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"TO HEAR THE MERMAIDS SING": VISUAL FIGURATION, MYTH AND DESIRE IN THE CASE OF THE WATERWOMAN

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> [The demon] *Antaura came out from the sea. She shouted aloud like a hind, she cried out like a cow. Artemis of Ephesos comes to meet her. "Antaura, where are you bringing the head-pain...?"*
> Against the half-head-ache [or migraine], Greek inscription on thin rolled silver sheet, found in 3C Roman tomb, Carnuntum, Austria[1]

> *Ic wæs fæmne geong, feaxhar cwene / ond ænlic rinc on ane tid / fleah mid fuglum ond on flode swom / deaf under yþe dead mid fiscum / ond on foldan stop, hæfde ferðe cwicu.*
> I was a young woman, a gray-haired queen / and a singular warrior – all at once. / I flew with the birds and swam in the sea / dived under the waves dead among the fishes / and stepped on the shore – I held a living spirit.
> Riddle 74, *Exeter Book*, 10C[2]

Abstract: The idea of a female spirit attached to a place of water has endured for millennia in literature, folklore and the visual arts. Supernatural aquatic women – mermaids, sirens, nymphs and nereids – attached to sea, shore, spring, river and cave, manifest at the interface between the natural world and the otherworld; they also serve as markers for that boundary. They have been visualised in a remarkable variety of forms, from ideal female nudes to monstrous hybrids. Central also to the mythos of the water-woman is the transformative power of desire; experienced by, or exerted on, either the entity herself or her beholder.

Focussing on traditions involving the Homeric sirens and the aquatic transformations described in Ovid, with excursions into Celtic, Northern European and folkloric sources, I explore how issues of hybridity and desire are related in treatments of the water-woman from Classical antiquity through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

Keywords: mermaid, siren, visual mythology, metamorphosis, history of desire, hybridity, goddesses

INTRODUCTION

The imagery of the mermaid-siren, part woman, part water-creature, is a "conceptual focus"[3] – a powerful meeting point – for a range of complex folkloric and mythic traditions about metamorphic and magical waterwomen.[4] We can think of her hybrid shape as a *figura*, to borrow Auerbach's term (1938: 320–341) for a rhetorical form which points to transcendental or supernatural reality. As such, the hybrid waterwoman is constantly mobilised in visual, literary and oral culture, from antiquity onwards; she evolves and yet stays the "same". The mermaid-siren is a "figure of speech" – in the widest sense – of the collective imaginary. And mermaid-siren imagery *en masse* – as a set of variations on a theme over time and space – itself constitutes a kind of discursive system, with its own internal rhetoric. I want also to suggest that we can take the operations of this figuration as a model demonstrating how the Otherworld in general is conceived of and maintained; essentially as a mirror of the mundane world, but with its boundaries defined by semiotic paradox and deformation, similar in kind to the processes of condensation and displacement which characterise dream-imagery. The present study explores the *figura* in these two senses. As an Otherworldly image, how and what does the mermaid-siren express? As a discursive system, to what ends, through what means, does its rhetoric work?

In visual and material culture, hybrid waterwomen constitute an "inter-artefactual domain" (Gell 1998: 216–219), wherein successive generations of exemplars reinforce each other, as it were, through line of sight.[5] Thus, a particular mermaid-siren carved on a wellhead in a town square (e.g. fig. 1a–b) might stay *in situ* for centuries, a model for straightforward reproduction. And, as a hybrid too, the form has inbuilt potential for variation: a person crafting a new woman-fish/waterbird may shrink, grow, double or multiply, hair, wings, fishtails etc.; in addition, transformative pathways common to all hybrid-types include change of scale, exaggeration/repression of body-parts, and/or cross-speciation.[6] All such routes for conserving or changing the shapes of waterwomen are thus embedded in concrete cultural traditions, which drive visual evolution over time.[7]

The family-tree of supernatural aquatic women encompasses spring, sea and river nymphs, marine goddesses, sea-monsters and sickness demons. Whether or not a hybrid form is used to represent such entities, and the degree of complexity of the hybrid form chosen, affects the meaning of the representation. More precisely, it changes *how* it means.[8] As Eco (1979: 271) observed:

> *the aesthetic text has a self-focussing quality, so* [its] *structural arrangement becomes one of the contents that it conveys... the way the rules are rearranged on one level will represent the way in which they are rearranged on another.*

Each water-woman representation is, in this sense, a "pre-existing discursive fragment" (Zumthor 1984: 27), like a variant of an oral text. Each (re-)arrangement of the hybrid form is, on some level, a commentary on the pre-existing repertoire. As successive iterations rearrange and twist the hybrid structure, the *figura*'s inter-artefactual domain expands and shifts terrain.

