavic alphabet – Cyrillic (Fig. 4). Children learned to read and less frequently to write at home and at secret (illegal) schools supported by peasants themselves. State schools, where the teaching language was Russian, were boycotted by peasants not only in protest at the open assimilation but also because they sought a more convenient and less expensive way to provide their children with primary education. It should be noted that at the end of the nineteenth century approximately half of the residents of Lithuania could read despite the fact that only 7% of them attended state schools. In this respect they were surpassed by Latvians and Estonians who enjoyed significantly better conditions of education (Aleksandravičius & Kulakauskas 1996: 273–282). Songbooks as examples of vernacular literacy of the time retained signs of this difficult period.

The indications of the historically established influence of the Polish language and culture, and the scale on which Russian, the language implemented on the state and institutional levels, was used, can be observed in various records in songbooks. Besides the official Russian language, which was mandatory in state institutions, local residents mainly used Lithuanian and Polish in their

private and public lives; these were also the languages which fulfilled their cultural needs. Bilingualism or multilingualism was rooted in the everyday life of society, above all – the literate society. Most educated Lithuanians spoke and wrote in Lithuanian and in Polish. It can be assumed that in songbooks, the records in other languages reflected the situation where a part of people faced the choice of national, civil, and social identity. Although in the investigated songbooks Lithuanian texts prevail, several records in other languages can be found; usually they are single literary texts in Polish and Russian. One song collection of a sketchbook type (LTR 5577/131–277/), most probably compiled by university or school students, stands out: judging by handwritings, 147 Lithuanian and 41 Polish texts in verse were written in by several persons. The linguistic diversity of the songbooks' content could have been determined by the national self-awareness of the compilers and encouraged by the Polish and Lithuanian literary discourse, perceived as a whole, the authority of the official culture, simple curiosity, and openness to various literacy practices. As songbooks were compiled in an environment unfavourable for the Lithuanian language and writing, the priority to the national culture founded on language and ethnicity could attest to the efforts of the compilers to express their national identity. Still, some linguistically heterogeneous collections merely reflected the preference of a specific part of society for the diversity of written culture created in various languages. In this context, linguistically "pure" collections could be viewed as an expression of Lithuanian cultural emancipation which at the time was perceived as a separation from the custody or pressure of foreigners (Mačiulis 2020: 54).

Another category of records in other languages (Russian and Polish) is comprised of structural components of manuscripts, such as the titles, authorial records and commentaries, the personal names of compilers, titles of individual poetic texts, notes on the circumstances of recording. The signature of the compiler/owner of a songbook was one of the main components testifying to the person's identity, an external symbol of identity. A signature usually specified the ownership of a collection, but it also served as a structural element of a manuscript – it signified the end of a particular record or a section of a book. In these cases, the authorship of an autograph as confirmed by a signature was related to a specific action, i.e., making a copy. The investigated songbooks of the second half of the nineteenth century reveal that their compilers frequently wrote their name in a Polish/Russian manner or in Russian letters (e.g., K. Staszewski, S. Szlupovicz, Антон Убейка, Иван Тумялис, Казимирь Кайрукштись, etc.) not only in official documents but also in private notebooks where the Lithuanian language was dominant. The tradition of using a Polish or a Russian form of a name took root both due to the efforts of official insti-

tutions and the unrelenting social and cultural pressure.[17] It seems that the learned official name form became an integral part of one's identity (Kotilainen 2013: 72). Curiously enough, a glimpse at the tradition of personal names in songbooks reveals a certain dynamic of the linguistic expression of signatures. With the knowledge that the Tzarist administration spared no effort to eliminate the Polish language (together with the cultural and political influence) from Lithuanian life, a specific tendency manifests in the change of signatures: from the eighth decade of the nineteenth century, personal names in Cyrillic in songbooks are more frequent than the previously dominant Polish form, although the number of poetic Russian texts (or recorded in Russian letters) did not increase. On the one hand, the Lithuanian language, prevalent in songbooks, reflected individuals' stance against the forced Russification and the rejection of the Russian alphabet, press, and state schools. On the other hand, manuscripts of this period more frequently include Russian entries specifying the owner's identity or the name forms written in Cyrillic. This could partly be explained by the growing participation of persons of peasant origin, who were educated in state schools with Russian as the teaching language, in vernacular literacy practices. The dominant, institutional culture strived to establish functional literacy skills, therefore, when participating in public life, people used Russian.

Taking into account the administrative measures imposed as part of acculturational and integrational policy, the personal initiative to compile and use the copies of song texts could be equated to illegal, underground activities, and cultural resistance associated with growing citizenship. In the years of the press ban, during searches in the houses of people suspected of press distribution and storage, besides publications, various manuscripts in other alphabet than Cyrillic were confiscated (the main criterion for confiscation and destruction of writings was their language and not the content). Surviving search records reveal that such manuscripts included copies of songs and verse (Merkys 1994: 41, 44, 153, 220, etc.); their possession could also incur administrative liability. We are inclined to assume that in this period, people's choice to compile songbooks was based not only on the urge to be a part of the literate society or their cultural aspirations. The desire to express national identity and the increasing self-awareness of national citizenship must have been of an equal importance. The latter motive encouraged resistance against the order imposed by authorities and taking the possible risk of punishment for the possession of illegal Lithuanian writings. In such circumstances, the compilation of a songbook, even if intended only for personal use, required personal efforts as well as the understanding and trust of the community. Some sectors of society, especially the peasantry, did not see secular literature as reliable or capable of bringing tangible benefits, and the scale of persecutions by government caused a certain

antagonism among people. The songbooks of a large scope suggest that for the compilers it was a purposeful and continuous activity requiring patience and devotion. They may have been challenged not only by the attitude of the official authorities, society, or family, but also by material issues, such as the lack of writing instruments and the sources of texts.

Participation in literacy practices was a means for the self-expression of an individual in society. Higher literacy competences allowed people to distinguish themselves in the social environment and served as a means for the expression of their cultural and national self-awareness. Despite the fact that through this activity persons were involved in the discourse of a certain group, this activity potentially testifies to the worldview of the compiler (author) of a specific collection. Each separate songbook appeared as a result of a choice (whether to record, compile, create, or participate) and selection (what one wishes, is capable to record). The combination of these factors caused the diversity of songbooks, which provides a glimpse into the process of the formation of identity "from inside", or, in other words, allows an attempt to reveal the attitude of people whose experiences were not directly witnessed in historical sources.

CONCLUSIONS

The tradition of songbooks took root in the nineteenth century, which in Lithuania was identified with an intensive expansion of literacy, the strengthening awareness of society, and processes of cultural, historical, and national identity formation. Taking these circumstances into consideration, I have analysed songbooks as a means of self-expression of an individual embracing a new sociocultural experience. In terms of content, songbooks gravitated between the written and oral traditions, yielding to the attraction and the appeal of the former. Oral folklore, especially its old forms, did not become established in personal songbooks, save for a few specific cases. Seemingly, the interest in folklore heritage, which arose during the period of national awakening and encouraged its collection, manifested itself more remarkably among the civically active intellectuals, whereas persons not committed to a community were oriented to a contemporary Lithuanian cultural discourse, especially existing in a written form. Their literacy practices may be viewed as a distinctive written statement about their cultural and linguistic rights and their nationality perceived on a linguistic basis. Nonetheless, while songbooks intended for personal use reflected the characteristics of their compilers' identity, the collections intended for the collective addressee were distinctive for their personality-forming effect. Conversely, all songbooks constitute a part of a common cultural process.

As part of the circulation of social ideas, cultural texts, and their meanings, these diverse, lately thoroughly investigated "writings from below" reveal the choices of common people, individuals (cf. Edlund 2012; Edlund & Haugen 2013; Edlund & Ashplant & Kuismin 2016; Kuismin & Driscoll 2016). Even though their experiences are formed not in isolation but under the influence of communities, personal notebooks, according to Martyn Lyons, lend a "human dimension" to the social and cultural processes of life (Lyons 2016:18). The gradually developing vernacular literacy practices not only influenced the oral culture paradigm but also provided an opportunity to move from the passive state of fostering cultural, social, and national identity to its conscious establishment through writing.

Due to their nature, private writings encouraged various manifestations of individuality. They meant the efforts of a person to acquire certain competences which could constitute the application of functional literacy skills, social and cultural adaptation in society, as well as a wish to approach a culturally valuable object which coincided with the increasing authority of the printed, written word, and the openness to literary diversity. These stimuli were related to a more or less conscious desire to express or establish the contours of one's identity which revealed the social, cultural, ethical, and national orientation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

[1] This research is based on approximately fifty manuscript songbooks, dated nineteenth century, preserved in the Lithuanian Folklore Archives at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore and the Manuscripts Division at Vilnius University Library.

[2] In literacy studies, a distinction is made between *institutional (dominant)* and *vernacular* literacy, stating that the latter is not regulated by the formal rules and procedures of dominant social institutions; the rules rather emerge from everyday needs (Barton & Hamilton 1998: 247–252).

[3] Lithuanian remained a school subject only in the elementary schools of the Suwalki Governorate which was incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland, yet in effect it was under the rule of the Russian Empire.

[4] Prussian Lithuania (or Lithuania Minor) was a historical ethnographical region which extended over the north-eastern parts of the Prussian province.

[5] The consistency of the poetic form of texts in songbooks is rather a tendency and not a rule.

[6] It seems that Lithuanian became the language of personal notes defined by self-reflective characteristics only in the nineteenth century. Until then, no personal Lithuanian manuscripts of considerable scope existed, even though records (usually – marginalia) in Lithuanian have been identified from the end of the eighteenth century (Pacevičius 2001: 672; Ališauskas 2001: 618).

[7] Women's personal names were found recorded in two songbooks. A collection compiled in 1885, based on the external qualities of the manuscript, belonged to a woman of a higher social status (see LMD III 241). The other collection was compiled by several members of one family (possibly farmers) in approximately 1889 (see LTR 3292).

[8] The connection between the increase of personal text collections and the press is noted by the researchers investigating the written tradition of various historical periods (cf. Holznagel 2016: 118–119; Burlinson 2016; Cowan 2018, etc.).

[9] In this context, the Lithuanian press represents the dominant literacy form.

[10] The collection of folklore at the end of the nineteenth century was very segmented and organised on the initiative of individual personalities. Institutionally coordinated efforts to collect folklore have occurred only since 1906, when the Lithuanian Scientific Society was founded.

[11] On the subject of folklore recording as a vernacular literacy practice see Kikas 2018.

[12] Matas Jonas Slančiauskas (1850–1924) – a tailor, book smuggler, collector of folklore, an active figure in Lithuanian national awakening, poet, publicist.

[13] The researchers of commonplace book culture emphasise the diversity and lability distinctive of this type of personal writings (Allan 2010: 34; Smyth 2010: 94). These characteristics were determined by the fact that commonplace books functioned in everyday and leisure context and were not heavily influenced by dominant social institutions.

[14] The collection that contains 67 texts – LTR 5577(46–112) – was transferred to the Lithuanian Folklore Archives, bound in a folio together with six manuscripts by other people.

[15] The need for personal libraries persisted not only due to the lack of printed publications but also because of the absence of public libraries intended for all groups of people in nineteenth-century Lithuania.

[16] The Lithuanian Folklore Archives and the Manuscripts Division at Vilnius University Library store manuscript collections by four active participants of Lithuanian national awakening movement of the end of the nineteenth century – the beginning of the twentieth century – Augustinas Baranauskas, Matas Slančiauskas, Jonas Trumpulis, Juozas Otonas Širvydas – intended for the collective addressee: LMD I 376, LMD I 567, LMD I 763, LMD I 855, LMD I 904, LMD I 1061, VUBR F 119-44/2, F 119-111, F 1169-523.

[17] Cf. the writing of Finnish personal names by using their Swedish equivalents in nineteenth-century Finland in Kotilainen 2013.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

LMD – Folklore Collections of the Lithuanian Scientific Society at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore

LTR – Lithuanian Folklore Archives at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore

VUBR F – Manuscripts Division at Vilnius University Library

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NURSING QUEEN ARCHETYPE IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGES IN ESTONIAN SOCIETY: A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

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Abstract: Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), the founder of modern nursing, had influence on the whole of Europe. Nightingale has become the archetype of the queen of nurses and the latter can be used to understand different nursing cultures. The aim of the research is to analyse the manifestation and development of the nursing queen archetype retrospectively in the context of the history of Estonian nursing. The research method involves studying and interpreting historical photographs, documents, and biographies as well as secondary sources. The historical-cultural context provides a framework for analysing the development of nursing, taking into account Pierre Bourdieu's theory. Data collection and analysis was conducted between 2019 and 2021. There were four developmental periods in the history of Estonian nursing: beginning in the early eighteenth century, the Republic of Estonia (1918–1940), the Soviet period (1940–1991), and the re-independent Republic of Estonia (since 1991). In periods of rapid

change, the leaders (Anna Erma, Anette Massov, Ilve-Teisi Remmel) emerged, who became the equivalents to Nightingale or the queens for Estonian nurses.

Keywords: Anette Massov, Anna Erma, Florence Nightingale, history of Estonian nursing, Ilve-Teisi Remmel, queen archetype

INTRODUCTION

An archetype is a permanent structure that has developed in the collective subconscious and that manifests in the consciousness as a universal motif or image. According to Carl Gustav Jung, the archetype has been formed because of the common imagination of many people and thus acquired a concrete form (Jung et al. 1968). Even more, archetypes occur practically all over the world as constituents of myths and at the same time as individual products of unconscious origin (Jung 1960 [1938]).

Through archetypes it is possible to explain an individual's personality and behaviour and the representation attributed to the individual by those around him or her. The queen (ruler) archetype is depicted as the boss, leader, aristocrat, parent, politician, responsible citizen, role model, manager, or administrator (Mark & Pearson 2001). Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), the founder of modern nursing, is called the queen of nurses (Shetty 2016). Her multifaceted role contributed significantly to the development of the nursing profession into a structured institution.

Developments in nursing in one country (Victorian England) extended to and affected other countries. Florence Nightingale's innovations had an impact throughout Europe. In many countries, followers of Nightingale emerged, charismatic leaders in nursing who could be called the next nursing queens, such as Carolina Santi Bevilacqua (Italy), Christiane Reimann (Denmark), Jules-Marie Heymans (Belgium), Angela Boškin (Slovenia), Ethel Gordon Fenwick (UK), and Hilde Steppe (Germany) (Ferrario & Lusignani & Manzoni 2020; De Munck 2020; Keršič et al. 2020; Malchau Dietz 2020; Ulmer & Seemann & Boenisch 2020; Wood & Shepherd 2020).

The nursing queen archetype can be used to understand different nursing cultures. Nightingale's principles have gained ground in Estonia too. The queens of nursing came forth at a time of rapid and profound changes in society. Anna Erma, Anette Massov, and Ilve-Teisi Remmel can be singled out as the queens of Estonian nursing.

The article deals with retrospective reflections and discussions. The formation of the archetype of the nursing queen is examined through time and change in order to understand the logic of the formation of the leaders in the history

of nursing. It is recognized that the present can be understood and explored in the context of the past, and the outlines of the future are drawn in connection with the generalization of the past. According to Jupp (2006), relying on retrospective analysis allows for a flexible and multifaceted approach to the issue.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

The study's background extends to the understanding of changes in society. Socio-psychological phenomena and processes can only be understood as seen in specific historical, cultural, and macro-social conditions. According to Pierre Bourdieu, "understanding begins primarily with understanding the field what we have developed into and in opposition to" (Bourdieu 1993: 38). Bourdieu analyses not only the "fields" but also the people in these fields, the reasons why they act the way they do. Bourdieu discusses artists, writers and other people working in the field of culture, but it can also be taken more generally, i.e., to think of a person in any field working in a social space as an "agent".

Social "agents" do not exist in a vacuum, but in a complex institutional network that empowers, enables, and legitimises their activities. The agents are free in their decisions and choices only insofar as the field allows. The field offers space for possibilities for everyone involved. Due to this space of possibilities, the agents of a certain era are fixed in space and time and are relatively dependent on the direct conditions of the economic and social environment. The possibilities offered by history determine what is possible or impossible to do or think in one given field at a given moment in time (Bourdieu 2003).

Ideas spread through personalities. This study covers the analysis of several biographies (Florence Nightingale, Anna Erma, Anette Massov, and Ilve-Teisi Remmel). The trajectory of human life (Bourdieu 2003) is a chain of positions occupied one after the other, in successive stages of the social field, formed as a result of the interaction of both social conditions and subjective personal experiences and situations.

This study is framed by two approaches: a biographical and a pictorial turn. "Biographical turn" means the rapid spreading of biographical research as a recognized critical scientific research method.

> *At the core of this development is a shift from the abstract and structural approaches of the past as the starting point for historical interpretation to placing human experience at the centre of historical interpretation. The individual's point of view and human experience are used as a methodological tool.* (Renders & Haan & Harmsma 2017: 3)

The biography presents the subject's life story, highlighting various aspects of his or her life, including intimate details of the experience, and may include an analysis of the subject's personality (Miller 2000).

The use of images in historical science became more active in the 1990s when there was a so-called "pictorial turn" in cultural studies, i.e., the invasion of visual information in Western societies in general. The common understanding of the relationship between a word and an image began to be re-evaluated: the image is not merely an illustration of the word but carries signs and meanings (Tamm 2016) that help to make sense of the past in today's context. "You can see more at a glance than is shown by the measurements, calculations and their interpretations" (Frank & Lange 2015: 11). The pictures of the different periods in nursing are significant considering Estonia's cultural identity and social diversity.

Thus, in the present study, the era, events, and participants in them are constructed retrospectively, using primary and secondary sources, and the story is interpreted accordingly. The research was prompted by a request to understand and interpret nursing in a historical-cultural context.

The prerequisites for Florence Nightingale to become a queen were: a good education and the ability to speak many languages; participation as a nurse in the Crimean War (1853–1856); being the first nursing theorist; a pioneering role in conceptualizing nurse education; initiating health and sanitation reform; being a methodological researcher and writing about 200 books. Florence Nightingale's principles and ideas have been applied in Estonia for more than a hundred years. The implementation of these ideas has been mainly led by three queens of Estonian nursing – Anna Erma, Anette Massov, and Ilve-Teisi Remmel (Talvik & Tulva & Ernits 2020b).

The history of nursing in Estonia dates back to the 1700s. Nursing began in churches and monasteries. In the mid-eighteenth century, the first nurses trained in Russia came to work in the newly opened hospitals in Estonia (Sooväli 1998). Later several nursing homes and nursing schools were opened. During the period of the Republic of Estonia (1918–1940) nursing grew into a profession and enjoyed high prestige. Wide international contacts were established. Continuous training of nurses began, facilitated by the formation of the Estonian Nurses Association. In periods of change people need heroes and two nursing queens, Anna Erma and Anette Massov, ensued in Estonia. They precisely understood the nature of the era, picked up Nightingale's ideas and carried out developmental leaps in Estonian nursing.

In 1940–1941 and 1944–1991 the territory of the Republic of Estonia was occupied by Soviet Russia and later by the Soviet Union. During the occupation that lasted from 1940 to 1941, the Estonian SSR was annexed to the Soviet

Union. In 1941, the Soviet occupation of Estonia was replaced by the German occupation. In 1944, Soviet troops conquered the territory of Estonia again and the second Soviet occupation began. The third nursing queen, Ilve-Teisi Remmel, began her activities during the Soviet occupation and continued after the restoration of Estonian independence.

The periods in the history of Estonian nursing and the emergence of nursing queens in these periods are characterized in the timeline in Figure 1, which provides guidance for discussing the actions of the queens.