Though the static hybrid form thus has its own domain of visual variation, its first purpose is to represent the time-based shapeshifting aspect of the waterwoman:

> *The accretion of* [elements] *from different species* [is] *a form of condensation...* [In] *metamorphosis... a creature goes through various transformations over a period of time. If we were to compress the time span, the result would be* [a] *composite creature.* [So] *a metamorphosis might be seen as displacement of the elements of a composite creature over time.*[9]

And vice-versa: composites condense and make visible the qualities of metamorphic creatures. As folkloric and other evidence demonstrates, hybrid construction in the sign does not necessarily represent the literal visual appearance of a magical creature. In "live" encounters, supernatural waterwomen are rarely said to look like composites; the observer either sees one shifting shape, or apprehends directly the "excess" of a creature outwith nature.[10] Like *Mischbildungen* [composites] in dream-imagery,[11] the hybrid-sign condenses together the creature's simultaneity. In folk lifeworld perceptions, the hybrid is an abstraction; a two- (or three-) dimensional projection of a four-dimensional entity (cf. Küchler 2001: 61). Here is how a Swedish-speaking Finn, Albert Endtbacka (b. 1900) perceived an uncanny bird, at which his gun would not shoot, by a haunted lake:

> *That bird* [behaved] *sometimes as if able to perform all sorts of tricks like in the cinema. It could grow to be so big, so cruel-looking that it was*

> *like nothing on earth. A while after it was only like a little sea bird. And I thought: I'd better leave... it was weird in some way.. somebody in the village also [has] seen that bird... it was that sprite they talk about. Or waternymph or whatever. It's just like that then, when that kind of thing happens.*[12]

In Classical antiquity, the hybrid form was not invariably used to represent waterwomen. The major Classical goddesses with aquatic aspects are characterised as shapeshifters, or capable disguisers: marine Thetis, Aphrodite (born from sea-foam), Artemis (in certain avatars). Lesser exemplars, named and nameless, include nymphs, monsters and ex-mortals.[13] Threatened by death or rape, such women transmutate into water-birds, marine creatures, or the element of water itself.[14] Sometimes their end form is hybrid (e.g. Scylla, the Sirens). But, even when it is not, hybridity enters the picture as code for their metamorphosis/apotheosis.

For his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid (43 BCE-17) selected mythical figures, including many aquatic women, who had – or could be given – metamorphic apotheoses (see Table 1, Ovid's Waterwomen).[15] He represented these as etiological climaxes, all driven in some manner by desire (*eros*/*imeros*). As a means of studying the *figura* of the mermaid-siren, we can see his great poem as a kind of ark, in which Classical waterwomen travelled through the Middle Ages, progressively encased in commentary.[16] Especially important for later Western waterwoman traditions are the Sirens; descending from Homer, through Ovid to the Renaissance; and with another line of descent, visible in medieval representations, from Celtic, Nordic and Slavic prototypes to modern folk sources. The Sirens were explicitly tied to death and desire, and this aspect of their imagery fuelled visualisations of waterwomen in many ancient and post-Classical contexts. Renaissance artists and writers further reconfigured this complex Classical inheritance (see Epilogue, below).

Both Ovid's metamorphic aquatic women and the Homeric Sirens raise explicitly the issue of desire. To investigate what this has to do with their hybrid representations, I want to bring to bear Weiss's analysis (1998) of Greek and Indo-European (IE) words for *desire*, first on Ovid's waterwoman cohort, then on the Siren-image in particular. I move from this material to discuss the mermaid-siren *figura* as a rhetorical system, which includes and invites commentary; applying here Foucault's remarks on commentary as a discourse characterized by repetition, rarefaction and variation.[17] The intention is to illuminate how and why the hybrid aspect of the waterwoman enables its use, in different contexts, as a kind of "operating system" for the interface between the Otherworld and this one.