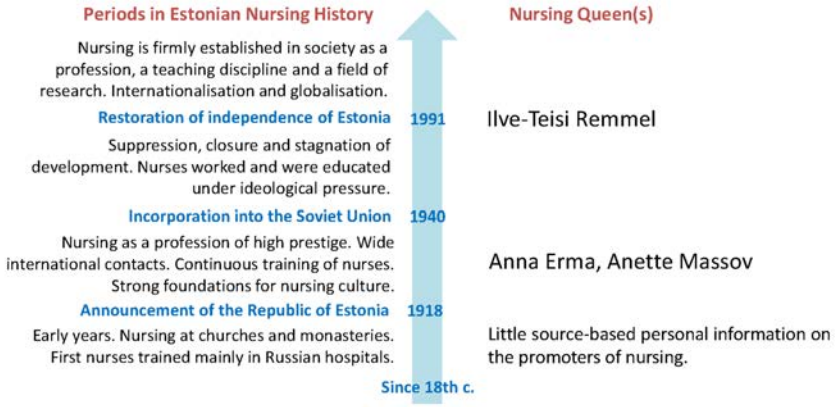

Figure 1. *Periods and queens in Estonian nursing (compiled by the authors of the article, 2021).*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of the research is to analyse the manifestation and development of the nursing queen archetype retrospectively in the context of the history of Estonian nursing. Based on the objective, the following research questions were formed for the study:

- Under what changes in society and subjective circumstances did Florence Nightingale become the reformer of nursing, the world's first nursing queen?
- How and under which circumstances did the queens of Estonian nursing appear?

- How have Florence Nightingale's ideas reached the present day through the queens of Estonian nursing?

The research materials used in the article were historical documents, photographs, and biographies. Data collection and analysis of scientific articles and historical documents were conducted from 2019 to 2021. The primary historical documents included newspapers, biographical material of Estonian nurses from the collections of the Estonian Health Museum and the Estonian History Museum, church books as well as photographic collections. Historical photographs offer opportunities to discuss the cultural specifics of nursing development and characterize the subjective journey of personalities. The photograph carries signs and meanings from which the peculiarities of the era and the encounters of cultures can be read (Frank & Lange 2015).

The collected material was analysed in a cross-section of historical periods. The queens of Estonian nursing were placed on the timeline (Fig. 1), and their activities were described through socio-cultural changes, highlighting their main patterns of behaviour characteristic of the nursing queens. The emphasis is on three periods of Estonian history: the period of the Republic of Estonia (1918–1940), the Soviet period (1940–1991), and the re-independent Republic of Estonia (since 1991).

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AS THE WORLD'S FIRST NURSING QUEEN

As an administrator, educator, and researcher, Nightingale moved nursing from a disrespectable profession into autonomous and evidence-based practice (Shetty 2016). After her enthusiastic activities in the Crimean War (1853–1856), Florence Nightingale became a symbol of patience and caring for the sick and wounded in difficult conditions.

Nightingale walked past the wards at night, offering support to patients; with this, she earned the nickname "The Lady with the Lamp" because that is how, with a lantern in her hand, she went to check the health of wounded soldiers. "She is a guardian angel in these hospitals without any exaggeration, and so soon as her slender body glides down the corridor, the relief and gratitude are seen in the face of every soldier," *The Times* wrote during the Crimean War (Sarapuu 2020: 2). "The Lady with the Lamp" is the most stereotypical image of Nightingale, in the closest connection with which the archetype of the queen of nursing has developed. Such Nightingale is represented in many works of art.

Figure 2. *Florence Nightingale, the lady with the lamp. Coloured lithograph. Wellcome V0006579. jpg. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Florence_Nightingale._Coloured_lithograph._Wellcome_V0006579.jpg.*

The Mary Evans Picture Library (Evans n.d.), a collection of historical images, contains a total of 63 different images of Florence Nightingale, of which 15, or nearly 24%, depict her walking between the rows of beds or nursing the sick in the barrack hospital at Scutari (Fig. 2).

Recently, the popular romantic perspective of Florence Nightingale as "The Lady with the Lamp" has come under critical regard. She was by all accounts a difficult person to get along with, and her privileged upbringing led to difficult relationships with the medical staff and other nursing contingents in the Crimea (Small 2017 [1998]; Williams 2008). Even more, Florence Nightingale is considered an astute and perhaps manipulative influencer, having been born into a wealthy and well-connected family (Williams 2008).

Nightingale's representation in the society of her era was very positive. Her activities were noticed and acknowledged. In 1855, Queen Victoria donated a gold enamelled brooch to Florence Nightingale. This brooch, the design of which was supervised by Prince Albert, is an engraved verso with a dedication from Queen Victoria "To Miss Florence Nightingale, as a mark of esteem and gratitude for her devotion towards the Queen's brave soldiers, from Victoria R. 1855" (Evans n.d.).

Although Nightingale is remembered above all for her activities in the Crimean War, her greatest achievements are attempts to establish social reforms in health care and nursing. This was facilitated by the conditions and hopes of the Victorian era (1837–1901). Florence Nightingale had a strong religious orientation. On 7 February 1837, she felt a mystical call, the "voice of God", telling her that her mission was to help people and improve their well-being. However,

for women of Florence Nightingale's social status, becoming a nurse was not considered appropriate. In Britain in the mid-1800s, nursing was not a highly respected profession. Hospitals were very dirty, unpleasant places, and to the wealthy parents of a young woman of higher social status, such an endeavour seemed like a nightmare (Selanders 2020). Despite parental objections, Florence stuck to her vocation and enrolled as a nursing student for Protestant deaconesses at Pastor Fliedner Hospital in Kaiserswerth, Germany, in 1844. There she studied basic nursing skills, the importance of patient monitoring, and the values of good hospital management (Brand 2018).

> *Her observation and organisation skills; a commitment to the fundamental requirements of those with health needs; a recognition of the power of collecting, analysing and using data to illustrate the need for change; and her ability to engage politicians, scientific collaborators and the media to influence opinion and change are all qualities that are critical to infection prevention and control practitioners of today.* (Loveday 2020: 4)

Nightingale set up a nursing school at St Thomas' Hospital in 1860 (Andrews 2019). The school operated for 31 years (Lewis 2019). Students came from all over the world to attend the Nightingale School. After graduating, they returned to their homeland, mainly as managers and trainers (Talvik & Tulva & Ernits 2020b). Florence Nightingale was also one of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century (Hallett 2020).

Using infographics, Nightingale was also a pioneer in visualizing data, effectively using the ability to distinguish statistical data graphically. In addition to her nursing queen status, Nightingale has also been considered a "Design Hero" (Andrews 2019) because she presented her arguments in the form of easy-to-understand graphical images.

Florence Nightingale earned the respect of fellow human beings not for her character, which could sometimes be sharp and authoritarian, but for her ideas, vision, and intelligence (Florence Nightingale 2018). She became a popular heroine, a queen, whose writings were constantly published in newspapers and other periodicals. As a woman, she often wrote anonymously. Behind the scenes, she advised on the establishment and operation of royal commissions, which benefited the society as a whole (Andrews 2019).

ANNA ERMA AS THE FOUNDER OF A NURSING SCHOOL IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA (1918–1940)

Like Nightingale, the first Estonian nursing queen Anna Erma (1884–1974) devoted her entire life to her profession. Anna Erma was educated at the Bethesda Strelna Deaconess House in St. Petersburg. From 1907, Erma worked as a deaconess in Germany, Russia, and Finland. She was a surgical nurse in German military hospitals during World War I (1914–1917) and the head nurse at Tallinn Military Hospital during the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920). Erma also stayed in France and Switzerland for a while to get acquainted with the work and care of the hospitals there (Reinart 2019).

Erma was one of the founders of the Estonian Nurses Association in 1923 (A.H.L. 1974). One of the first and most important tasks of the association was to establish a nursing school, as various nursing courses could not replace the traditional school. Being aware of the innovations and knowing the situation of treatment and nursing in Estonia, Anna Erma understood well that in addition to the doctors being trained at university, hospitals also need well-trained, professional nurses. Thus, a school for nurses at the University of Tartu was opened at the end of 1925. Anna Erma was invited to be the head of the boarding school, which operated there until the school was closed in 1941 (Anna Erma n.d.).

Anna Erma grew up in a deeply religious family. The education at the nursing school was based on religious principles, as Anna Erma herself had experienced. The meals began and ended with a prayer, and spiritual songs were sung in the hall (Otsasoo 1940; Fig. 3).

Figure 3. *The first graduates of Erma's School of Nurses in a music class. Anna Erma is in a dark dress in the middle. Students wear the school uniform: a light-blue dress with a length of 25 cm from the ground and a white apron, white or grey stockings, white headwear, and shoes with low heels (Anna Erma n.d.). Unknown photographer. Estonian Health Museum THM F 852.*

The school and the hostel had certain rules that were followed by both the students and teachers. Students had to get used to the discipline, to the exact performance of their duties. The school uniform was worn both at school and in the street and in the clinic (Anna Erma n.d.).

Like Nightingale, Erma considered it important that theory should be closely linked to practice. Erma said that "there is no time to study at the sick-bed" (Reinart 2019: 14). In Erma's School of Nurses, four sample rooms with beds and nursing equipment were set up. Erma's School of Nurses laid the foundation for the further development of nursing principles for future generations. Therefore, Anna Erma can be considered the first queen of Estonian nursing. She was also recognized by the state. The Estonian state awarded her with the medal of the Red Cross for participating in the Estonian War of Independence (Anna Erma n.d.).

ANETTE MASSOV AS THE PROMOTER OF PRACTICAL NURSING IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA (1918–1940)

During the same historical period, another nursing queen, Anette Massov, entered the arena. Anette Massov (1883–?) also received her first education in St. Petersburg. Later on Massov studied at the Red Cross School of Nurses in Tallinn. Immediately after graduating (1904), she went to the Russo-Japanese War, taking part in it as a frontline nurse (Uus Eesti 1939). She operated in the ambulance train of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia. Massov received several awards for her activity during the war: Maria Pavlovna and the Russian emperor Nikolai II awarded a silver and a gold medal to Massov (Kikas 2018).

After 1914, nurse Massov took part in World War I, staying on the frontline part of the time (Uus Eesti 1939) and she was awarded the George Cross fourth degree (Kikas 2018). In 1919 Massov was appointed a head nurse at the Central Hospital of Tallinn. She worked continuously in Tallinn hospitals, being one of the few nurses who had taken part in the two wars and also treated soldiers wounded in the War of Independence (Uus Eesti 1939). Alongside her studies, Massov worked as a head nurse for 37 years. Like Nightingale, she had to go through very difficult trials, especially in the Far East and in World War I, where her work sometimes resulted in her coming under the fire. On 12 May 1939, Anette Massov was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal (Fig. 4) and a photograph of Florence Nightingale. The medal was awarded for services performed on the battlefield and during peacetime by the Florence Nightingale Society, based in Geneva (Kiviranna 1939).

Figure 4. *Medal* Ad Memoriam Florence Nightingale*, awarded to Anette Massov (Estonian Health Museum THM 05832E1701). The medal is one of the most beautiful objects in the Estonian Health Museum. It is awarded every two years by the Geneva International Committee of the Red Cross on 12 May, Florence Nightingale's birthday. Since 1912, the medal has been awarded to a total of more than 1,400 sisters of mercy who are dedicated to helping the sick and suffering during peace or war.*

Anette Massov is the only Estonian to receive the Nightingale Medal (Põder 1997). The tradition could not continue, because the Soviet occupation interrupted the continuity in Estonian nursing. During the pre-war Estonian Republic, Anette Massov provided practical nursing with the "Nightingale content", working for years as a head nurse and leading the development of the field.

The career of both Estonian nursing queens ended with the arrival of the Soviet occupation: Erma emigrated together with many Estonian intellectuals to Germany and later to South America, and Massov disappeared during World War II.

ILVE-TEISI REMMEL AS A NURSING QUEEN DURING THE TRANSITION FROM THE SOVIET PERIOD TO A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

In the period of Soviet power, the image of nursing and the stereotype of a nurse also changed. For the Soviet regime, health care was not only an individual right but also a "political act" (Starks 2017: 1718). Health care was politicized according to the communist orientation of the Soviet state. Next to the figures

of a female tractor driver and an astronaut, there was a nurse who had taken part in World War II, carrying a weapon (Fig. 5). The Stalin-era gender policy promoted the mass involvement of women in the work process and social activities (Kivimaa 2015) as well as changes in their roles, and the change of social attitudes was represented in the media, literature, and visual culture.

In nursing, this political direction led to the period of suppression and hierarchy, closure, and stagnation of development. Nurses worked under ideological pressure and had to follow the doctors' orders exactly. All the work and training of the nurses was politicized (Kõrran et al. 2008). The description of the main role of a nurse in publications was astounding. Nurses' chief responsibility was described as "accurately carrying out physician orders" (Kalnins & Barkauskas & Šesškevičius 2001: 142). The publications did not mention the independent role of a nurse in the assessment of patients' conditions, planning and application of nursing care (Ernits et al. 2019).

By the 1980s the health care system of Soviet Estonia was lagging far behind the Western standards. There was a shortage of employees, medicines, and equipment. The ratio of hospital beds and patients was disproportional. The main shortage was of support staff, including nurses and paramedics (Healy & McKee 1997). By the beginning of the 1980s all resources were exhausted, and economic misery reached the health care system. The fall of the Soviet Union caused the collapse of the existing health care system and it had to restart from scratch (Ernits & Talvik & Tulva 2019). The new crisis highlighted the need for a new nursing leader and paved the way for the arrival of the third nursing queen, Ilve-Teisi Remmel (b. 1938).

Figure 5. *Yulia Yarovskaya, a Soviet nurse who rescued 56 wounded soldiers in the Battle of Stalingrad in World War II (Stewart 2017).*

Ilve-Teisi Remmel chose the specialty of a feldsher. In 1957, she graduated from Tallinn Medical School and entered working life. Remmel gained her first experience in nursing and nursing management during the Soviet period. The "new period of awakening" started under Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* (1985–1991), beginning a process of democratization. By 1989, only 61% of Estonia's inhabitants were ethnic Estonians. Intellectuals and rural people were guardians of Estonian traditions and culture and those who contradicted Soviet policies and practices. In the years 1988 and 1989, the intellectuals emerged on the political arena during the so-called Singing Revolution (Estonian nationalist songs used as a form of protest during student marches in several cities) (Tulva 1997).

At the end of the 1980s, radical changes in nursing started. Again, it was possible to talk about nursing queens Florence Nightingale and Anna Erma. Estonian nurses had the opportunity to get acquainted with nursing organizations in the Western world. Ilve-Teisi Remmel organized conferences dedicated to Nightingale and Erma and numerous meetings to introduce their ideas (Remmel 2020). Continuous self-improvement and international training, which had been possible since the end of the 1980s, ensured success for Remmel in various positions: feldsher, nurse, head nurse, and leading specialist in the field of nursing (THCC n.d.; Fig. 6).

Figure 6. *Ilve-Teisi Remmel in the role of Soviet-period superior in 1979. Photograph from the private collection of I.-T. Remmel.*

Remmel consistently supported the idea of bringing the training of nurses to the level of higher education. The renewal of the nursing system, especially the training of nurses, became her life's work (Talvik & Tulva & Ernits 2020a). Being an active developer of nursing, Remmel was a member of the board of the Estonian Nurses Association (ENA) from 1967, and in 1988–2002 she was the chairwoman of the ENA. In 1990–1993 she was the president of the Baltic Nurses Association, in 1999–2015 a member of the board of the Estonian Council of Health Care Managers, in 1998–2002 the chairman of the Health and Social Work Professional Council, and since 2003 a member of the Tallinn School Health Council.

Ilve-Teisi Remmel achieved the most that could be achieved in the field of nursing. Since the beginning of the 1990s, when there was a difficult transition period in Estonia, Remmel helped many people in need, participating in charity events through a Christian organization (Remmel 2008). Faith and commitment have played an important role in Remmel's life and her contribution to the development of Estonian nursing is meaningful. Like the aforementioned queens, Ilve-Teisi Remmel has received national recognition and her diverse activities have been widely noticed. The Order of the Red Cross was conferred upon her in 1999, and in 2006 she was awarded the Order of Honorary Citizen of the City of Tallinn for organizing nursing care in Tallinn.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this article was to compile a study of the queens in nursing and to place the course of their lives in a socio-cultural context. Biographies offer opportunities to discuss the historical and cultural peculiarities (Renders & Haan & Harmsma 2017) of the story of Estonian nursing against the background of the queen archetype. In the study, the archetype of the nursing queen was opened against the personal background of the charismatic pioneers of nursing.

It is very difficult to answer the question of why one or another person chose a particular path, but given the person's life trajectory, relationships, affiliation, and position in the social field (Bourdieu 2003) and the choices that life could offer at any given time, it is more or less possible to construct an overview of the development of nursing in Europe, including Estonia. The preserved historical memory often reaches us in the form of historical photographs and texts that allow us to represent the past (Frank & Lange 2015).

Florence Nightingale became the leader and reformer of nursing because of the many prerequisites given by nature and the environment, including religion, origin, and a very thorough and versatile education. Secondly, the time when she was born required the emergence of a person with such qualities, as well as created the preconditions for her to achieve her goals. She fought to free

herself from the restrictions imposed on women by Victorian society, and she carried out a complete revolution in nursing. In many ways, nursing care has evolved, but the principles of nursing founded by Nightingale are still alive.

Florence Nightingale's ideas were represented all over the world. Nightingale created a school that carried a whole system of values as a symbolic capital (Bourdieu 2003), which combined the upbringing, education, and behavioural culture that nursing school students had to embrace and follow. Equally strong was the nursing culture in Estonia created by Anna Erma and Anette Massov, which also included, in addition to nursing activities, norms of behaviour, attitudes, principles of being a nurse and a responsible person. This nursing culture developed constantly until the Soviet period degraded and ruined it. During the Soviet regime, the previously built training system for nurses was demolished. In the 1980s, a gradual liberation began, the ideas of the Western world penetrated through the Iron Curtain, and this gave the opportunity to act and created a fertile soil for the third Estonian nursing queen, Ilve-Teisi Remmel. It was possible to start changing the status of the nurses again.

Florence Nightingale lived in Victorian England, where women's roles were strictly defined by society, and despite the limitations of her status, she carried out a revolution in health care. The queens of Estonian nursing, Anna Erma and Anette Massov, began to build up nursing during the young Republic of Estonia, when the wars revealed an increased need for nursing care and Estonia was open to Europe, which made it possible to learn from colleagues in neighbouring countries. Ilve-Teisi Remmel started developing nursing during the Soviet period, when the range of possibilities was limited, and continued in re-independent Estonia, where the opportunities were diverse again.

In 1875, as an elderly and experienced advisor, Nightingale wrote to her graduates the following lines that became an important credo of her life's work:

> *A woman with a healthy, active tone of mind, plenty of work in her, and some enthusiasm, who makes the best of everything, and, above all, does not think herself better than other people because she is a "Nightingale Nurse", that is the woman we want.* (Nightingale & Nash 2007 [1914]: 108).

During changes, societies create a need for symbolic figures, strong personalities, whose behaviour is exemplified and whose activities become archetypal. Nightingale's ideas about patient-centred care were represented in the winds of change in Estonian society and achieved sustainable development under the leadership of the queens of Estonian nurses.

The awakening of new potential leaders in nursing, health care, and other areas of society is relevant and very possible in the current context of a pandemic, when we as a society are facing numerous new challenges. The pandemic

and other global issues have reminded us that there are limits to the global economy and the growth of human well-being. Soon the questions of how to tolerate the inevitable change ahead so that during the change foundations of people's orderly coexistence would not be destroyed, will become topical. There is always a part of the past in the future, and so present and future leaders need a legacy from the past leaders to induce a different kind of change in society.

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PLOTS OF GOTHIC ORIGIN IN UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE PROSE

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Abstract: The article deals with plot elements of Gothic origin present in Ukrainian folk legends and other prose works: people and cattle sinking into the earth, and witches' curses. Those motifs can be traced back to the Migration Period when the Germanic tribes entered the Circum-Pontic region. Despite the significant time lapse, the relics of those times still remain in the European folklore in the form of certain plots or plot elements. A widespread legend about a person punished by God for tilling the earth at Easter is comparable to an accident with some Gothic troops crossing a bridge across the river in Jordanes's *Getica*. The beliefs about the reasons of the Gothic empire's downfall are to some extent similar to those about the Zaporizhian Sich's demise.

Keywords: Circum-Pontic region, legend, plot, the Goths, Ukrainian folklore

Comparative analysis acquires special significance in the studies of complex cultural phenomena as it allows to reveal things remaining hidden during work with isolated traditions and to reinterpret the already-known facts, their correlation and principles underneath. The comparative approach permits not only to understand separate traits, but also to provide more accurate characteristics of the entire phenomenon and to find its place within the range of other cultural manifestations. A complex study of Ukrainian ethnogeny involves scrupulous work with different kinds of sources, including folkloric ones. The latter still remain largely unexplored in the comparative context, so numerous issues are left without answers. A search for parallels invariably leads to the extensive realm of folklore variations, branching of oral traditions, plurality of historic types of expression, and, along with this, to the sphere of ethnic history in all its specificity and complexity. For instance, it is possible to trace the motifs of

Visigothic origin in Spanish folklore (Menéndez Pidal 1956) regardless of the considerable temporal gap. Similarly, the reminiscences of the motifs of the Migration Period are present in the folklore of the Ukrainians, especially in *dumas* (epic poems) and legends.

JORDANES'S STORY

Recordings of Gothic "folklore" mostly belong to the Early Medieval Period and are included in the context of book learning, primarily, the first Gothic chronicles. It was Vladimir Toporov, a Russian linguist and mythologist, who noted places in the Latin text by Jordanes possessing an undeniable imprint of folkloric origin (Toporov 1987: 164–165). In particular, *Getica* (Jordanes 1960) mentions the arrival of the Goths under Filimer's guidance to the northern Circum-Pontic region where they suffered an accident while crossing a river:

> *Searching for the most appropriate lands and places [to settle] he came to the lands of Scythia called Oium in their language (pervenit ad Scythiae terras quae lingua eorum Oium vocabantur). Filimer, having been delighted with great abundance of those lands (ubi delectatus magna ubertate regionum), moved half of his troops there, after which, as it was said, the bridge cast over a river broke irreparably, so no-one could traverse or go back. They also say that those lands are secluded, surrounded by quaking bogs and deeps, so the Nature itself made it inaccessible (inpervitum), by combining both. One can believe travellers' claims that till these very days voices of cattle sound there and signs of the human [presence], but they are heard from afar (verumtamen hodieque illic et voces armentorum audiri et indicia hominum depraehendi commeantium attestationem, quamus a longe audientium, credere licet)* ... (Jordanes 1960: 70; Monumenta 1882: 60).

UKRAINIAN MORAL LEGENDS

Vladimir Toporov found certain correspondences to the motif of audible sounds made by cattle and, apparently, also humans trapped underground or underwater, as Jordanes's text says, in Romanian, Belarussian, Lithuanian, and Latvian folklore (Toporov 1983: 255; 1984: 133; 1987: 165–167). At the same time, in Ukraine – in western and eastern Podolia, Galicia, Boiko region, Pokuttia, Transcarpathia, western and eastern Polissya, and other places there

exist hundreds of mythological legends about a ploughman who went to till his field on a holiday, Easter (*Velykden*, literally 'Big Day') or Rakhman Easter (*Rakhmans'kyi Velykden*, 'Easter of the ancient wise soothsayers'). This person was believed to have sunk into the ground together with his oxen or horses, and his drover, the latter sometimes being his wife. From under the ground the ploughman can be heard singing and shouting to his oxen, and the animals mooing. The places where the ploughman went underground are known as a trap, a window, a lake, a bog, a swamp, a depression, a hole *(zapadnya, viknyshhe, vikno, viknyna, ozero, mlaka, reveha, provalyshche, proval, yamnytsya)*. Sometimes it is thought that at that place there appeared a burial mound holding the ploughman's name, or big stones, or a spring, or a lake. So, the natural landscape itself changed. Such legends are no less numerous than the ones talking about towns that disappeared under the ground, as well as villages, castles, barns, churches, cathedrals, chapels, bell towers, and inns. There are variations talking about a local lord who rode in a carriage with his wife and a coachman, got in a swamp and drowned there together with the horses and the cart (Pushyk 2004: 156).

Zakarpattia Region

In particular, the appearance of Lake Svyrydove in a legend from the village of Pidpolozzya of the Volovets District of the Zakarpattia region is associated with a sin committed by a poor man who started tilling his land on Easter and was swallowed by the ground together with his bulls. The Christian elements are intertwined with the old motif of petrifaction: there are two stones believed to be Svyryd and his wife who turned into stone (Sokil 1995: 123).

This tale relates that between the villages of Vyshni and Nizhni Veretsky (now Verkhni Vorota and Nizhni Vorota) of the Volovets District there is a small pond (lake) the size of half a morgen of land. That lake is called Svyrydove. In summer, in time of severe drought, it becomes so shallow that cattle can go through it. A certain part of this lake is very deep and called "a window" by the locals. No streams come in or out of the lake, yet it has still remained the same for many years. Svyryd was a rich farm owner of Vyshni Veretsky in the year dot, and this lake was named Svyrydove after him. This landowner had servants and housemaids to help him in his household and did not pay them every month as now, but for a year, and the pay for one servant consisted of footwear and outerwear as well as the right to plough one morgen of land for themselves and sow it with oats within one day. One of Svyryd's servants, receiving such a payment, persuaded Svyryd to allow him to cultivate his land on

Velykden ('Big Day') to be able to plough as much as possible, because it was the longest day. On Easter, at dawn, they went into the field to plough. The servant hurried the oxen and shouted at them: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day". Svyryd's wife brought them their meals. When a High Mass started in the nearby church and the Gospel was read, the land began to groan and shift. Where they had ploughed, the earth caved in and water came pouring out. And where the plough, yokes, shafts, and the beam were, there appeared a broom bush from shafts and a small birch from the beam in the middle of the lake. There are two big stones near the lake – most probably Svyryd and his wife who had turned into stone. People also say that sometimes when you pressed your ear to the ground, you could hear words sounding from underneath the earth's surface: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day". But no people of faith would ever visit that site anyway (Pysana 1994: 94–95).

Yet another variation claims that there was a poor but miserly man in the village of Nizhni Veretski (now – Nizhni Vorota) of the Volovets District. He did not fast and liked to drink. The man had a small patch of land on top of a hill, but possessed nothing to till it. His prosperous neighbours, having oxen or horses, had long since ploughed their own fields. The man decided to go and ask his neighbour to lend him his plough and bulls on Easter as the neighbour was unlikely to do any work on that day. The latter pitied the poor fellow and lent him a plough, warning him that it was an unforgivable and potentially punishable sin against God. The man did not heed the advice, though. When everybody else was going to the church to consecrate an Easter cake, salted beef, and cheese, he went to the fields with his wife. She was driving the bulls, and he was holding the plough's handles. After the work was done, they started to have a meal of some Easter cake and cheese. The moment they took the consecrated bread, the earth opened up and swallowed the field, the bulls, and the sinful couple. So God punished the sinners who did not worship Easter. Instead of the ploughed field there appeared a seemingly bottomless lake, and in the middle of its waters a stone stood in place of the bulls and the plough. And the tiller's whip turned into reeds around the stone.

In the village of Vyshni Veretsky of the Volovets District old people related that once upon a time there was a farmer called Svyryd. It was a rich man who had servants. In ancient times landowners did not pay money for work, but settled accounts with corn. Because Svyryd's servant was decent and dutiful, the farmer promised him to have a day for tilling his land to sow oats. The servant wanted to till as much as possible and he chose *Velykden*, because he thought it would be the longest day in the year. When Easter came, the landowner Svyryd and his servant went ploughing before dawn. They ploughed, and the servant urged the oxen: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day". At midday, when

worship took place in churches, the ground shook beneath them and cracked. Water appeared on the ploughed field. It still exists nowadays. A willow and a short birch grow in the middle of this waterbody. People believe that this willow grew out of the shafts of a yoke and the birch – from the servant's beam. According to old people, two big stones near the lake should be Svyryd and his servant. And every Easter during Mass in the church you can hear: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day!"

Other variations also talk about people who sank into the earth, such as a servant to whom a local landlord promised to lend oxen on a Sunday. The next Sunday was Easter. After the consecration of the cakes in church, the servant yoked the oxen and went to cultivate his field in the mountains between the locations of Stiv and Mutvytsia. He began to plough, urging the oxen: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day!". When these words had been uttered, the ploughman and the oxen turned into big boulders, the field sank under water and a deep lake appeared. Although the lake is already gone and transformed into a swampy marsh, people say that human voices are still heard there in early spring. And if one goes to the lake on Easter after Mass, they can hear how under the earth's surface the working animals are urged: "Hey, my oxen, hey, today is a big day!". In this version the lake is called Svyrydove, because Svyryd was the servant's name (Chori 2003: 108–111). A similar legend about a rich landowner Svyryd, who was turned to stone along with his servant near a lake, is known in the village of Kelechyn (Sen'ko 2003: 29–30).

In the village of Kostrynska Roztoka of Velykoberezne District there is a big swamp feared by the villagers, which is connected with several legends. The marsh is said to have appeared a very long time ago, when people still used wooden ploughs. Those who did not have horses or bulls to drag the plough had to pull it on their own. But it was very difficult to pull the plough; poor people had to expend great efforts. One peasant worked hard and long for a local rich man and did not have time to plough his own field. The peasant went to the master and begged him to give him oxen to plough his plot till Easter. At first the landowner did not want to give him oxen, but then he promised to lend them, but only when he himself had no need for them and his own lands were cultivated. And he said, "You have three days of Easter holidays... Go and plough not till Easter, but on Easter if you want!" At first, the peasant hesitated to commit such a profanity, but he had no choice as he had to feed his family. He took the oxen to the field on Easter. After he had started to plough, the earth underneath him slowly sagged and gradually turned into watery mud, sucking him and the oxen into its depths. The man tried to escape but did not succeed. The mud swallowed up him as well as his oxen. The marsh that replaced the field was called Kostrynska Swamp by the peasants. Older people believed

that the man was so punished for going out to plough on such a big holiday as Easter (Chori 2003: 123).

Old people from the village of Sukhyi in Velykoberezne District said that if somebody went to the landmark Solena Mlaka on Easter, when the consecration of Easter cakes was held, it was possible to hear the voice of a ploughman shouting: "To the left! To the right!" The village has a legend about a faithless man who yoked his oxen and went to plough with his servant when the others were carrying Easter cakes to the church for consecration. He ploughed up the area and then sat down with his servant on a furrow to rest. The piece of land that they had ploughed sank underground together with the landowner, his servant, oxen, and the plough as God was enraged by the unforgivable sin of them working on a great feast of Resurrection. The lake with moss-covered shores that supposedly appeared there later turned into marshland. The man's voice calling out to his bulls, "To the left! To the right!" was still heard at that place on Easter. His relatives cried there, their salty tears falling on the earth. Later the spot was called *Solena Mlaka* 'Salty Swamp' (Chori 2003: 204–205).

Ivano-Frankivsk Region

The motif of the tiller sinking into the earth as a punishment for working on Easter repeats in multiple locations in western Ukraine. In the village of Bortnyky in the Tlumak District of the Ivano-Frankivsk region a tiller sunk into the earth for working on *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden*, that is why it is now forbidden to do any field work on that day. In the village of Viktoriv in the Halych District a field used to be a cemetery for cholera victims. A local peasant tried tilling that land and sank under the earth's surface together with his bulls. Similarly, a man was believed to have been swallowed by the ground for working during big holidays on the Zahadky fields in the villages of Vodnyky and Dubivtsi in the Halych District. Near Havrylivka in the Nadvirna District there is a so-called *viknysche* 'window', where peasants ploughed on Easter, and the ploughman and the ox-driver with a pair of oxen and the plough disappeared into the ground and a spring formed at that place. In the village of Harasymiv in the Tlumach District a peasant met the same fate, and his voice is still heard from beneath the night before *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden* (Pushyk 2004: 156). According to another variant from Harasymiv, if one presses an ear to the earth on the day of Rakhman Easter, they can hear the cattle-driver's cries for help (Kolberg 1882: 199).

In the village of Dovhe in the Tysmenytsia District, in the field *Zapadnia* 'Trap', a ploughman disappeared under the earth's surface with his tool and

oxen or horses on Easter. Several other sites have similar legends attached to them: a man who ploughed on a holiday sank into the earth on the farmstead of Dubrivka in the Rohatyn District, near the villages of Zhovchiv and Uiizd. There appeared a spring called *Viknyna* 'Window' feeding a local river of Uizdsky Potik. A place name Uiizd is connected with Bohdan Khmelnytsky's[1] entry into the village (Pushyk 2004: 156).

In the village of Zahiria in the Halych District there is a mountain called Bobonets. There a peasant went to water his oxen and disappeared underground together with them. In the village of Mezyhirtsi in the same district, at the foot of Rostova Mountain, where there is a rocky sanctuary with *Bozhyi Tik* 'God's Threshing Floor', an old heathen altar, and the cave of Babyna Nora, which is called *Manastyr* 'Monastery', a ploughmen sank underground with his bulls, a plough, and a dog. On *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden* one could hear the sound of bells from underground. A similar legend about a ploughman in the village of Nizhnia Lipitsia in the Rohatyn District was connected with *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden*. In the village of Olesha in the Tlumach District, on the Annunciation Day a man ploughed the first furrow in the field and sank under the earth's surface (Pushyk 2004: 156).

The same story was known in the village of Klishchivna in the Rohatyn District, on the riverside of Hnyla Lypa. In the village of Korshiv in the Kolomyia District is a field called *Strihovytsia* ('Field of Witches') where a ploughman disappeared with a plough and the oxen, which went to drink water. It happened on a holiday. In the village of Petryliv in the Tlumach District a serf ploughed for the master for a whole week, and the master gave oxen and a plough to the ploughman also on Easter Sunday. When he began to plough, water broke through, a swamp formed, and the ploughman with oxen and the plough disappeared. In the village of Prutivka in the Sniatyn District on *Velykden* a ploughman was able to plough one part of the field before sinking. One could hear from under the ground how he urged: "Hey! To the left! To the right!" In the village of Puzhnyky of the Tlumach District is a field called *Yamnytsia* ('Field of Holes'), which was ploughed by a man on Easter, and this man had the same destiny (Pushyk 2004: 157).

Between the villages of Siltse and Tiaziv (Keziv) in the Tysmenytsia District there is Rakhmans'kyi Field where on St. Nicholas Day (or Rakhman Easter) a tiller managed to make three furrows in the earth before water came gushing out, and an abyss swallowed him. Local people of Tiaziv show a *reveha* ('hole') in the earth where it happened. Another version places this event near Mount Lysa 'the Bald', where there is a well of Bila Hlyna and a local river called Drovnych flows below. A Masurian settler worked in the field though the locals warned him not to do that on St. Nicholas the Wondermaker's Day. The man

blasphemously answered that it would be him who would make another wonder by tilling and raking the field – and paid for the sacrilege in the same way as the other characters. In the village of Tarasivka (Yatsivka) in the Tlumach District, in the place where later on there was a collective farm, is a lake called *Vikno* 'Window', in which a ploughman shouts at his oxen who sank underground with him and his plough. In the village of Tysiv of the Dolyne District there is a deep pond which never gets overgrown with aquatic plants. A man ploughing his field is believed to have disappeared there. In Shevelivka, which today forms a part of the town of Deliatyn in the Nadvirna District, at Easter, while people were coming back home from the church, one man ploughed and disappeared with his bulls and the plough underground. According to another legend, a church sank underground and Lake Mors'ke Oko 'Sea Eye' appeared (Pushyk 2004: 157).

Lviv Region

The Lviv region is also known for almost identical tales. In the village of Bolozva Dolishnia (Nizhnie) in the Sambir District a rich man ploughed on the Annunciation Day and sank underground with his horses and the plough. When you put your ear to the ground, you could hear him shouting at his horses. Between the villages of Dubyna and Kamianka in the Stryi District there is Lake Chortove ('Devils' Lake') where there used to be a field that consumed a man with his oxen and the plough for working on Easter. In the village of Vovkiv in the Pustomytiv District there is Petro's Pit into which ploughman Petro fell with his horses and the plough. In the village of Halivka in the Staryi Sambir District a man ploughed at Easter, and the ground collapsed beneath him. One could hear him shouting at oxen underground. In the village of Husiatychi in the Zhydachiv District there is a pit called *Zapadnya* ('Trap'), where a rich man with a plough and oxen fell when ploughing on Easter, because he forgot that it was a holiday. In the village of Demydiv in the same district there is a cross-shaped lake *Sviate* ('Holy Lake') where a rich man with his serf, oxen, and a plough was swallowed by the earth for the sin of ploughing on a holiday. In the village of Kniazhe of the Mostyska District a man ploughed on Easter and fell in with his horses (oxen) and the plough. In the village of Kryvka in the Skole District the same thing happened with a ploughman on Easter. It is still possible to hear his oxen moaning underground. In the village of Ozhydiv in the Busk District a part of this village is called *Boloto* 'Swamp' by the locals and it is attributed the very same reputation. Here a man ploughed on Easter

and sank underground. He re-surfaced with a plough and horses at the foot of Pidlyssia Mountain (Pushyk 2004: 157–158).

In the village of Oriava in the Skole District, on Dzvyniv Mountain, a man ploughed on Easter and disappeared with his oxen and farm equipment into the earth. In the village of Rozvadiv in the Mykolaiv District there is a hole in a field where a ploughman sank underground on Easter in the same fashion. This field is called Rukove, which could be connected with the Rakhmans. One could hear how he hastens his oxen under the earth's surface. In the village of Rudnyky in the same district a man ploughed with oxen and sank underground on Easter. He was heard shouting there: "To the left! To the right!" In the village of Smozhe in the Skole District there is Lake Hostyliv which appeared on that place where a man ploughed with oxen on *Velykden* and disappeared under the earth. Nowadays he is heard shouting from below the ground: "Hey! Hey!" So he urges the oxen. Once in the village of Ternava in the Staryi Sambir District horses stopped in the middle of a field on a holiday, and the ploughman beat them, shouted at them, until he became dumb. Nowadays one can hear how beneath the surface of the earth he beats the horses and shouts: "Gee up! Gee up!", because he got his voice back under the earth's surface. In the village of Turie of the same district there was a man who did not believe in God and went to plough his land on Easter. His oxen together with him and his plough were swallowed by the earth, and nowadays his shouts can be heard from under the ground. In the village of Yavoriv in the Turkiv District, on Studena Mountain, there is a spring. A man ploughed there on Easter and sank into the ground with his plough and oxen for this sin. Now it is heard from under the ground: "To the left! To the right!" (Pushyk 2004: 158).