Table 1. *Ovid's Waterwomen.*

Io (cow) (I. 637 ff., 728 ff.)	Daughter of river Inachas changed by Jupiter; sees reflected in father's waters that she is cow; "flees in terror from herself" to bank of River Nile; prays to Jupiter, who restores her [*imeros*]
Syrinx (river-reed sleep-making pipes) (I. 689 ff.)	To escape rape by Pan, prays to River Ladon, who makes her a reed in his river; from her is made reed-pipe with which Mercury sends Argus to sleep [*imeros*]
Narcissus (flower) (III. 509-510):	Tiresias prophesises (III, 341 ff.) would live long "if he never knows himself" (III, 348); scorns all suitors; fears & flees from desire of the nymph Echo; sees his reflection in spring; loves it "madly"; cannot touch it; dies from hunger; in Hades, continues to love own reflection in Styx (V. 563) [*imeros & eros*]
Salmacis (hermaphrodite; castratory pool) (IV. 328-74)	Desires & is refused by Hermaphroditus; prays to a "goddess", is fused with him in her pool/spring [*eros*]
Cyane (water) (V. 407-464, V. 418-419)	Tries to prevent Proserpina's abduction; Hades cuts her river in half, changes her into mute water [*imeros*]
Nine muses (birds) (V. 289-93)	(Maeonian nymphs) take up wings in rainy weather to escape rape by King Pyreneus (*imeros*); frequent sacred spring of Pegasus (Hippocrene), on Mt. Helicon [cf. Pausanias, 9. 31. 3] [*imeros*]
Arethusa (water) (V. 572 ff)	Spring nymph; bathes in river Alpheus; to escape his rape, prays to Diana, who turns her into water. Alpheus joins his waters with her... [*imeros*]
Sirens (bird-fish women, sea monsters) (V. 551 ff.)	Witness Proserpina's abduction, wish for wings to search for her over sea and air. Wings given, they became sea monsters, retaining faces of maidens & human voice but terminating like fishes (V. 563) [*pothos*?]
Niobe (weeping marble) (VI. 312)	Offends Latona, Apollo & Diana kill her children & husband, turn her into stone [often represented as fountain] [*pothos*?]
Thetis, goddess of waters (shapeshifter) (X. 217 ff.)	Evades rape by Peleus through shapeshifting; Proteus tells how to bind her with cords; Peleus sires Achilles on her. [Discord attends their wedding] [*imeros*]
Alcyone (kingfisher) (XI. 411 ff.)	Juno sends Iris to cave of Somnus god of sleep, bids him send a dream to Alcyone: takes shape of her husband Ceyx, informing her of his death by shipwreck. In the morning, Alcyone finds her drowned husband floating by the shore & hurls herself into the sea. Gods change both into kingfishers, frequent the sea, make nests above the sand... [*eros & pathos*]
Liriopê	Boeotian naiad, probably daughter of a river god; raped by river Cephissus, son of Oceanus and Tethys, sires Narcissus [*imeros*]
Scylla (sea monster; or, peril of the sea) (XIV. 18 ff.)	Loved by seagod, Glaucus; rival Circe poisons fountain where she bathes. Dog from the loins down, with barking heads of dogs all around her [*imeros*]

PREHISTORIC, ANCIENT AND FOLKLORIC WATERWOMEN

> *... anthropomorphic thinking about animal behaviour is built into us. We could not abandon it even if we wished to. Besides, we do not wish to.* (Kennedy 1992: 5)

First, let us look briefly at the deeper history of waterwomen. Why women-fish, why water-birds? As with all fauna in the prehistoric lifeworld, birds and aquatic creatures were hunted and observed, dissected and consumed. Their shapes, as well as their skins, scales, bones and feathers, were taken as raw material for both functional and symbolic purposes (Milne 2011: 61–119; 2024: Ch. 4). Birds (and fish) appear in Paleolithic paintings and petroglyphs; on Neolithic amulets, jugs and figurines.[18] Graves carry bird, fish and seal images and seashell ornaments; sometimes, entire wings of swans and other seabirds (Mannermaa 2008b). At Çatalhöyük (c. 7100–6000 BCE), waterbirds appear in murals; crane-wings were pierced and preserved, possibly for use in dance (Russell 2019; Russell & McGowan 2003).