Ternopil Region

In the Ternopil region, in the village of Koropets in the Monastyryska District, there is a tale of a rich cattle-breeder who never went to church or prayed. He did not observe religious holidays and made no difference between working days and holy festivals, worrying only about his wealth. He learned from his neighbour that the next day was *Velykden,* and decided to plough his field on that day to test whether this day was big or not. Early on Easter peasants made preparations for taking Easter cakes to the church to be consecrated, but the rich man fed his oxen and went into the field to plough. People went to the church with cakes, but the rich man was trying to plough a furrow, shouting: "Hey, to the left, my grey one!" His dog was with him. When the rich man started his

work, his oxen began mooing, his dog howled, and the earth itself roared and a chasm opened. The earthquake created a lake with poisonous fetid water where neither fish or crayfish nor frogs could live, and even birds died when they flew over that place. During High Mass on Easter one can still hear the man shouting "Hey, hey!" in the lake (Hnatiuk 1902: 102–103).

In the village of Velesniv in the same district a man ploughed on a holiday and sank underground with his plough and oxen. In the village of Vistria of the same district, a farmer went out to a field to plough on Easter, but the ground parted beneath him, and he sank underground together with the oxen and the plough. In the village of Volytsia of the Terebovlya District, now part of the town of Terebovlya, a man went to plough on a holiday and fell underground. According to popular belief the name of the village (Volytsia 'village of oxen') is supposed to derive from the fact that oxen still sink underground there. In the village of Honcharivka of the Monastyryska District a man went to plough his field with horses and a plough on *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden* (Mid-Pentecost) and disappeared underground with all of them. In the village of Zadariv of the same district a man took his oxen into a field for ploughing, but fell underground with all of them, and the spring of *Vyknyshche* 'Window' emerged instead. During major religious holidays people could hear him moaning and shouting at his oxen. In the village of Kamyanky in the Pidvolochysk District a man said that once it was *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden*, he would have to plough a lot; but the earth swallowed him, and now people can hear how he sings and shouts at his bulls underground. In the village of Narayiv in the Berezhany District, in the Fihurna Valley, on St. George's Day, a ploughman sank into the earth with oxen and ploughs. In the village of Mozolivka in the Pidhaitsi District there is a field that the locals call Bendera, where on the *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden* a ploughman fell underground with his oxen, because he said that on the big day he would plough more land. In the village of Pechirna in the Lanivtsi District a swamp appeared at the place where a ploughman with his horses and ploughs sank underground when he was ploughing on Easter. In the village of Pidvysoke of the Berezhany District a Polish farmer named Jasko worked on St. Nicholas Day when a hare came running across his way, and his cart fell over the edge of a precipice. In the village of Stari Petlykivsti of the Buchach District a ploughman sank underground in the field with his plough and horses on *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden* (Pushyk 2004: 158).

Khmelnytsky Region

In the Khmelnytsky region, outside the village of Svichna of the Letychiv District there is a depression with a well called *Divochka* 'Maiden'. At that place an old man with his daughter tilled their land during a religious festival and, as a result, sank into the earth together with the plough (Pushyk 2004: 158).

Vinnytsia Region

In the Vinnytsia region, in the village of Travna of the Sharhorod District, there is a deep ravine turned into a pond. A man ploughed his field on Easter, his bulls went amok and drew him into the gorge. In the village of Tarasivka of the Zhmerynka District there is "a window" (deep water) where bulls drowned with ploughs while drinking water. They were eventually found in the environs of the city of Yampil (Pushyk 2004: 156).

Volyn Region

In the village of Troianivka in the Manevychi District of the Volyn region people say that Lake Bolotsko used to be a field with the soil so hard that nobody could till it. A poor peasant asked it for himself and managed to get it ploughed. A rich man, whose lands were near that field, decided to till a patch of that no-man's land. But he would be ridiculed if he started ploughing together with the poor man. That is why he decided to do that on the third day after Easter, when everybody was in church. At the very dawn he set off and started to plough. But his plough got stuck. The rich man left the plough there and went to the cart, cursing the field: "May you go down!" At that moment the earth started to sink and disappeared underwater. The rich man's wife returned from the church and went to take her absent husband home. Having seen the lake, she understood the predicament and started weeping. Then she heard her husband's distant voice. Pressing her ear to the earth, she heard him urging on the oxen and became dumb forever, also losing her speech and mind. People say that even today one can hear the rich man calling out to his oxen on the very same date that it happened. But no-one who hears that will not tell anyone about it due to the risk of losing their speech forever, similar to that woman (Davydiuk 1996: 91).

Chernihiv Region

It is possible to find traces of the legend outside western Ukraine. In the village of Krasylivka, now in the Bakhmach District of the Chernihiv region, there is a similar tale about a man called Svyryd. When *Velykden* came, he desired to make sure that this was really a big day, and decided to work in the field as much as possible. In the first day of Easter he yoked oxen to the plough and went to work together with his farm labourers. When people were praying to God in the church, he ploughed. Peasants went home with consecrated Easter cakes, the bells in the belfry were pealing, and he was still ploughing. As soon as they began to make the tenth furrow, something hammered very terribly underground, and Svyryd sank into the earth together with his oxen. A mound arose where the man had perished. It is called Svyryd's Tomb to this day. When one comes to the mound and presses their ear to the earth, they can hear someone calling to the bulls: "Hey, hey!" (Kulish 1847: 69; 1857: 30–31).

GOTHIC DESTINY IN UKRAINIAN CALENDARICAL FOLKLORE

The motifs mentioned above are much more ancient than the Christian paradigm. Cult stones, ancient altars, and traces of idolatry in the related toponymy serve as a further proof of that. These motifs show the confrontation of a male ploughman, a bearer of cultural activities and civilization, with natural elements as chaos. Earth (less frequently, water) is an element of life and death, consuming by water means returning to the primeval chaotic state, and at the same time, a possibility for rebirth. At the time of major religious holidays the barriers between the worlds of the living and the dead become thinner (there are Ukrainian legends about revenants in an abandoned/closed church celebrating their own feast, *Navskyi Velykden* ('Easter of the Dead'), coinciding with *Rakhmans'kyi Velykden*). On such days the chaos forces are especially active. The holidays are seams of a kind, in which the supernatural seeps through the fabric of the organized existence. Correspondingly, a person who voluntarily or accidentally approaches the "window" (one of the names for pernicious places in the legends) is at risk of getting to the world of the dead by sinking through the earth. After getting stuck between the two worlds, a person gets a chance to have their voice heard only on this particular religious holiday next year. The transfer to another dimension does not necessarily result in total destruction – the person continues with their everyday chores as before crossing the border. As a punishment for the sacrilege, the victim may be stuck in a temporal loop, repeating the act that broke some sacred laws and reliving that moment

repeatedly. Extremely rarely the ones getting under the earth's surface are able to return to another location; whether they are dead or alive is unclear.

The Goths were similarly divided between the two worlds, having lost any chance of getting back after the bridge had collapsed (a bridge as well as a window/door is a symbol of transitions between worlds). The link to another realm gets severed by the act of blasphemy, destroying the very earth on which the lawbreaker stood. The unhallowed space is lost to "the cultured space" and becomes hostile, unsuitable for agriculture and people's presence. Swamp and/or deep water are a typical "no-man's land" believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, an antipode to farming land.

In *Getica*, Oium is reported to be surrounded by swamps and deep water, so it can be viewed as a separate realm with limited access for people (Jordanes directly refers to it as *inpervitum*, 'inaccessible'). The bridge's collapse as well as sinking of the earth, the emergence of deep water/swamps can be classified as an act of closing the gate between two dimensions, which irrevocably divides people into two groups. An important feature of the folkloric nature of Gothic legends is that the phenomenon could be heard 'even today'– *hodie*. The foremost question must surely be: how much of this account was preserved in the Gothic *carmina prisca pene storicu ritu*? Was it an entire story, or only parts of it (Christensen 2002: 303)? We can deem it possible to assume that the original legend, only a fragment of which Jordanes presents to us, used to contain a motif of a certain rash action, of breaking a rule of conduct that ultimately led to the bridge collapsing. That incident may have been possibly related to some pagan deities whom the baptized historian was reluctant to mention.

WITCHES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ZAPOROZHIAN SICH

If one takes into consideration the fact that the Promised Land for the Goths, Oium, serving as the destination of their migration, is associated with the lower Dnieper (Toporov 1984: 130–131), there appears one even more noteworthy motif of Gothic origin: the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich foretold by the witches who were executed by Zaporozhian Cossacks. This legend still spread in the south of Ukraine in the late nineteenth century:

> *The Sich treasures, as the Zaporozhian Cossacks who survived the destruction complained, were plundered by the Don Cossacks.*
> *– Our Sich perished for nothing! The poor thing went down for all the eternity! Moscow has made a nest inside it! – So spoke the Zaporozhians*

> *about Colonel Norov who remained as an overseer after the destruction of the Cossack Host.*
> *– A woman made our glorious Zaporozhian Sich fall, a woman! It was the truth that the cursed witch foretold. – So explained one old man, a survivor from the Zaporozhian times.*
> *– Why so, Grandpa?, his grandchildren kept asking him.*
> *– So it was. Once upon a time there was no rain in Zaporozhia, everything in the fields turned black, burned down to the last little blade of grass. Hunger was upon us. Wise men suspected that the witches were stealing rain, and found two-three old witches. When the Zaporozhians started to torment them, they confessed on their own. When the witches were drowned in the river, one cried out dying:*
> *– So you, Zaporozhians, destroy us, old women, and a woman will destroy you! And so the curse of the damned witch came true: Czarina Catherine destroyed the Zaporozhian nest – the Sich.* (Nadkhin 1876: 146)[2]

The prototype of this legend is also present in the remnants of the Gothic oral tradition. In *Getica* by Jordanes (1960: 121–122) the Gothic king Filimer found women practicing magic among his tribe and expelled them from his military camp – "female magicians whom he [Filimer] called *haliurunnas* in his own language [Gothic]" (*magas mulieres quas patrio sermone Haliurunnas is ipse cognominat*). In their exile, while roaming the desert, they met unclean spirits of the waste and gave life to the terrible Huns, "small in height, dirty, and weak, hardly resembling human beings, and whose language was hardly human" (Jordanes 1960: 90; Monumenta 1882: 89). In the addenda of Landolfus Sagax to Paul the Deacon's chronicle (circa the year 1000) and chronicles of Ekkehard of Aura (1125) and Sigebert of Gembloux (1111), these spirits were called the fauns (*quos Faunos Ficarios vocant*) (Monumenta 1878: 344; Monumenta 1843: 123, 301), in other words, minor forest deities. The latter were considered simultaneously protectors of herds grazing in the woods and impersonations of fertility. Roman poets often mention fauns, inhabitants of wood groves, who roamed about at night and disturbed people. Roots of forest plants were thought to be a protection against them, but one needed to dig them out at night in order not to have "a woodpecker peck out their eyes". Another way was to leave a sacrifice under a sacred tree (Nemirovskii 1964: 46). The forest nature of those spirits can be further proved by Jordanes (1960: 123–126), who claimed that the Hun hunters were sent a deer showing them a route through Syvash to the Crimea (Scythia Minor) by those creatures (Jordanes 1960: 90–91; Monumenta 1882: 60). Therefore, the spirits in question could be an equivalent of a forest deity of hunting connected with deer, similarly to an Ossetian god Æfsati.

In both plots it is possible to detect the same dynamics between male and female principles on both macrosocial and microsocial levels. On the macrosocial level of the male-female system, under the conditions of patrilocality of the closed society, the real dominance of the male principle gives rise to its transcendental overcoming in the marginal forms of witchcraft driving the plot conflict. The bipolarity of the male and female principles translates into the interpretation of complex sociocultural and historic events. In accordance with mythological concepts, the feminine is associated with the creative forces of nature, so it is not a coincidence that the witches are exiled to the natural locus where they guarantee life's reproduction in union with the supernatural forces. The Huns produced by the exiled witches destroy the Gothic kingdom as a punishment of a kind. In the Zaporozhian legend similar destructive outcomes are ascribed to the punishment of the witches by the Cossacks. This act symbolically compromises the Cossacks' masculinity. The destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich, a male society, by Czarina Catherine II happens as a consequence of the Cossacks torturing witches who had power over the natural elements and could be regarded as scions of the Gothic *haliurunnas*. In the Cossacks' worldview, a woman on the Russian throne acted as a violation of the natural order of things, a crisis of the masculine matrix, a manifestation of witchcraft itself. That is why Czarina Catherine II got associated with the image of a witch in the Ukrainian folklore (Belova & Petrukhin 2008: 122–124).

Both plots also show the universal semantic *friend-enemy* opposition that is realized in the narrative folklore as a set of ethnocultural stereotypes related not only to the ethnic neighbours, but also to the entire surrounding world. Time and space are clearly divided into the sacred and the profane. The Ukrainian parallel proves, contrary to Otto Maenchen-Helfen's opinion (Maenchen-Helfen 1944–1945: 245–248), that Jordanes's report about the Gothic witches has folkloric rather than bookish origin.

ERMANARIC AND SAINT SABBAS AS COSSACKS?

As there have already been attempts to reconstruct separate fragments of the Gothic epic texts belonging to the cycle of the Ostrogothic king Ermanaric (*Hermanaricus, Eormenric, Jörmunrekkr*) subsequently defeated by the Huns, it is noteworthy that according to the oral records taken in the early nineteenth century from the last old Zaporozhian Cossacks, witnesses of the fall of the Sich, the first Zaporozhian *otaman* (military leader) and the founder of the Sich society was a certain Herman (Storozhenko 1957: 246–247; Ustnoye 1842: 85). It is important to remember that the Antes, possible forefathers of the modern

Ukrainians, were a part of Ermanaric's empire. Such identification of the medieval Goths with the Cossacks is oddly reflected in the Ukrainian folk belief that Saint Sabbas (*sviatyi Savka*) comes "from the Cossacks and is very kind to us" (*iz kozakov i duzhe do nas dobryi*) unlike Saint Nicholas who is believed to protect the Russian interests and does things "in the Muscovite favour" (*na moskovs'ku ruku*). This belief was recorded by Nikolai Leskov, a scholar of clandestine folk religiousness and a Russian writer, in his short story "Unbaptised Priest" (1877) (Leskov 1957: 202). It leads to important outcomes in the light of the classic work by Boris Uspenskii about the cult of Saint Nicholas, which also uses works by Leskov as an ethnographic source (Uspenskii 1982: 30, 32). What is more important is that Kostiantyn Tyschenko, a Ukrainian linguist and culturologist, stressed the fact of the Gothic ethnic origin of Saint Sabbas in connection with the above-mentioned ethnographic data (Tyschenko 2008: 460). It proves the possibility of the existence of the cultural substratum of Gothic origin in the Ukrainian inhabitants of the northern Circum-Pontic region.

CONCLUSION

The epic resettlement of the Goths preserved in the heroic legends at the time of Jordanes from Ravenna left an ineffaceable imprint on the national memory of the people who interacted with the Germanic tribes and came to take their place. Their motifs, re-interpreted and adapted according to Slavonic narrative tradition, played a role in the formation of the folklore concepts of Zaporozhian Cossacks' history. Studies of Ukrainian folklore, in which folk prose plays an important role, are going to contribute to solving of numerous other questions, for instance, the issues of the Scythian, Sarmato-Alanian, and Germanic substratum in composing the ethnographically recorded traditional Ukrainian culture.

NOTES

[1] Ukrainian Hetman of the Zaporozhian Host.

[2] The original text is as follows:

Богатства Сечи, как жаловались оставшиеся от разгрома Сечевики, разграблены Донцами.

– Пропала наша Сечь ни за цапову (козлиную) душу! На веки вечные, сердечная, провалилась! Московская Нора теперь в ней завелась! – так говорили Запорожцы о Полковнике Норове, который в первое время после уничтожения Коша оставлен был начальником в этих местах.

– Од бабы пропала наша славная Запорожская Сечь, от бабы! Правду напророчила проклятая ведьма, – толковал один чубатый старик, уцелевший от времен Запорожья.

– Як так, дедусю? – спрашивали внуки.

– А от воно. Як не було в Запорожьи целее лето дощa, все в поле почорнело, выгорело до последней былинки. Настав голод. Знающии люди догадались, що дощ крадуть ведьмы, и нашли двух, трех, таких старых ведьм, и як их пришпарили Сечовики, сами воны и повинились, а як стали их топить в речце, одна, утопаючи, и закричала:

– От же, вы, Запороженьки, губите нас, баб: сгубит и вас самих баба!

Воно так и вышло теперь по заклятью вражои ведьмы: Цариця Катерина розорила Запорозькее гнездо – Сечь.

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GENDER ROLE PERCEPTIONS IN SELECTED SOUTH-AFRICAN FOLKTALES

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to unpack gender role perceptions in selected South-African folktales. To this end, 65 purposefully selected folktales which reinforce character roles were analysed and interpreted, using narrative analysis. With the exception of a few that are used as instruments of contestation, the studied South-African folktales mainly serve as a tool to confirm the entrenched hegemonic philosophy of patriarchal communal life in terms of marriage, work, character traits, and authority. The rebelliousness of female characters against the patriarchal system in some folktales indicates that there is an emerging dynamism of discourse which aims at transforming the gender stereotype ideology inculcated in the folktales.

Keywords: culture, folklore, folktale, gender, role

INTRODUCTION

Folktales are stories which "are not considered as dogma or history; they may or may not have happened" (Bascom 1965: 4). They emanate from the thinking, perceptions, and experiences of individuals or a community (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 1993). Tales of marvellous themes (fairy tales), tales which reflect the real world's incidents (novellas), stories where super humans appear as characters (hero tales), tales of unusual events that are presumed to have really happened (legends), descriptions that justify how the present world and its inhabitants are the way they are now (etiological tales) and narrations which personify animals (animal tales) are all versions, with no clear demarcation, subsumed under 'folktale' (Thompson 1951 [1946]). To address the social truth of the time and preach the values anticipated by the people, common characteristics that folktales adhere to are narrating the escapades of characters, employing supernatural adversaries and/or supernatural helpers, rewarding the righteous and punishing the malicious (Norton 1987). With regard to their

literary quality, Dorson (1972: 60) claims that the "folktale embodies the highly polished, artistic story genres that have a relatively consistent, finished form".

Folktales have two purposes: amusement and socialisation. The instrumental value of folktales for these purposes is especially true for pre-literate communities that have no access to modern communication technologies. Though scholars, for example Dorson (1972: 60), argue that "folktales are told primarily for entertainment" so long as the social truth and communal values to be conveyed are imbued in them, distinguishing the primary and secondary purposes may not even be possible. The entertainment and the didactic purposes are inseparable. Along with enjoyment, enlightening the audience about their respective communities' philosophy of life is a central agenda.

Nurturing all necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude, folktales sustainably maintain the life philosophies of communities. Acknowledging the role of folktales in transmitting a community's strength and growth strategies for the generation to come, Opoku-Agyemang (1999: 118) argues that they provide "a closer account of the values of society than other forms of written, imaginative texts, given the context for the creation in both literary forms". Hence, it is safe to argue that folktales, as a component of folklore, offer penetrating pictures of the lifestyles of their respective communities. They are echoes of the psychological and sociological disposition of the communities they belong to (Campbell 1986).

Along with these illuminating roles, folktales, originating from patriarchal communities in which a powerful group undeniably has the lion's share of the production and manipulation of ideas, are bluntly blamed for gender stereotyping. Though gender is "composed of cultural discourses" (Kiesling 2009: 196), Nenola (1999: 21) writes, "The natural division of labour between insemination and childbearing has been thought to indicate that the nature and activities of men and women are different in other ways as well and belong to different areas of society and culture". To legitimise the socially constructed truths and values in connection with gender roles, stories are used as tools to inculcate ideology (Weinger et al. 2006; Furniss & Grunner 1995; Kapteijns & Ali 1999).

The virtues and vices of maleness and femaleness are conveyed in the different male and female characters in folktales. In this regard, femaleness is usually equated to daughterhood, obedient wifehood (competence in women's work) and motherhood (child-rearing). Scholars (e.g. Al-Barazenji (2014: 146)) argue that in doing this, folktales are "objects for the real suffering of this generation because women are subjects of submissiveness, silence, patriarchal authority, or physical and psychological violence". Along with this, scholars like McKay, Dune, MacPhail, Mapedzahama, and Maple (2013) label folktales as destructive

traps for females. Muthoni, cited in Arndt (2000), also condemns literature as a whole as a "sugar-coated poison" for its role in presenting females negatively.

However, there are other scholars that say this is not always the case in the instrumental value of folklore, in which folktales are subsumed. Gold (1997: 103) in her work on Rajasthani women's voices reports that she discovered "neither the modesty and 'embarrassment'… prescribed as appropriate, ornamental female behavior within the culture, nor the voicelessness and submissiveness depicted in many outsider views of South Asian women". Nenola (1999) also claims that as folklore serves the dominating group to legitimise socially constructed truths, it is also a tool of the dominated group for resisting hegemonic stereotyping discourses and transforming them for their benefit. With this background, the objective of the study is to explore gender role perceptions in selected South-African folktales in terms of marriage, work, character traits, and authority.

METHODOLOGY

In line with Richardson's (1995: 200) claim that narrative "displays the goals and intentions of human actors; it makes individuals, cultures, societies, and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes", the study uses 65 folktales, a storehouse of the life philosophy of South Africans, to explore their gender role perceptions of marriage, work, character traits, and authority. The stories that show the gender-based depiction of characters in terms of the above-mentioned themes were purposively selected from published and unpublished repositories. The folktales were fairy tales, the novella, hero tales, legends, and animal tales. Bearing in mind that the communities that the study was about convey their worldview through the various characters depicted in the folktales, the study employed narrative analysis, a genre of qualitative research design which is believed to be pertinent to work on "how respondents impose order on the flow of experience in their lives and thus make sense of events and actions in which they have participated" (Chambliss & Schutt 2012: 217).

Czarniawska (2004) contends that one of the features of narrative analysis in the era of postmodernism has to be deconstructing the stories to unpack the power relations in all its forms of portrayal. To this end, the focus of analysis was unmasking the gender-role perceptions of communities as depicted in their expectations of characters in the stories. In other words, emphasis was given to the purposes and representational connotation of the folktales as epitomising the teaching of the life philosophy of respective communities.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Marriage

Marriage, as an important institution that both female and male should be engaged in at a certain stage of their lives to sustain family and community, is one area of focus in folktales. As it is taken for granted that the experience is enjoyable, it is often offered as a reward for individuals who meet communal requirements. Females are mainly expected to be obedient to social norms and able to give birth. Males, on the other hand, should be economically capable and physically able to protect their family and community.

In a community where all extra-marital sexual relations are illegitimate, a girl's sole option is achieving a formal engagement. If a girl is to be chosen as a bride from among her competitors, she has to behave in ways her community and her would-be groom expect her to. This is especially true when the race is to marry a chief or another important person. To achieve success, a girl is usually depicted soliciting the guidance of elderly women who usually test her humility and helpfulness by demanding special favours. Thokozile, who wants to marry Mamba of Maquba (the chief), in Msimang's "UMamba kaMaquba" (Mamba, the son of Maquba), is first tested by old women she meets on her way to the chief's house. The first old woman asks her to lick the discharge from her eyes, while the second woman's demand is to help her to carry the bundle of firewood on her back. After the girl humbly carries out both women's assignments, the first old woman gives her practical advice on the nature of the chief and the tasks awaiting her in the chief's house. The second woman offers her a blessing so that Thokozile will be successful in the marriage she aspires to. As she humbly did what she was asked to do by the old women, and consequently they gave her all the necessary advice and blessings, she is eventually successful in securing the marriage she dreamed of.

In the same story, we see Thokozile's younger sister's unsuccessful attempt to marry the same chief. On her way to the chief's house, the girl meets the same old women and is urged to carry out the same tasks given to her older sister. But because she is not willing to do either of these activities, the women do not give her advice and blessing; she cannot properly accomplish what she was asked to do by the chief's people. Consequently, her aspiration to marry the chief is doomed to failure (Masuku 2005: 200). The girl in "UZembeni noma Uzwanide" (Zembeni and Zwanide), who saved Sikhulumi from a cannibal, could also eventually marry him (De Bruin 2002: 24).

The message that can be deduced from the stories is: in their search for life partners, females are expected to go to great lengths to satisfy the interests of

grooms and their communities. In fact, the choice of either failing or succeeding is left to a bride looking for a groom. As long as she behaves in the way she is expected to, she can get what she wants. Otherwise, she cannot be successful. This characterisation indicates that the main reward for women who behave according to the expectations of their communities is marriage. That is why Thokozile, the helpful, obedient, and hard-working girl, is depicted as successful in securing the life partner she was looking for, while her younger sister (who could not meet these communal expectations) is portrayed as unsuccessful in the same endeavour.

The fact that children are needed to ensure the continuity of families and are considered to be the social security of their parents in their old age makes childbearing and upbringing one of, if not the main, requirements of successful marriage for females. For this reason, life for a barren woman in traditional South-African society is painful, especially in a polygamous marriage where wives compete to win the attention of their husband. One can clearly observe the value to a wife of being fertile, considering the number of evils infertile women experience and how their lives would be changed if by some magic power they are able to have children.

The chief's wife in "The birth of Hlakanyana" was in distress for she could not fall pregnant. Until she gave birth to Hlakanyana and people were overjoyed by the event, her barrenness was an area of concern to the community (Cope 1990). In Msimang's "Unyumbakatali"(The barren one), Nyumbakatali, who looked white because she slept in the ashes, is shown crying because she was barren. Her co-wives laugh at her and insult her barrenness for they have at least given birth to crows; Dumudumu, Nyumbakatali's husband, does not visit her and the crows are dirtying her hut and stealing her food.

When by a miracle Nyumbakatali has children with the help of the pigeons, we see how her life is completely changed for the better. She becomes happy and is observed laughing and singing. The co-wives are astonished to notice that she no longer cries and has started washing and taking care of herself. Her husband, who used to admire the beauty of the crows because he had never seen normal children, is taken greatly by surprise by the beautiful new children. Consequently, as she added to his grace in the eyes of his chief and his community, he crowned Nyumbakatali the head wife of his house.

The chief, who is happy by the new beautiful children of the ex-barren wife, kills the crows of the co-wives. This act of the chief disappoints and angers the mothers of the crows for now they are same with the barren wife. When the co-wives see the children of the ex-barren wife, one dies of shock, another one leaves the house, and the rest are turned into the slaves of Nyumbakatali (Masuku 2005: 196). Thokozile in "UMamba kaMaquba", who marries the chief,

asks to visit her people after she becomes pregnant. When she goes home to visit her family, she is depicted carrying her child on her back (Masuku 2005: 200).

Women are also depicted as deploying all the resources under their control to do their motherly duties. They are seen expressing their care, affection, and concern for their children by feeding them, keeping their hygiene, and working for their security. Mothers' love of their children goes to the extent of sacrificing themselves. Hlakanyana's mother serves him food (Cope 1990: 32) and washes him (ibid.: 12). She says: "I have been troubled, saying to myself you would die, seeing you left me while still small; saying to myself what would you possibly eat" (ibid.: 77). She is also depicted as delighted when they reunite (ibid.: 77). In the same book, we see a mother leopard suckling her children and eventually losing her life in an effort to take revenge on the predator of her cubs (ibid.: 52–55). The woman in "The woman who worked on a Sabbath day" is punished for committing a sin so that her baby would not go hungry (Kganyago 2000: 136–137).

Dominant depictions of the reproductive processes such as pregnancy, childbearing, bringing up children and the problem of barrenness demonstrate that women's ultimate roles in life are getting married, bearing children, and bringing them up. What is needed is not their selves but their reproductive success; a woman's wifehood becomes complete and legitimate the moment she gives birth to her husband's child. The main reason for marriage seems to be having children. Nyumbakatali's appointment as a head wife right after she has children declares that a woman is accepted, respected, and rewarded as a wife if she is in a position to fulfil her duties, particularly her responsibility to reproduce. The man in "A man and two wives" declares that he no longer wants his second wife, because she gave birth to eggs (Motshwari 1998: 40–41). In a society where a man is not condemned for sterility, life for a barren wife is painful and miserable. If she fails to give birth, she has no right even to take care of herself; her co-wives have the right to humiliate her; her husband may legitimately desert her; and she must be a servant for those co-wives who have children. Considering the women suffering due to their competitors, their husbands, and communities when they fail meeting marriage-related expectations, it looks safe to argue that this strengthens Weinger and her colleagues' finding which states that "folktales promote women's rivalry and mask men's culpability in oppressing women by setting the stage for their jealousy, enmity and competition" (Weinger et al. 2006:16).

One of the basic community requirements that enables a groom to secure a bride is economic capacity. He must be at least in a position to cover the dowry; also *lobola* in South Africa is a tradition of presenting cattle or other gifts to the family of the bride by the groom's family, and his family's living expenses.

In "Usiwelewele, intokazi eyayiyogana" (Siwelewele the witch), a father who is ready to offer a dowry so that he will see his son married witnesses how presenting a wedding gift is obligatory for a male in need of a female partner (Masuku 2005: 211). Mamba of Maquba, the chief, in "UMamba kaMaquba" is seen accompanying Thokozile (his wife) to give cattle to her family as *lobola* (wedding gift) (Masuku 2005: 200); AbaHhwebu in "Ucombecansini"(The little mat marker) brings cattle as the bride's wealth to take Ucombecansini as a bride for their chief's son (Hammond-Tooke 1988: 92); Saitsane's husband in "Mosetsana Saitsane" (The girl Saitsane) gives a large quantity of sorghum as a wedding gift and also as compensation for the grain destroyed by a team of dogs that were angered when Saitsane refused their demand (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 444).

Providing supplies for the survival of his family is the male's responsibility. Jackal and Lion in "Lion and Jackal" agree to hunt on a shared basis, aiming to store meat for the coming winter; in "Lion and Little Jackal", the lioness complains to her husband that she and her cubs are starving to death (Honey 1910: 48, 57). In another version of "Lion and Jackal", Lion returns to his family and the encounter is depicted as follows:

> *After a very successful hunt, which lasted for some time, the Lion returned to see his family, and also to enjoy, as he thought, a plentiful supply of his spoil; when, to his utter surprise, he found Lioness and all the young Lions on the point of death from sheer hunger, and in a mangy state.* (Honey 1910: 48)

Jackal in "Lion's share", as the head of the household responsible for supplies, is also depicted ordering his family to rush to where the game is (Honey 1910: 88). In "How Hlakanyana got a beating", which narrates how some old men were deceived and their meat was taken by Hlakanyana, the wives of the old men are heard saying, "What meat? We are waiting but we have seen none," when the husbands enquire about the whereabouts of the meat they sent by Hlakanyana (Cope 1990: 19). In his effort to scare Tiger and Jackal, who are approaching to attack him, Ram in "The Tiger, the Ram and the Jackal" is also presented as responsible for supplying his child's food (Honey 1910: 21).

The stories show that the responsibility for providing wedding gifts and necessary supplies is on the shoulders of grooms and husbands. That is why we see dowries go to brides' families and wives waiting for supplies from their husbands. Lioness, along with her children, is depicted as hungry and the women are shown waiting for their husbands to bring food in order to demonstrate that males are indispensable because they are responsible for the

survival of women and their children. Cognisant of this responsibility, males are seen making efforts to fulfil what is expected of them by offering wedding gifts, hunting, and bringing food.

The other requirement for a male who wishes to get a female partner is being able to safeguard his family and community from any threat. The chief's army in "Hlakanyana overcomes the king's army" is portrayed as ready to fight against cattle raiders (Cope 1990: 24–30). In "Lion and Little Jackal", Lion is rushing to attack Jackal to defend his wife (Honey 1910: 60). The husband in "UDemana noDemazane" (Demana and Demazane) is shown to fulfil his duty to protect when his wife is troubled by a bird that repeatedly ruins her work on the farm. He wildly chases the bird to avenge the mischief it did to his wife's work (Masuku 2005: 191). The portrayal of Lioness complaining, "Is it you who sent Little Jackal to beat me and my children?" (Honey 1910: 60), and the woman bringing her problem on the farm to her husband indicate that safeguarding the wife is the job of the husband. The message seems to be that females are weak and need protection. To undertake this responsibility, males are often seen as ferocious and winning all confrontations.

Character traits

With regard to character traits in the tales, worriedness, jealousy, and brutality are demonstrated by both males and females. A man in "A man and two wives", whose wives gave birth to a crippled child and to eggs, is terrified by the situation (Motshwari 1998: 40–41). In "The world's reward", men are startled by aged domestic animals that were disappointed by human beings' ingratitude for the services they had given them throughout their lives (Honey 1910: 28). Tiger in "The Tiger, the Ram, and the Jackal" is heard saying, "Friend Jackal, I am quite out of breath and am half dead with fright, for I have just seen a terrible-looking fellow". Later, in the same story, Ram explains his fear to his wife, saying, "I fear this is our last day, for Jackal and Tiger are both coming against us. What shall we do?" (Honey 1910: 19–20). Hlakanyana's mother in "The birth of Hlakanyana" is greatly frightened by the speech of the foetus in her womb (Honey 1910: 12). The girls in "Sananapo" are very scared by the puppy's song, for fear that it will reveal their secret (Motshwari 1998: 38). Nyumbakatali in "Unyumbakatali" is also scared when her husband and the chief interrogate her about who she was talking to in her hut (Masuku 2005: 196).

Both male and female characters are shown as jealous in different stories. Wolf in "The Monkey's fiddle" is jealous of Monkey's bow and arrow (Honey 1910: 14). Chief Gunqu in "UGunqu" (The Gunqu) and Qakala in "Indaba ka-

Phoshozwayo" (Tricks of Phoshozwayo) are described as envious. The former orders his servant to kill his son, Sivi, whom he envies for his good physical appearance, while the latter gets into trouble when collecting wealth he did not deserve (De Bruin 2002: 26, 30–31).

Often, females are presented as jealous and antagonistic either in their efforts to secure a groom or in their attempts to win the attention of their husbands, who usually have several wives. In "Unyumbakatali" the women's jealousy is revealed by their actions when their husband brings home the children of the wife who had been barren. When the husband enters with the children and gives them to their mother, he says, "One woman died of shock. Another packed and went away". A young girl in "UMamba kaMaquba" is also depicted as jealous of her elder sister's marriage (Masuku 2005: 200). In "Noqandakazana", we see Noqandakazana sabotaging her sister's marriage. She first misleads her into going to a homestead of dogs instead of the chief's house. Subsequently, she misinforms her that the chief no longer wants her because she is in the dogs' homestead. In "UMphangose" (Mphangose), a similar mischievous trick is played by Imbulu on Mphangose, who is competing for the same groom (De Bruin 2002: 15–16). Depictions of marriage as the main source of jealousy among girls in the stories reveal that they are dependent creatures that need males for their survival. In their effort to secure husbands to depend on, they engage in mischievous activities that turn sisters into rivals.

Although mothers, as discussed under the previous theme, are depicted showing love, affection, and dedication to their children, both males and females can engage in brutal acts. In several stories, we see parents taking ruthless violent actions and harassing their children in different ways. In "UDemana noDemazane", we see cruel parents who harshly punish their children (stabbing them, using red-hot tools to the extent the awls go through one ear into the other) because they consumed the curdled milk of the 'amasi bird' and let the bird fly out of the pot it was placed in (Masuku 2005: 191). Hlakanyana's father in "The birth of Hlakanyana" "rushed at Hlakanyana and knocked him flat. Then he jumped on him with both feet and trampled him into the dust" (Cope 1990: 13–14). Saitsane in "Mosetsana Saitsane" (The girl Saitsane) is punished by her mother because the family's sorghum was ruined by dogs (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 444). Mosidinyana (Albino) in "A certain man and a woman (the frog and the albino)" is abandoned by her parents because she has sores. Eventually, the second daughter, Mosidi (Frog) is also put to death by her father because she is lazy doing her domestic duties (Kganyago 2000: 141–143; Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 445). In "UZembeni noma Uzwanide" (Zembeni and Zwanide) and "UNkombose noSihlangusabayeni" (Nkombose and

Sihlangusabayeni) there is Zembeni, who attempts to eat her daughter, and a woman who kills her son, respectively (De Bruin 2002: 24, 26).

Apart from the shared traits, male characters are depicted as hot-tempered, physically strong, and greedy. The chief in "The birth of Hlakanyana" is very angry at his son's behaviour. In the same story, the men who were skinning the ox are annoyed by Hlakanyana's interference. The old men deceived by Hlakanyana in "How Hlakanyana got a beating" "were bitter with anger" (Cope 1990: 19) because they thought that the meat was eaten by dogs while the women were talking and laughing together. In the same book, the fighters in "Hlakanyana overcomes the King's army" are upset by being tricked by Hlakanyana (ibid.: 30). Demane in "UDemana noDemazane" is very annoyed because the meat was taken by the cannibals (Masuku 2005: 191). In several stories in *South-African Folk-Tales,* Lion is angry with other animals, especially Jackal, who usually deceives him (Honey 1910).

Almost all of the angry male characters are reacting violently. It should be noted that Hlakanyana's father beats his son harshly; the men who were skinning the ox and the fighters who lost their meat for their festival threaten to beat Hlakanyana; the old men also intend to beat their wives. The hot temper of the men and the subsequent threat of violent reactions show that male characters are capable of confronting those who give them trouble in any way. Likewise, a man in "UDemana noDemazane" is seen violently chasing a bird (Masuku 2005: 191). In "The Lion, the Jackal and the Man" Lion describes man's strength as follows:

> *…when I attempted to turn him to chaff, he spat and blew fire at me, mostly into my face, that burned just a little but not very badly. And when I again endeavored to pull him to the ground he jerked out from his body one of his ribs with which he gave me some very ugly wounds, so bad that I had to make chips fly, and as a parting he sent some warm bullets after me. No, Jackal, give him the name.* (Honey 1910: 27)

Male characters are not only hot-tempered and strong but also greedy. In "The Honeyguide's revenge", a greedy man who refuses to offer a share of the honey to the honeyguide suffers the consequences (Zulu folktale 2014). In most of the stories where Jackal appears as a character, he satisfies his greed by his ability to trick other animals. In "The hunt of Lion and Jackal", "The story of Lion and Little Jackal", and "Lion and Little Jackal" he takes food from the lion's family; in "Lion's share" he refuses the lioness' request to go with him to where the ox had been killed (Honey 1910: 60). Hlakanyana, in *Tales of the Trickster Boy*, is shown as greedy in several stories. In "The birth of Hlakanyana" his

greedy behaviour is depicted in his effort to take all the meat away from the old men serving the chief. This action, as well as his refusal to share the meat with his mother, overtly shows his voracity. In "Hlakanyana overcomes the king's army" his greed forces him to play a trick on the fighters so that he alone will eat the meat prepared for the feast. In "How Hlakanyana thatched hut with Hyena", Hlakanyana threatens Hyena with death because he would not share food with him (Cope 1990). In "UDemana noDemazane" it is through the leadership of the husband that the couple deny their children even a taste of the curdled milk of the '*amasi* bird' (Masuku 2005: 191). What is more, a male character in "USikhulumi kaHlokohloko" (Sikhulumi, the son of Hlokohloko), who is greedy for power, orders all male children to be killed for fear of losing his throne (De Bruin 2002: 35–36).