Water-creature associations are tied to the female gender in some Neolithic contexts. On Gotland, the "Woman of the Flutes" was buried (c. 2600 BCE) with 35 small flutes (perhaps decoy whistles, imitating specific bird calls), and a duck figurine by her feet (fig. 2a–b).[19] Among the oldest extant waterwoman images are the Lepenski Vir carved ovoids (c. 6000 BCE) – some combining fish-head with human female genitals (fig. 3) – and beak-faced deities in carts drawn by waterbirds (c. 1500 BCE, fig. 4).[20] Ethnographic evidence also suggests a widespread connection between waterbirds and the Otherworld.[21] In Siberia and northern Asia, waterfowl were commonly used to represent spirit-travel, because they could dive, swim, walk and fly; moving easily through the boundaries of air, land and sea.[22] The interface of water is itself reflective, literally and figuratively; just as pools and lakes are age-old mirrors, any water-surface can serve as a portal to the Otherworld.

In the Mediterranean and Near Eastern Bronze Age, winged (i.e. bird-hybrid) figures of all kinds are ubiquitous (e.g. fig. 5; cf. Pásztor 2017: 213–218). Wings on a humanoid or quadruped may mark their owner as possessing avian speed or powers (like the diving birds); or, as an otherworldly entity, travelling between, worlds; or, as a metamorphic creature in transition between forms. In ancient visual cultures generally, hybrid beings [*Mischwesen*] work as "pre-cooked" formulae, readily copied and adaptable.[23] Frontisi-Ducroux sees an intrinsic affinity between hybrid forms and marine divinities in antiquity.[24] Mer-human and siren-forms emerge in this context, moving with trade west and north.[25]

Turning to folk culture, in Greater Russian folk art, hybrid bird- or fish-women (fig. 6a–d) are used to represent *berenyi* (spirits of rivers, lakes and forests), and, more specifically, *rus(s)alki* (=watermaidens; cf. *vili*, *zhiri*, *rozhanitsi*; Hilton 1995; Netting 1976).[26] On one level, *rusalki* are a type of Unquiet Dead: transformed souls of young women who die unmarried, for love, or in first childbirth,[27] their rites-of-passage incomplete (Dynda 2017: 92ff). In a tale from Samara region:

> *...Marina drowned in the Volga out of love for [Ivan], and became a rusalka, living in a terrible whirlpool, where water boiled in quiet and stormy weather alike...* [there] *Marina Rusalka would appear* [and] *overturn boats. Fishermen said they sometimes saw her on the sands opposite Simbirsk. It would seem that a swan was swimming along... It would come out onto the sands, flap and strike its wings, turn into a beautiful woman, and tumble down on the sand as if dead. In the evening, she frightened many people....* (adapted from Ivanits 1992: 189)

Barber (1997) compared waterbird forms associated with Slavic *vily* and *rusalki* with Neolithic and Classical prototypes (cf. fig. 4).[28] She argued that their capacity for healing or harm stems from unfulfilled fertility; hence the association with waterbirds and other egg-laying aquatic or amphibious creatures (fish, snakes). Their power can be invoked through custom and ritual (e.g. in seasonal festivals),[29] or triggered through private encounters. In Bulgaria, for example, in the 1930s, incubation in water-meadows on Ascension Day was used to cure diseases attributed to *vily*.[30] There are signs here of an important aspect of the *figura*: its relation to dream-cultures, otherworldly visions, prophecy and healing.

There is good evidence for the antiquity of this concept. The Greeks and Romans built shrines and dedicated grottos and springs to water-nymphs (cf. figs. 7a–c).[31] Cures, curses and miracles were solicited at such places, from named or unnamed water-goddesses, and at more formal incubation and bath-temple complexes.[32] In Northern England at Hadrian's Wall, in Northern England, with its rotating legions drawn from all over the Empire, Coventina's Well (fig. 7a) is named for its many dedication-stones inscribed to this otherwise unattested deity.[33] The similar "Shrine of the Nymphs" (fig. 7b) nearby has stones carved with triple water-nymphs (Smith 1962; Allason-Jones 1996; Mayers 2017). In both places, simplified draperies begin to read visually as fish-tail shapes (figs. 7a–b). Further south in Roman Britain, Minerva-Sulis (fig. 8a) received hundreds of curse-prayers at her healing pools in Bath. In central Gaul, the river deity Sequana (in her duck-boat, fig. 8b; cf. fig. 4) attracted huge

numbers of votive offerings at her temple and hospital complex at the source of the Seine (Green 1999: 37–40, 69). These include plaques and models of eyes (e.g. fig. 8c), and pleas for help with headaches. The goddess Sirona, depicted holding snake and eggs, presided at healing thermal spring-sanctuaries from Brittany to Hungary (Green 1995a: 90–105).[34]