In terms of specific female character traits, two opposing behaviours are dominant: submissiveness on the one hand and a growing rebelliousness on the other. Wives in several stories are presented as submissive to their husbands. In "UDemana noDemazane", the wife submits to her husband's reproaches, regardless of the difficulties she has experienced with the bird in the farm (Masuku 2005: 191). In "The birth of Hlakanyana", the women being threatened by their husbands for not looking after the meat try to reveal the truth, regardless of their husbands' harshness towards them (Cope 1990: 19). As in "UMamba kaMaquba", the girl who wants to marry a chief has to do what she is ordered to do both by her would-be husband and elderly people authorised to give guidance and blessing (Masuku 2005: 200).

Regardless of their conscious or unconscious consent to the patriarchal ideology, depictions of some exceptional females in some stories indicate that there is a rebelliousness against the existing hegemony. Female characters in some folktales seem to provoke confrontation instead of accepting the domination of the patriarchal ideology. They are depicted as questioning males' orders and quashing their requests. In "Monna le basadi ba babedi" (A man with two wives) women defy their husband's order by eating the prohibited fruit (Kganyago 2000: 143–144); Demane in "UDemana noDemazane" does not obey her parents' order (Masuku 2005: 191). The mother-in-law in "Umkhwekazi namasi" (Mkhwekazi and the cow's milk) violates the custom of not drinking sour milk in an in-law's house (Nyembezi 1985: 59–63).

Rebellion against the established norm that men are strong and hence are protectors of their family and community is noticeable in some deviant female characters. In "Umfazi nemamba" (Mfazi and the snake), an exceptionally brave woman declares that she is willing and determined to kill the snake that caused trouble for the community. This woman's decision is astonishing because she is willing to take a risk no man dares to take (Nyembezi 1985). Thembelet-

sheni in "UNoqandakazana" (Noqandakazana) manages to kill monsters, using her physical strength (De Bruin 2002: 16). Mabhejane in "UMabhejane" is a strangely powerful woman who causes the death of many people (Msimang 1987: 84–87). Mother Nanana in "Unanana kaselesele" (Nanana, the daughter of Selesele) is also portrayed bravely, tackling an elephant which ate her children (Masuku 2005: 203). Sometimes, women's protest even goes to the extent of challenging their creator's order. In "The woman who worked on a Sabbath day", a woman is punished for working on a holiday (Kganyago 2000: 137–41).

In line with Nenola's (1999) assertion, the investigated South-African folktales are not only used to socialise the community in the patriarchal society's life philosophy. They are also tools for combating the hegemony of the already established gender stereotype. The present finding also corroborates Namulundah's (2016: 1) claim that "[s]exist portrayals sanction the marginality of Bukusu women, particularly when these reflect prevailing gender roles and expectations. However, contests over identity and representation are as ancient as (unwritten) history".

Work

One function of folktales is to enlighten the audience about the duties expected of them. In this regard, it is the duty of both men and women, if not mainly women, to cultivate farms. In "Umkhwekazi namasi", both the husband and wife work hard in the field (Nyembezi 1985: 59–63). In "A certain man and a woman", field work is depicted as the regular duty of the husband and wife (Kganyago 2000: 141–143). Nyumbakatali in "Unyumbakatali" is depicted as working in the field (Masuku 2005: 196); a woman who is challenged by a magical bird in "UDemana noDemazane" is portrayed as busy on her farm (Masuku 2005: 191).

Otherwise, community members' obligations are dichotomised on a gender basis. Most of the folktales socialise males to be engaged in activities outside the house, while females carry out domestic duties. Male characters are predominately represented as hunters and herders; females, on the other hand, are portrayed as homemakers.

As a means of sustenance, hunting is predominately the job of male characters. In "Hlakanyana plays a game of cooking", we see ogre hunters who catch Hlakanyana (Cope 1990: 30); warriors in "Hlakanyana goes to a wedding – and what happened" are portrayed fighting with a leopard (ibid.: 87). Demane in "UDemana noDemazane" hunts and feeds himself and his sister (Masuku 2005: 191). Monkey in "The Monkey's fiddle" is offered a bow and arrow for hunting (Honey 1910: 14). A hunter in "The Lion, the Jackal and the Man" bravely con-

fronts Lion (ibid.: 27). In "Lion and Jackal", Lion and Jackal as heads of families are engaged in hunting to secure food for the coming winter months (ibid.: 48).

The involvement of males in hunting is a matter of family survival. That is why Lioness in "Lion and Little Jackal" is heard complaining, "there was no meat … No, he [little Jackal] was not here. We are still dying of hunger", in response to her husband's enquiry: "Did not little Jackal bring a message to my children to carry meat?" (Honey 1910: 57). Males are expected to be good hunters so that they will be in a position to adequately support their families. In accomplishing their duties, hunters are expected to use their own natural skills and power. In "The Cheetah and the lazy hunter", a hunter who tries to use a leopard's cubs for hunting purposes is condemned by his fellows for his unethical action (ANIKE 2011).

The other dominant activity of male characters in the folktales is herding. In "The birth of Hlakanyana", we see boys driving cattle (Cope 1990: 11); in "UMamba kaMaquba", Mamba of Maquba drives cattle to the grazing fields (Masuku 2005: 200); in "UMshayandlela" (The big bull), "USikhulumi kaHlokohloko" (Sikhulumi, the son of Hlokohloko), and "UGubudela KaNomantshali" (Gubudela, the son of Nomantshali) males are shown herding (De Bruin 2002: 13, 36, 22).

In most of the folktales, women are confined to domestic activities in their houses. Hlakanyana's mother in "The birth of Hlakanyana" is in her hut when she hears the voice of her son in her womb; later she cooks and serves meat to her son (Cope 1990: 12–13, 78). Women in "Hlakanyana overcomes the king's army" and "Hlakanyana goes to a wedding – and what happened after" are shown collecting firewood (ibid.: 25, 84). In "Hlakanyana plays a game of cooking", the mother of the monsters cooks for her sons (ibid.: 31–39). The sin of the woman who worked on a Sabbath is collecting firewood on a holiday (Kganyago 2000: 136–137). In "Segwagwa le Leswafe" (The frog and the albino) the girl who was lazy doing household chores is punished with death, while her albino sister who was previously banned is welcomed after it is proved that she was good at dealing with household tasks (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 444–445).

In "Usiwelewele, intokazi eyayiyogana", collecting firewood is the regular obligation of Siwelewele (Masuku 2005: 211); the old lady in "UMamba kaMaquba" gives her blessing to Thokozile because she helps the old woman by carrying her bundle of firewood on her back (Masuku 2005: 200). In *South-African Folk-Tales*, Jackal's wife is responsible for arranging a classroom for Leopard's children; Mrs Jackal and the little Jackals are assigned to dry the meat that Lion and Jackal provide and other women are shown performing domestic activities such as milking, serving meals and taking care of young children (Honey 1910: 37, 48,129–133).

More plainly, Hlakanyana's cry in "Hlakanyana goes to a wedding – and what happened after" is as follows:

> *Give me my shield*
> *The shield the young men gave me*
> *The young men having torn my blanket in two in the night*
> *The blanket the young girls gave me*
> *The young girls having dropped my beer pot*
> *The beer pot the women gave me*
> *The women having broken my axe*
> *The axe the boys gave me*
> *The boys having broken my hunting-assegai*
> *The assegai the other boys gave me*
> *Those boys having broken my milk pail*
> *The milk pail my mother gave me*
> *My mother having eaten up my wild roots*
> *My sweet wild roots that I dug up on a little hill on my way back from the weeding…*
> (Cope 1990: 88)

Meticulous examination of who gave what to Hlakanyana reveals what belongs to whom. While the tools of the male characters are a shield, an axe and an assegai (a slender hardwood spear with an iron tip), the females possess a blanket, a beer pot, and a milk pail. The materials owned by the male characters are used outside, while the tools of the females are mostly used in household chores. Hence, the narration depicts male and female boundaries in terms of the activities they are engaged in and the materials they employ in accomplishing their socially demarcated tasks.

The fact that most of the activities of female characters are confined to domestic chores implies that they act as supporters who work for the smooth running of males' lives. Women's essential task is carrying out domestic chores. If they fail to do them, they may not have the right to be considered as members of the community or even the right to live, as the action taken against the lazy girl in "Segwagwa le Leswafe" testifies (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 444–445). The finding of the present study on the division of tasks among female and male actors is in line with the findings of Louie (2012) and Dionne (2010), among others.

Authority

Examination of the selected folktales in terms of who has what authority reveals that characters have both communal and gender-specific powers. While possession of magic power is common to exceptional males and females, authoritarian leadership and being a helpless victim are dominant depictions of ordinary male and female characters respectively.

In some stories, a few female and male characters are presented, using animals and objects with magic power as their tools to accomplish activities that in their normal human status they could not otherwise address. On some occasions, we see human characters turning themselves into other beings. In some of the folktales, characters are presented as omniscient. We also see excessive male power to the extent of challenging big events such as death.

In "Monna le basadi ba babedi" a man sends a bird as a messenger to a husband whose wives are dead. In the same story, we see the husband exercising his magic power to heal his dead wives. The traditional doctor (*inyanga*) and his patient in "Monna wa Setlhare mo tlhogong" (A man with a tree on his head) use magic power to pass an order to the messenger bird, which is sent to remind the patient about the payment for his medication (Kganyago 2000: 143–145). In "UMshayandlela" (The big bull) a boy uses magic power to manage his cattle (De Bruin 2002: 13). A man in "Selekane" offers his magical blue stone to a girl so that the chief whom she wants to marry will be under her control (Motshwari 1998: 48). A king in "The girl and the whirlwind" sends a big whirlwind to Ntiatiagatsana's home to catch and bring her to him (Kganyago 2000: 143). In *Tales of the Trickster Boy,* Hlakanyana is converted from human to animal and vice versa (Cope 1990).

Female characters are depicted as owners of magic power that helps them know all the requirements for a successful marriage with a prestigious person of the community. They give instructions to obedient young women and men on what, how, and when they should do things in their effort to secure the persons whom they want to marry. An old woman in "UMamba kaMaquba" gives practical guidance to an obedient girl who meets her requirements (Masuku 2005: 200). A mother obsessed by her daughter has the magic power of attacking and killing people who come to herald her daughter's marriage proposal, and an old woman in "UMabhejane" gives advice to the groom's team on how and when to handle wedding matters. She gives the magic gallbladder of a hose lizard with instructions on how to use it on a chief who is travelling to the wedding (Msimang 1987: 84–87). Siwelewele, the beautiful bride in "Usiwelewele, intokazi eyayiyogana", has the power to change from human to animal and vice versa (Masuku 2005: 211). In "UNoqandakazana", Thembeletsheni is capable

of producing food using a magic stick; similarly, Maphangose in "UMphangose" has the magic power of producing food and cattle (De Bruin 2002: 15–16). Nokuthula in "UNokuthula" (Nokuthula) employs magic power to safeguard girls under attack by their cannibal mother (De Bruin 2002: 20–21). Escaping their natural and biological constraints, both male and female characters employ magic power to accomplish activities beyond their normal capability.

Coming to normal males' peculiar traits, they seem to have undisputable absolute control of females and children. Husbands have the right to order, discipline, and even kill their wives and/or other females and children. The husband in "Monna le basadi ba babedi" is authorised to give or deny permission to his wives to do something. His authority is also legitimised by the death of his wives the moment they ate the fruits that were forbidden to them (Kganyago 2000: 143–144). The lioness in "Lion's share" solicits Jackal's permission to go with his family to the place where an ox has been killed (Honey 1910: 89). In "Umkwekazi namasi" (Mkhwekazi and the cow's milk) an old woman is punished by her son-in-law (De Bruin 2002: 27). The chief in "Unyumbakatali" kills the crows that were born to the wives of Somaxhegwana (Masuku 2005: 196).

In "How Hlakanyana got a beating", men are seen rushing home to give orders to their wives; following the announcement that the women received no meat, the men say, "Foolish women! While you gossip and cackle together, the food is stolen from under your eyes" (Cope 1990: 19). In the same story, some of the men intimidate their wives with sticks. In "UDemana noDemazane" a husband insults his wife by calling her 'lazy' after she tells him how the magic bird ruined her work on the farm (Masuku 2005: 191). In "Segwagwa le Leswafe", and also in "A certain man and a woman", it is the father who takes the initiative to investigate who is doing the household chores, and he is also the one who punishes the lazy girl with death (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al. 2007: 444–445). The husband in "Usiwelewele, intokazi eyayiyogana" beats and stabs Siwelewele, his wife, to death (Masuku 2005: 211).

Regardless of the differences in physical size and physical strength, we see a male character beating a female character. In "Lion and Little Jackal" we hear that "Little Jackal thereupon struck Lion's wife in the face and went back to the place where the ox was killed" (Honey 1910: 60). This implies that being a male is enough to exercise one's power over any female. Females, no matter that they could be stronger than their male counterparts, should remain obedient to the patriarchal power relations of their communities. Their passiveness and compliance with the men and husbands' world is their depiction of womanhood and wifehood. It could be argued that this is done to indoctrinate the idea that males have power over females and other subordinates in every way. As

a result, males' orders should be obeyed, and their requirements should be met by their wives and children. Otherwise, the punishment is as severe as death.

On the other hand, being a helpless victim of an attack is a peculiar depiction of ordinary females in several folktales considered in this study. In "Phothi le tau" (The duiker and the lion), a duiker cries for her child that was abducted by a lion (Kganyago 2000: 146–147). In *South-African Folk-Tales*, Lioness is heard saying, "Is it you who sent Little Jackal to beat me and my children?", and Jackal's wife is beaten by her husband (Honey 1910: 50–60). In "How Hlakanyana got a beating" the wives are insulted and threatened through no fault of their own (Cope 1990: 19). In "UDemana noDemazane" a woman who goes to cultivate her field is the victim of a magic bird that ruins her work on the farm. The woman does not take any action to resist the attack (Masuku 2005: 191). This shows that females, who are usually vulnerable to attack, are not capable of defending themselves. This agrees with Madoda's (2013) finding which states that female characters in the studied folktales are depicted as weak and helpless.

CONCLUSION

Folktales "serve a descriptive, as well as prescriptive role" (Namulundah 2016:1). As a mirror of South-African communities, folktales have much to say about their life philosophies. The analysis and interpretation of the selected folktales show that communities nurture social roles, assigning both communal and gender-specific duties. Obedience to norms and being able to bear children for women, and economic capacity and providing protection for men are the predominant marriage-related requirements. With regard to character traits, males are predominantly described as hot-tempered, physically strong, and greedy. Females, on the other hand, are shown to display two opposing behaviours: submissiveness on one hand and rebelliousness on the other. Worriedness, jealousy, and brutality are also the predominant traits across genders. In terms of the division of tasks, males are engaged mainly in hunting and herding while females are responsible for homemaking. Cultivating the farm is presented as the shared task of females and males. Though both exceptional males and females are depicted as exercising magic powers to address issues beyond their natural ability, the former are authoritative leaders and hence have the right to discipline women and children. In fact, the folktales teach that regardless of other requirements such as physical strength, being male is sufficient to make man a master of women and children. In this regard, females are helpless victims of powerful males. Predominantly the findings indicate that

the traditional female and male role perceptions were inbuilt in the studied folktales. The findings of the present study are more or less in line with the findings of Namulundah (2016), Madoda (2013), Louie (2012), Weinger et al. (2006), and Kasner (2004).

From the perspective of socialisation, South-African folktales have an instrumental role in inculcating the entrenched hegemonic patriarchal communal life philosophy. They educate community members to conform to the gender stereotype requirements on marriage, character traits, work, and authority. The depiction of women as both submissive and rebellious reveals a contestation which aims at transforming folktales into tools to produce gender-egalitarian communities. Folktales reflect communities' lifestyles and portray both areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed. These portrayals should therefore serve as an input for interventions by concerned parties to maximise the areas of strength and transform the areas of improvement to work towards gender-egalitarian communities.

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PRACTICAL VIEWPOINT

WHEN A CRISIS OPENS NEW ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES: THE NEW WEBINAR SERIES OF THE SIEF RITUAL YEAR WORKING GROUP

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For over 10 years, the academic journal *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* has regularly published news on the activity of The Ritual Year Working Group (RY WG), a group of international scholars with shared interests in ritual activities, customs and festive celebrations throughout the yearly calendric cycle, an affiliate of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF – Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore). This includes reviews of the annual WG's conferences, reviews of panels organised by the WG at important congresses in the field of ethnology and folklore, and releases of new books. In addition, the journal has dedicated several special issues to topics addressed by the various academic meetings of the WG, reuniting studies written by its members (Fournier & Sedakova 2015; Sedakova & Vlaskina 2016, etc.).

This article sheds light on the drastic changes that the academic world was recently confronted with during the Covid-19 pandemic, and on how the RY WG met the challenges of this new reality; it shows how a crisis can also open new possibilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic radically disrupted lives and traditional rituals all over the world. Among other things, it also altered the normal rhythm of the academic life and restricted the usual activities of our WG. The necessary cancellation of the RY 2020 conference, planned to take place in Riga in early June was a big disappointment to all our members who have, since the group's

creation in 2004, become accustomed to coming together annually (until 2016), and then biennially. However, not meeting in person does not mean not meeting at all, as physical distancing does not imply social and professional distancing. Today, more than ever, it is important for us to stay connected, exchange our ideas and plans, and continue doing what we do best.

In an effort to maintain the tradition of membership contact, in 2020, the RY Board devised the idea of starting a new series of virtual WG meetings: **The Ritual Year WG Seasonal Webinars**. The webinars are coordinated by Irina Stahl, the WG Secretary (Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest) and are moderated by Irina Sedakova, the WG Chair (Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow) and Mare Kõiva (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Tartu). Technical support has generously been provided by the Estonian Literary Museum and the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies in Tartu. Initially planned to take place four times a year, once every season, via Microsoft Teams, the webinars have also had, in addition, several special editions dedicated to thematic lectures.

The 1st RY Seasonal Webinar in the series, **Autumn 2020**, took place on 20 October and it consisted of three presentations with a Q&A session and discussions at the end.

Emily Lyle (University of Edinburgh) provided the first talk in the series of webinars, "A Spark of Hope: Needfire as a Response to Crisis". As founder of the RY WG and author of the idea of focused investigation of the ritual year(s), and currently the group's Honorary Chair, it was most appropriate and highly symbolic that she initiated this new form of activity. Moreover, her presentation covered the motifs of initiation and healing powers of fire, combining the ideas of a beginning of a crisis, such as the pandemic. As Emily Lyle stressed, fire serves to mark fresh beginnings of many calendric events worldwide: whether the start of a new season, new year, or new era, as in the case of the Aztec transition between the 52-year cycles. The presence of fire in such events, although condemned in the secular world by the Church, has been incorporated in Christian symbolism. Lévi-Strauss explored this symbolism with its contrast of darkness and noise, as opposed to the light and harmonious sound that celebrated the Resurrection. People have believed in its magical power to heal through establishing new eras, and consider it an appropriate response to life-threatening crises, similar to the one our society is experiencing today. Focusing on the Scottish needfire, Emily Lyle once again gave us her particular insights into more ancient as well as contemporary cultures all over the world, in an outstanding lesson of comparative ethnology and mythology.

Mare Kõiva (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Tartu) presented her paper "Earth Day: Against the Silent Spring". The liberalisation of calendric anniversaries has given rise to new feasts, which focus on the relationship between humans and their environment. The largest grassroots demonstration in history witnessed 20 million people, 10% of the US population, gathered on 22 April 1970 to proclaim the first Earth Day. This demonstration aimed to protect the planet from "the silent spring" and put an end to the neglect of the natural environment. Earth Day, now 50 years old, is celebrated in 193 countries and includes many of the features of anniversaries of the ritual year. Mare Kõiva described the reasons why this is the case and showed how Earth Day is observed in various countries. She also dwelled on the question whether this date and the corresponding feast will be a part of the planetarian ritual year in the near future.

Laurent S. Fournier (Cochair of the RY WG, Aix-Marseille University) gave a talk under the heading "Holy Healers in Provence (France): From Folklore to Anthropology". He argued that throughout Mediterranean Europe, numerous Catholic saints are considered holy healers, who people ask to cure a variety of health issues and diseases. Asking for a saint's intercession is part of popular religion and is considered superstitious by the Catholic Church. Local cults have been documented by folklorists and interpreted as survivors of primitive cultures. During the 20th century, belief in holy healers rapidly decreased although some festivals still remember them. This talk connected the older practices and beliefs with the more modern ones, regarding a crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, showing the anthropological relevance of traditional healing rituals and their renewed meaning in today's world.

Discussions, prompted by the variety of rituals described, ensued following the paper presentations. A certain allusion to viruses and the current pandemic was evident. Participants discussed the purifying power of fire in many traditional societies, and the long-standing beliefs that fire can drive away an epidemic. The issues of newly emerging prayers against diseases and the pandemic, as well as the recent ritual complexes of the devotional veneration of the Earth and Nature in various countries, were touched upon.

A special Christmas edition, on December 23, served as our **2nd RY Winter 2020 Seasonal Webinar**. The virtual meeting was dedicated to festive Christmas foods from all around the world. The lectures, with picturesque presentations, covered five countries: Sweden (Marlene Hugoson, Institute for Language and Folklore, Uppsala), Philippines (Maria Bernadette L. Abrera, University of the Philippines, Diliman), Romania (Anamaria Iuga, the National

Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Bucharest), USA (Lucy Margaret Long, Bowling Green State University, Ohio), and France (Laurent S. Fournier, Aix-Marseille University). Many similar features (due to the mutual origin, historical and religious interactions and geographical proximity, or globalisation) were identified in festive Christmas dishes, as well as significant differences. All speakers underlined the growing interest in old traditions, shown by contemporary societies, sort of a fashion of traditional culinary, a reality for which ethnologists and folklorists can rejoice.

Marlene Hugoson spoke about the Swedish Christmas table, stressing the historical differences of the menu, depending on the family's social status and the economy of the region. She dwelled on the dialectal names of the ritual foods and their differentiation from region to region. As examples, Marlene Hugoson showed pictures from her institute's archive as well as those from her own family archive. Christmas ginger houses remain popular in Sweden, where they are frequently baked from scratch and decorated by the families, or they are simply bought. The speaker shared several old magic and fortune-telling acts connected with foods from the Christmas table, which aimed to ensure the prosperity of the house and the marital future of girls. Nowadays, multiculturalism has impacted the traditional menu, and there are many "borrowed" foods on the Christmas table. In Sweden, Muslims also organise "Christmas" tables, following the proverb "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", but the kind of food served has almost nothing to do with the Swedish tradition.

In her presentation, "Exploring Culture and History in Philippine Christmas Foods", **Maria Bernadette L. Abrera** argued that Christmas foods in the Philippines illustrate the colonial history of the country. Christianity was introduced in the Philippine Islands by the Spanish expedition of Fernando Magellan 500 years ago. Since that time, the holiday and the foods served are called by Spanish names, and in general repeat the Spanish Christmas menu, in an adapted form. There are many rice products, such as "sticky rice" (with the idea that, as the rice grains, family members should stick one to another in the future). American colonialism has also influenced the Philippine Christmas menu, adding spaghetti, which in this case has been sweetened.

In her presentation, "*Sarmale* and Strong Drinks for (and after) Christmas in Transylvania and Maramureș", **Anamaria Iuga** discussed several regional differences in the Romanian Christmas menu. Nevertheless, the main dish, *sarmale* (cabbage rolls with minced meat), are the centrepiece of Christmas tables all over the country. Ritual breads and sweets are also very important. Smaller buns are presented to the carol singers, while the big Christmas loaf does not leave the table, to ensure good luck would not leave the house. Pork and

derived products, from the pig slaughtered on Saint Ignatius Day (20 December), are other typical dishes. Warm brandy complements the Christmas dishes.

Lucy M. Long started her presentation, "American Christmas Foods: Ethnic, Regional, and National Traditions", with the consideration that it is difficult to talk about one tradition in such a diverse and large country as the USA, where immigrants from various cultures and ethnic backgrounds provide for a wide array of food varieties, typical of Christmas celebrations. Lucy Long focused on home-baked cookies as a social, family activity, observed via Zoom during the pandemic. Characteristic of Christmas food products in the United States is their commercialisation, the display in the shop windows and the special holiday sales; many also contain added religious symbols. Another trend is also the creative combination between other nations' cuisines and family Christmas food traditions.

In his presentation, "Thirteen Desserts for the 12 Days Cycle: A Modern Mythology of Christmas in Provence", **Laurent S. Fournier** addressed the theoretical question whether the term "invented traditions" as coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) can be used to denote the regional Provence ritual of the thirteen Christmas deserts. Based on his own fieldwork materials and studies by other ethnologists, the speaker argued that this notion of thirteen foods, though becoming increasingly popular during the past several decades, can be regarded as a transformed tradition. It has symbolic and magical meanings, alluding to Christian (there are three layers of cloth covering the table, symbolising the Holy Trinity) and pre-Christian issues (weather and wedding fortune-telling) as well as to modern facts (the largest city in Provence, Marseille, is located in department number 13). The abundance of food, typical of Christmas tables, conveys a magical message; a wish for the house and the family to have a prosperous year.

The discussion following the presentations touched upon practical and theoretical questions. Some features common in all Christmas celebrations were noted: the special importance of family gathering, making of the best food with at least one, typical dish, prepared only for this seasonal feast, etc. Although the religious content of the holiday in the countries presented may be fading away, the cults of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ continue to be traced through some acts of dedication of food.

The 3rd RY Winter 2021 Seasonal Webinar was held on a date which is meaningful for many calendars – 1 February. The three speakers examined both old and innovative features in archaic traditions, speaking about near as well as more distant celebrations and traditions, in connection with the beginning

of the calendric year. The central theme was traditional and newly developed forms of folk religiosity.

Jenny Buttler (University College Cork, Ireland), in her talk "Saint Brigit's Day and the Festival of Imbolc: Themes of Regeneration and Fertility", explored themes of regeneration and fertility that connect the Celtic goddess and her Christian namesake. Saint Brigit's feast day, which falls on 1 February, also corresponds with the pagan festival of Imbolc, and the traditional beginning of spring and the pastoral year in Ireland. The talk focused on Irish popular tradition with some parallels being made with the Gaelic tradition of Scotland. The presenter reflected on the Old Irish names of Saint Brigit, her pre-Christian folk images (connection with lactation, fertility, purification through water, etc.), and her connection with the Virgin Mary and the birth of Jesus, who she helped deliver. She also characterised the powers and miracles ascribed to Saint Brigit and the ritual practices on 1 February, such as making special crosses for good luck and protection against fire and lightening.

Tobias Boos (Free University of Bolzano-Bozen) dedicated his presentation, "Exploring Urban and Rural Carnivals in Auzuay and Cañar (Ecuador)", to shedding light on the Latin American festivals held in Argentina and Ecuador. His field research in these countries, though quite short in time, allowed him to trace the development and the strategy for enforcing the city carnivals. "Home" events 20 years ago, the carnivals have today turned into urban processions, with music performances, competitions, and water battles. The aim of the government is to develop the attractiveness of the cities in order to appeal to foreign investors and consequently increase the work opportunities for locals.

In her paper, "Russian and Bulgarian Popular Versions of the Epiphany: Traditions and New Developments", **Irina Sedakova** (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) traced the development of certain rituals, carried out during Epiphany in two Christian Orthodox Slavic countries. The water with its power of purification is the dominating element of ritual practices in Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox feasts, and in their folk versions. Still, the factual ritual activities, increasingly documented today, differ. In Russia, bathing in the freezing waters of rivers, ponds, and artificial basins is gaining in popularity. In Bulgaria, the custom of sanctifying the waters is followed by throwing a cross into the waters. There has been a widely discussed development of this custom, initially performed in the freezing river of Tunja, and now in many other regions of Bulgaria. Men dressed in national costumes and singing heroic and other folk songs, accompanied by a folk music assembly, perform the *horo* dance, while holding up the national flag. The development of the ritual, both in Russia and Bulgaria, demonstrates a similar feature: it has become infused with national symbols and embodies the national identity.

An interesting discussion at the end of the presentations raised questions about how Epiphany is celebrated in India, Canada, and the Philippines. Interestingly enough, in the Philippines people begin preparations for Christmas as early as 1 September, and the winter holiday season ends on New Year's Day. The idea of Epiphany being the closing holiday of the "impure" season is not known here. Parallels were made regarding organisational strategies for carnivals in various other places, similar to those observed in Ecuador and Argentina by Tobias Boos, who refers to them as "festivalisation".

For the **4th RY Spring 2021 Seasonal Webinar,** held on 5 April, **Anna Muradova**, an independent scholar in Celtic studies and translator from Tbilisi (Georgia), was invited to talk on the exceptional, though little known figure of Ekaterina Balobanova (1847–1927). In her presentation, "Breton Christmas and Other Holidays in Ekaterina Balobanova's Traveller Notes", Anna Muradova gave an account on Ekaterina Balobanova's biography, with a particular focus on her writings on Brittany. Balobanova was an outstanding lady of her time, librarian, translator of many languages and the first Russian specialist in Celtic studies. Her deep knowledge of Celtic literature and local traditions was due to her studies at the Sorbonne and Heidelberg universities, and her travels in French Brittany in the 1860s. She is, however, considered to be neither an ethnologist nor a linguist. Her writing about Bretons' oral literature and traditions was published as a traveller's notes or a retelling of local legends, and appears to be a literary creation rather than a result of field research. Her books are of particular interest for modern researchers due to the description of various local celebrations, including Saint John's Day and Christmas (see Balobanova 2021). The speaker described in great detail the Breton versions of Midsummer and Christmas and the folklore surrounding these dates. She also drew parallels between mythological beings, bringing and predicting death in Celtic cultures and the popular cult of the dead.

At the end of June, many of the RY WG members took part in the 15th SIEF congress under the heading *Breaking the Rules? Power, Participation, Transgression*, organised for the first time virtually, by the University of Helsinki. Consequently, the **5th RY Seasonal Webinar** took place on 26 May as a joint **Spring-Summer 2021** edition dedicated to Midsummer.

During this meeting, **Tiziana Soverino** (Crumlin College of Further Education, Dublin) gave a talk under the heading "Midsummer in Ireland: Food, Drink, and Stories of the Supernatural", in which she focused on the role of bonfires. In her research, the presenter used answers given to questionnaires,

going back to the 1940s and 1970s, documents from the schools' collection, as well as more recent data, collected during her own fieldwork on bonfires and pilgrimages to holy wells in several Irish regions. Tiziana Soverino noted that pagan and Christian ideas are mingled in the celebration of the summer solstice, with the tendency of Christian references dying out. Apart from marking the summer solstice, 21 June is also an important day in the history of some parts of Ireland. The fishermen of Bushmills (Antrim County, Northern Ireland), for instance, celebrate it as their trade holiday, eating fish (often salmon) and new potatoes. The rest of the people eat a special dessert-like dish of bread and milk, a combination known under the name of *goody*. These foods are shared around a bonfire, and accompanied by music, singing and dancing. The feast combines the ordinary and the extraordinary, which can be traced both in food and in the ritual activities. Rites of preparation (wood for the fire, cleaning the houses) purification (jumping over the fire) and runaway marriages are typical of Midsummer. The location of the fires is very important; usually they are burnt on hills, so as to increase their visibility. Around the bonfires, pagan customs prevail: folk medicine rituals are performed, while the ashes are taken home to be used during the year for multiple magical purposes.

During his presentation, "Midsummer Mock-marriages in the Nordic Countries", **Terry Gunnell (**University of Iceland, Reykjavík) shared his observations on certain Midsummer rituals performed in the Nordic countries. The data he used were taken from his own fieldwork in Norway, as well as from the studies of several other scholars, included in the volume *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (Gunnell 2007). After analysing the Nordic and Scandinavian names of Saint John's Day, Terry Gunnell outlined the mock wedding involving young children dressed in national dresses, with the bride wearing a special crown, and accompanied by a mock priest. This ceremony is performed in some regions of Norway on Saint John's Day, while in other areas and countries on Saint Gregory's Day (12 March), on Easter, Whitsun, or other spring or summer holidays. It corresponds with other "begging" processions, in which children go around the village collecting food and sweets. The mock marriage has strong links to the archaic view of the Scandinavian ritual year divided into two halves, male and female. The genders meet during the summer solstice, symbolising the new beginnings, unification, respect for the nature and the memory of the past.

Georgi Mishev (independent researcher, Plovdiv), in his paper "Midsummer Celebrations in Bulgaria: Ancient Sites, Folk Beliefs and Modern Life", highlighted several parallels between Bulgarian and ancient Thracian mythology, which connect the aristocracy and the kings with the sun as the symbol of male power. The speaker focused on the sun motifs in the semantics of Midsummer

customs, such as in the beliefs that at dawn the sun dances or jumps. Another focus was on the water rituals with their purifying and fertilising powers. Today greeting the sun by collecting herbs at dawn is still very popular in Bulgaria, as parts of a ritual activity of the neo-paganists and as part of historical museum re-enactments. Georgi Mishev spoke in detail about the ways the plants should be collected, and about their healing qualities, as described in his recent book (Mishev 2021).

Following the paper presentations, the audience discussed the parallels between the mock marriage and other wedding-like rituals, such as the Balkan *Bride of Enio* (Sun), performed by a girl who is thought to be the intermediate between the Sun and the community. Other customs such as stealing the fertility and bathing in the morning dew were mentioned as well.

The **6th RY Autumn 2021 Seasonal Webinar** took place on 25 October, and was dedicated to ethnoastronomy, celestial bodies, and mythology.

Opening the virtual meeting with her talk, "The Myth of the One-Eyed God and the Signal Star at the Start of a Season", **Emily Lyle** (University of Edinburgh) expressed her intention to continue one of her previous presentations, given at the Ritual Year WG's 10th conference in Innsbruck (Lyle 2015), referring to a proposed eight-point ritual year of the Proto-Indo-Europeans. In it, one set of four was related to the life cycle of birth, initiation, marriage, and death, while another set of four commemorated the victories of the young hero god over the monstrous old cosmic gods. The speaker had now more to say, in the Scandinavian and Celtic contexts, about the myth of the contest of the young god (Thor, Lug) with the cosmic sky god (Geirrod/Odin, Balor/Bres) who posed a threat to the Earth by being too hot and burning it up. The hero threw the glowing eye of the god into the distance where it became a star (the Pleiades cluster). This star cluster is of great value to humankind because it signals the start of agricultural activities.

Oksana Tchoekha (Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) gave a presentation titled "Human Life of the Celestial Bodies". Her talk focused on the Sun and the Moon and other celestial bodies portrayed as human beings, exhibiting their strengths and frailties. Both the Sun and the Moon are provided with a life story including a history involving marital or familial relationships, often between each other (e.g., they are believed to be either siblings, or husband and wife). The dichotomy of the Sun and the Moon displays different interpretations geographically. While the Moon is usually more important and has more folklore evidence than the Sun, in many parts of Europe, in the Balkan region, the Sun dominates over the Moon.

Tsimafei Avilin (Centre for Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Research, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk) started his presentation "Belarusian Folk Astronomy: What Is Your Ritual about?", with a short introduction into Belarusian folk star names (astronyms) and provided an overview of practices related to the starry objects in East Slavonic and Belarusian folk knowledge. Particular examples dealt with meteors, or the so-called falling stars, or dragons. The scholar presented maps, illustrating the distribution of the main motifs among Eastern Slavs. His talk was a brief overview of his latest book, where these subjects are investigated in great detail (Avilin 2021).

In the ensuing discussions, participants underlined the close connection between calendric customs and folk astronomy, the endurance and stability of anthropomorphic images of the Sun and the Moon in the folklore of many different cultures, and the relevance of area studies of motifs related to the celestial bodies. The catalogue published by Yuri Berezkin and Evgeny Duvakin (Berezkin & Duvakin n.d.) is an unprecedented and valuable tool in the investigations of ethnoastronomy and other mythological subjects.

The 7th RY Special Christmas 2021 Seasonal Webinar was held on 13 December, and was entirely dedicated to Udmurt traditions. The topic was imposed by the recent publication of two new books in Tartu, Estonia.

Tatiana Vladykina (Udmurt Federal Research Centre, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Izhevsk), **Tatiana Panina** (Udmurt Federal Research Centre, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Izhevsk) and **Galina Glukhova** (Udmurt State University, Izhevsk) gave a presentation "The Winter Cycle of Udmurt Calendar Rituals". A very archaic feature of the Udmurt calendric year is the division of the cycle into two equal parts (in Udmurt, *polar*), and its orientation with regard to the Sun. One part lasts from the winter solstice to the summer one, and the other from the summer solstice to the winter one. The transition periods from one *polar* to another are marked by multiple feasts and rituals, incorporating allusions to family cycle customs, such as an improvised wedding, or funeral ceremonies. Christian Orthodox influences are documented in many calendric customs, including the transitional period in January, from Christmas (6 January (Julian calendar)), until Epiphany (19 January). During this time, multiple dangerous creatures, like Vozho, emerge from the water; typologically they are comparable to the Balkan evil spirits (Sedakova 2021). Another focus was on dressing up as mummers, illustrated with a video showing a group of disguised people visiting a house in an Udmurt village.

Tatiana Minniyakhmetova (independent researcher, Innsbruck) presented her latest book, *In Search of Udmurt "Pearls" in Estonian Archives*

(Minniyakhmetova 2020). She briefly talked about the main contributions to the Udmurt folklore and ethnological studies and reported on the classification of the folklore types represented in the Estonian archives. The documentation included in her book was collected from the Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and from the archives of the University of Tartu, from the Estonian National Museum, the Institute of the Estonian Language, the Estonian Academy of Arts, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and several private archives of Estonian colleagues. The volume contains notes on the history of the study of the Udmurts by scientists from Estonia, in chronological order, a list of catalogues, deciphered archival texts on the Udmurt tradition, with their literal translation into Russian and explanations. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova read several passages regarding the cult of the dead and commemorative rituals, which involve sacrifices.

Before advertising another book, the latest publication of the Estonian Literary Museum, *Udmurt Mythology and Folklore* (Anisimov & Kõiva & Toulouze 2021), Mare Kõiva informed the audience that the book is a *Festschrift* to Tatiana Vladykina on her jubilee, which was an unexpected and pleasant surprise to the Udmurt scholar. The book includes memories of collaboration with Professor Vladykina and articles dedicated to her by peers.

Eva Toulouze (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris & University of Tartu) continued by presenting the book, "warm from the oven", as she said. The speaker highlighted the main topics included in the book, among them: demonology with depictions of all spirits known among the Udmurts; mythological beings in modern Udmurt poetry; sacred places, images of local priests and commemorations; the ritual of sending a young boy to the army, still very much alive today; the relevance of music and sound in Udmurt culture as a communicating means, etc.

At the end of the webinar, fragments of *Tol mör vös* (winter intervillage ceremony), an ethnographic film by **Liivo Niglas**, filmed in December 2016 in Novye Tatyshly, Tatyshly district, Bashkortostan, were shown. They illustrated the winter sacrificial ceremonies of the Tatyshly Udmurts, who escaped evangelisation and live in a tolerant Muslim environment. In the Udmurt culture, the winter ceremonies are more modest than the summer ones: in the district, there is only one winter village ceremony (compared to 19 in the summer), and one winter ceremony, gathering three-four villages together. The aim is to obtain the favour of the main deity, Inmar-Kylchin, to whom a sacrifice and the offerings of the villagers are addressed. As in the summer ceremonies, the winter ceremony is led by the village's sacrificial priests. The movie was filmed during an expedition organised with Liivo Niglas, Eva Toulouze, and Nikolai

Anisimov, in the framework of a French I.U.F. project on the religion of the Eastern Udmurts.

In the discussions following the presentations, Irina Stahl asked the presenters to describe the sequence of sacrifices demonstrated in the film. The Turkic word *aide*, used by the ceremonial priest, also raised questions, since it is known in many other languages, including Romanian and Bulgarian, in which it is used with the meaning "let's go", "let's do it", "come on".

This "one-tradition" webinar gave us a wide perspective of the Udmurt calendric rites, as it was analysed both from the insider's and the outsider's point of view: by the Udmurt scholars, bearers of the archaic tradition, and by the scholars from Russia, Estonia, and France.

In conclusion, our RY Seasonal Webinar series have proven the relevance of the WG's topical interest in the development and continuous transformation of the ritual year, documenting and scrutinising the process of ritual structuring and marking of the major and minor calendric feasts on both micro- and macro-scales.

All the past RY webinars have been recorded and are available on the WG's SIEF webpage at https://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/seasonal_webinars.shtml and http://www.folklore.ee/. These videos constitute an informative source for university and public lectures; they promote the interest in past traditions and the necessity to keep them alive for the future, regardless of new and unexpected obstacles.

Our future webinars are announced on the WG's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/148137881914062 and on the SIEF website.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

SCHOOL LORE COMPETITION FOR CANADIAN ESTONIANS CONCLUDES WITH PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The Estonian Museum Canada (VEMU) in Toronto, in collaboration with the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu, organized a campaign to collect the school lore of the Estonian diaspora community in Canada throughout 2021. Submissions for the campaign were welcomed from both current students and individuals who had either worked in education or previously attended an educational institution. The campaign honoured the memory of the former director of the Estonian Supplementary Schools in Toronto, Edgar Marten, who passed away in 2020.

The project was centred around collecting general folklore that pertained to five major topics of interest: 1) jokes and anecdotes; 2) fears, beliefs, and predictions; 3) celebrations and important holidays or dates; 4) free time and friends; and 5) games and pastimes. Other interesting material, such as descriptions of guide and scout activities and camp experiences, was gathered as well and helps to further document the school-related and educational experiences of Estonians in Canada.

Information relating to children's and youth heritage has been collected in Estonia since the 1920s. Materials documenting educational heritage have been gathered nationally in Estonia in three separate cases to date: in 1992, 2007, and 2018. Based on earlier collection campaigns, a plentitude of research and informative material meant for consumption by the general public has been published but information regarding Estonians abroad has been very hard to find to date. The aforementioned project was the first sizeable campaign to collect the school lore of diaspora Estonians and their educational experiences, therefore providing valuable comparative material to the existing Estonian counterpart.

Valuable interviews were conducted mainly with Estonians in the local Toronto community but some from the Montreal area were also included; a grand total of 18 interviews or over 20 hours of audio-visual footage was the result. A very special thanks on behalf of the organizers goes to everyone who was willing to be interviewed, who shared with us their memories, experiences, and materials. This is a great resource for further studies and research that will take place in the future. Thanks to the campaign an invaluable collection of photographs, written correspondences, documented personal school-related memoirs, published material and much more was also contributed.

Six written submissions were gathered from students of the Estonian Supplementary Schools in Toronto; a big thank you to both teacher Kai Kiilaspea for her words of encouragement and the young writers for their thoughts and recollections. We would

also like to thank director Monika Roose-Kolga and the parents for helping find willing interviewees. Posts made on the school's blogsite were also researched and recorded. The results of the campaign showed that differing approaches have to be taken for individuals living in Estonia versus Estonians living abroad. It became apparent during the project that the web-based questionnaire which worked well in Estonia was, for a multitude of reasons, not appropriate for the Canadian context and had to be altered, the main reason being that it is not a format people here are used to. Instead of collecting answers through a text-based format, July 2021 saw a switch to interviews that took place and were recorded via online meeting platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype. In the end, this change of format ended up being very beneficial to the project and valuable material was collected. The great thing about conducting interviews was the direct line of contact between interviewer and interviewee; it also gave a chance to use the so-called "snowball effect" to find future participants.

To help conduct interviews, we looked to interviewers from younger generations: young adults Kati Kiilaspea and Kaisa Kasekamp, who were knowledgeable about the local lifestyle and talked with Estonian-Canadian students, and on the Estonian side we had help from Pille Triin Voolaid. Interviewees were divided into three age groups: 1) current students; 2) younger and middle-aged individuals who are former students or current teachers and are of working age; and 3) currently retired former students and/or teachers who still support Estonian-Canadian school life. Valuable memoirs and descriptive materials paint a multi-faceted picture in the long-term perspective, starting from the childhood of the post-war generation and carrying through to today's youth and their school-related culture. Estonians in Estonia are time and time again thoroughly moved by a unique miracle of sorts – the fact that for over 70 years, the Estonian diaspora community in Canada has managed to thrive and continues to do so thanks to the strong internal desire to be an Estonian, no matter how far they are from the homeland. The various supplementary schools have played a truly valuable role in this longevity, and this was summed up well by one of the respondents: "Our school is basically a basis for the growth of Estonian culture, for keeping the Estonian spirit alive. It's also where lasting friendships with fellow Estonians can begin to grow and flourish, friendships that truly last forever. These are the two most important aspects and they pave the path for language, reading, writing, grammar, etc to follow." The same gratitude for keeping Estonian culture alive was expressed by individuals associated with the guide and scout movement.

A goal of the project is definitely the desire to draw attention to and pinpoint the heritage and youth culture of Estonians abroad, something that has not been highlighted to a great degree in Estonia as of yet. This would allow for further research and analysis and therefore comparison of school life in Estonia and of diaspora Estonians, both in the past and present. Based on the materials gathered during the course of the campaign, a publication and exhibit are planned for the future to showcase the

findings to a larger audience; it would be displayed both in Estonia and Canada. The aforementioned themes and topics will also be touched upon at a permanent exhibit in the future new home of VEMU.

All materials collected over the course of the project will be preserved according to the ethical standards within the scientific archive EFITA of the Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum and at VEMU.

The campaign has officially ended but individuals who missed out and wish to participate can still do so; further information about the campaign as well as the questionnaire in both English and Estonian can be accessed through www.folklore.ee/kp. The organizers of this project can also be contacted by those wishing to be interviewed or to submit further archival materials that pertain to topics discussed in the campaign.

The main organizers of the Estonian-Canadian collection campaign for educational heritage were Piret Voolaid, Senior Researcher of the Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum and the Executive Manager of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, and Piret Noorhani, Chief Archivist of VEMU in Toronto. Johanna Helin, a former employee of VEMU, also helped out in the early phases of the project.

The project was made possible through the sponsorship of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (Program for Global Estonians, 2021–2024) and through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies).

Piret Voolaid, Piret Noorhani

Figure 1. *A photograph from Hille Viires' personal collection. Many Estonians living in Canada have varying experiences with Estonian schools abroad; this picture, depicting students deep in the throes of playing, is taken at the Estonian school in Stockholm in 1952.*

BOOK REVIEWS

A FIELD FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Simon Franklin. *The Russian Graphosphere, 1450–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 428 pp.

This latest work by Slavist Simon Franklin develops out of his monograph *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950–1300* (2002) and a book he co-edited in 2017, *Information and Empire: Mechanisms of Communication in Russia, 1600–1854*. It deals with what can be broadly called 'literate culture', but in a far, far broader way than typically is the case. It also possesses thought-provoking elements for those who study oral culture too, inasmuch as such a thing can even be separated from literacy in contemporary societies, or indeed in historical ones. The time period the author chooses for his study, 1450–1850, is an intriguing one, as such a span allows him to begin with the late Middle Ages and come up to the eve of modernity, to discuss both the disappearance of birch-bark as a surface for writing and the incipient age of the telegraph, to discuss the period when Muscovy was a grand duchy and that when Russia had become an empire.

But what is a 'graphosphere'? It is defined on the first page of the book as "the space of the visible word … formed wherever words are encoded, recorded, stored, disseminated and displayed through visible signs" (p. 1). Naturally enough, a graphosphere will have its own characteristics, its own history and geography, its own links with culture, society, and politics. Franklin is open about the fact that his term was coined on the model of Lotman's 'semiosphere' (p. 9). The neologism is found throughout the book in nominal form, but we also read of "graphospheric purposes" (p. 269) or that "Dutch, too, remained graphospherically insignificant" (p. 139). We even hear of "micro-graphospheres" (p. 118). Now that we have a noun, an adjective, and an adverb, can it be long before we have a verb, 'to graphosphere', too? In any event, this morphological expansiveness is all to the good, and it demonstrates the author's thoroughgoing commitment both to the term and to the notion behind it.

Within the graphosphere, Franklin distinguishes between three kinds of writing: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary writing is the kind of writing we are most used to, for example, manuscripts or personal letters. Secondary writing is writing on an object, which has been authorized and which forms a consistent part of that object. And tertiary writing is unauthorized writing on objects, such as graffiti. While he covers all three categories in this work, he dedicates the most attention to secondary writing,

something which can be found in a wide variety of venues: "from a brick to a bronze cannon, from a wax seal to a glass goblet, from a liturgical embroidery to an insurance company's plaque, from a snuff box to a triumphal arch, from a gravestone to a satirical print" (p. 61). Another striking list, this time of the materials that writing has appeared on and the techniques used to put it there, runs as follows: "the range of materials and techniques is huge. Visible words have been created in stone, in wood or bark, in ceramics from clay tablets to porcelain, in metals, glass, textiles, plaster, wax, even on the living body. They have been painted and drawn, scratched, chiselled and carved, moulded and cast, stamped and embossed, sewn, seared with heat or acid" (p. 3).

The book is organized as follows. The first chapter deals with concepts and context, and the two subsequent chapters discuss primary and secondary writing, respectively. Franklin then turns to the graphosphere's scripts and languages in his fourth chapter, and its places and times in the fifth. In the sixth chapter he considers the 'ecology' of the graphosphere, before turning to remark upon aspects of authority and status in the seventh chapter. The final chapter of the book, entitled '(In)conclusion', begins with the words "Where is the grand narrative?" (p. 268). The author makes certain apologetic remarks here to the effect that the book is more of "a series of surveys and investigations, … [than] a presentation of a thesis" or an integrated chronological account. Perhaps he apologizes too much, for he is far from being oblivious of the context of technological, economic, political, and institutional aspects that impinge upon the graphosphere (e.g., "the early modern state owed its growth in part to the exploitation of handwriting" (p. 270)), and, as he points out, while his work may lack a plot, there are two recurrent sub-plots. These are the semantics of letters, and the relations between graphospheric fact and graphospheric imagination. The book proper is followed by a massive apparatus (pp. 275–414) that is made up of 77 pages of notes, 46 pages of bibliographies (of both 'catalogues and editions' and 'studies'), and a 14-page index. The work is illustrated with black and white photographs, though a few of these (e.g., 4.1 and 4.2) could do with being reproduced more clearly.

Folklore appears at times in Franklin's book, for example in the origin story of the thumb gesture for requesting drink (p. 101). And the presence of folklore in the graphosphere is now and again underlined in his discussions of *lubki*, graffiti, or even of the fact that the bells on horses' yokes were "often inscribed with a brief phrase or folkloric tag … [such as] 'kogo liubliu, togo dariu'" (p. 81). He also talks about a 'domestic graphosphere', which can include phenomena such as the writing on the painted tiles on stoves. But as it is not his especial focus, the work leaves much folkloric matter untouched – or perhaps it would be better to say, opens up the field for further investigation.

Folklorists have always known about the co-existence of and interactions between the oral and the literate sphere – the very first work of 'Mr. Folklore', a.k.a. William John Thoms, was on folk-books – but we have sometimes forgotten popular literacy and we have not always been officious in seeking out the traces of handwriting or (especially)

print in oral culture. In recent years, a large number of specialists, such as Adam Fox, to name just one, have reminded us of the links between oral and literate culture. One particular area of research out of several has been a growing recognition of the role of newspapers in the spread of folk narrative – the names of Caroline Sumpter and Katre Kikas come to mind here. And I remember staff members when I was at Sheffield, whose research encompassed 'secondary writing' (though they did not use the term) – using records of the names of medieval ships as a source of linguistic and cultural data or studying the inscriptions on coins as a source of evidence for placenames. It was no coincidence that those who did this were among the most folklore-friendly of the faculty. There is clearly much more for folklorists to investigate within the graphosphere (including the digital graphosphere), in addition to our traditional focus on what Franklin calls at one point the 'audiosphere' (p. 128).

In one sense, the book, although it is the result of a great deal of work, is really a first move in opening up and establishing a field of study that is at once intriguing and incomplete. I imagine that a book about the Roman, rather than the Russian, graphosphere would dedicate a much larger focus to grave inscriptions than this book did, but I am not quite sure whether this is because the evidence does not survive also in Russia or whether because the author's focus was on other, less familiar objects of study. In this regard, Franklin's remarks about blank forms (another fascinating, overlooked topic!) are emblematic: "a great deal of evidence surely remains untouched, undiscovered, unidentified, and the present summary will need modification" (p. 214). Nevertheless, the work stands as an example to others studying the Russian graphosphere, as well as to those studying also other traditions.

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF FOLKLORE STUDIES IN THREE BALTIC COUNTRIES

Sadhana Naithani. *Folklore in Baltic History: Resistance and Resurgence.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019. 115 pp.

This is a book by Indian scholar Sadhana Naithani from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, which is long overdue. While usually European scholars tend to write academic books about Asia, this is a book from an Asian scholar dealing with the history of folkloristics in the periphery of Europe. This gives another dimension and an additional scope. To my knowledge, academic relations between India and Estonia have strengthened in recent decades, or there might be other reasons why an Indian scholar became interested in the academic traditions of small countries far away from her homeland. The author states in the opening sentence that this book "should be seen as a nuanced representation of the relationship between folklore studies and a socialist-totalitarian state" (p. vii). The state in question is the Soviet Union, and folklore studies are represented by the Baltic countries. The focus is on the years 1944–1991, when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were part of the Soviet Union. Naithani says that exploring Baltic folkloristics of this era contributes to a better understanding of the diversity of folklore studies across the globe (p. vii). This book is a result of a study in which the author has leaned on several written sources in German and English and has conducted interviews with 25 Baltic folklorists. Unfortunately, due to a lack of language resources, literature sources in Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian were inaccessible to the author. Sadly, the solid Soviet-era literature about methodology and the theoretical basis for Soviet folkloristics in general, and folklore studies in the three Baltic states in particular, did not find their way into the book. Sadly, because at the beginning of the book Naithani emphasizes the deep connection between folkloristics and national ideologies in three Baltic states, adding, "Therefore, it is a significant location to study the relations of folkloristics with nationalism, socialism, and postsocialism" (p. viii). Indeed, the shift in official ideologies – from a Western democracy to Soviet socialism, and later back to a Western-style worldview – has been radical. Moreover, ideologies also changed in the Soviet period, starting with Stalinist-era totalitarianism, to the Khrushchev-era 'thaw' and Brezhnev's stagnation, to Gorbachev's perestroika. Throughout all these periods, folkloristics was ordered to use different concepts of identity and culture, and partially had to change its research methods.

This book has a clear focus on the Socialist period, with the emphasis of 'resistance' and 'dramatic changes' being central to the analysis. It is hard to say whether this emphasis was provided by the interlocutors or was the interpretation of the author. Nevertheless, in interviews with Baltic scholars and the few biographies that were accessible to the author via English translation, the narrative of drama and resistance plays a central role throughout the book. From my own side, I would say that the view of the Soviet period, as a period of grim rupture in which most people were, in one way or another, engaged with resistance to the oppressive and foreign system they were incorporated into, is a dominant historic narrative in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. As the author argues, "the period from 1944 to 1991 is dramatic because it was full of not one but several sudden and striking changes" (p. 4): loss of independence, brutal Sovietization and later the restoration of statehood. This interpretation is in unison with how the majority of scholars of folklore studies or ethnography view the history of their discipline in the Baltic countries. What of course is missing in that picture is how the Baltic scholars' community adapted to Soviet science and became part of it. Baltic scholars of the Soviet era followed the methodological and theoretical trends of Soviet science, and their published works did not differ radically from what was published elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

Since Naithani knows none of the three regional languages, nor Russian, her sources were somewhat limited. Besides familiarizing herself with some relevant research and historical overviews accessible in English and German, she visited the three countries and recorded conversations with 25 Baltic folklorists. Already in the first chapters we see that the book is biased toward Estonia, either because the author spent more time there, or because of more written sources she could access. Therefore, the Estonian case becomes a kind of template, or skeleton, of the history of folkloristics in the Baltic states, and Lithuania and Latvia contribute additional material.

What is interesting in Naithani's approach, and what is novel in the historiography of the Soviet and Socialist science, is the anti-colonial perspective she uses throughout the book. The author sees Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian folklore and folkloristics as resistance to a colonial Baltic-German and Soviet hegemony (p. 7). She writes that 'folklore' is conformist as well as rebellious (p. 100). It is for this reason that it has been used by both right-wing and left-wing forces, and has been criticized by some feminists for propagating patriarchal values, seen as liberatory by other feminist scholars, and presented as evidence of the backwardness of the colonized by colonizers, and as evidence of cultural identity by anticolonial freedom fighters (including the Baltic folklorists throughout the twentieth century) (p. 100). This approach was probably picked up during her interviews with the Baltic colleagues, because the concept of Soviet-era folklore as a form of vernacular resistance is relatively popular in the current interpretation of the history of folklore in the Baltic countries. This is an interesting approach, because

the comparison of postcolonialism and post-Socialism has captured attention in many academic publications already since 2000.

Unfortunately, the book contains some misinformation, for instance, the argument that "Tartu University was established in 1632, and German continued to remain its official language of instruction until World War II" (p. 16) The first part is true, but Estonian was the language of instruction at the university already beginning in 1919.

This is a book that delivers a good chronological overview of the history of folklore studies in three Baltic states from the 19th century until the post-Soviet period. When it comes to a detailed analysis of a certain period, institution, or a person, the reader is highly recommended to explore additional literature.

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On the cover: Crimean War: Florence Nightingale with her lamp at a patient's bedside. Coloured lithograph after H. Rae. 1891. Wikimedia.

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