Water-bird cult imagery had other non-Classical roots.[35] A Gallo-Roman monument unearthed in Paris (figs. 9a–b) bears on one face the image-constellation labelled TARVOSTRIGARANUS (The Bull with Three Cranes); another face shows Esus, a woodcutting deity connected with rune-mastery.[36] On another slab from Trèves (now Trier, Germany), Esus cuts branches from a willow which supports a bull's head and three cranes or egrets (fig. 9c); an abutting (damaged) face carries a female figure.[37]

Later Celtic traditions favoured waterbirds as a form for shapeshifting women. The medieval Irish prose and verse *Dindshenchas*[38] present etiologies of rivers and other bodies of water as aquatic female apotheoses. Thus, the river Boyne is the dismembered arm of the disobedient wife Bóand, whose flooding waters become a source of poetic inspiration (*imbas forosnai*).[39] Other *Dindshenchas* describe recognisable mermaid-siren figures. The maiden Rúad in Donegal travels to Ireland in a bronze boat to meet her betrothed:

> *co cuala dord na samguba isinn mbiur nach cuala nech* [*riam*]
> (in the inver [=estuary] then she heard the lamenting music [*dord*] which none had ever heard)."[40]

In the prose account, this makes her sleep and fall in the water. In the verse equivalent, she seems to both fall asleep (spellbound?) and jump in the sea; the music she hears is described as *síd* (wondrous, enchanting; Darwin 2019: 157). A waterfall bears her name (Ess Rúaid [Rúad's Waterfall]).

In the legend for Inber n-Ailbinne (Meath), nine beautiful marine women hold fast a prince's fleet on the open sea. He sleeps with one, promises to return, fails to do so. She bears his child and throws its head after him (Stokes 1894: 294–95; Gwynn 1903: ii.26–35). In another tale, a prince hears – like Rúad – the *dord* [murmurous wailing] of the *murdúchainn* [sirens] in the sea:

> *This is the form that he beheld, the mermaid with the shape of a grown-up girl. Above the water she was most smooth; but below the water her lower parts were hairy-clawed and bestial. So the monsters devoured him and cast him away in joints. And the sea carried his two thigh-bones to yonder port, and the share of a hundred would fit on the flat of each bone. Hence Port Lairge* [Port of the Thighbone] *is (so) called.*[41]

Aspects of these legends fit Barber's thesis: Rúad is a maiden drowned on the verge of marriage, the mer-woman of Inber n-Ailbinne is an abandoned lover who kills her child.[42]

In *Beowulf* (2002 [8C]: lines 103–104), the monster Grendel is a *border-walker* [*merc-stapa*] who lives in *wastelands, fen and fastness*. His mother, on the other hand, is called a *brim-wylf* [she-wolf of the water; 1506, 1599], a *mere-wīf* [female of the mere; 1519] and a *grund-wyrgenne* (accursed creature of the depths; 1518). She inhabits an uncanny well of *dreadful water* and *cold currents* (1260-1); it takes Beowulf most of the day to reach the bottom. This water then becomes alive with a host of *wundra* (weird creatures; 1509), tusked *sǣ-dēor* (sea beasts; 1510) and *āglǣca(n)* (monsters; 1512); who are all, evidently, the mother's creatures. Her claws, however, are defeated by the hero's armour; he eventually dispatches her with a huge magical sword, part of the heap of her victims' leavings.

As well as hybridity and metamorphosis, the account of Grendel's mother, like the legends of Bóand and Port Lairge, contains oneiric markers: changes of scale (gigantic) and state (dismemberment) (cf. Milne 2008; 2024: Ch. 3). One is reminded of Pausanias (2.10.2), describing the sanctuary of Asklepios at Sikyon (Gulf of Corinth): "In the stoa lies the huge bone of an enormous sea monster, and, behind this, statues of Dream and Sleep lulling a lion..." (Stafford 2003: 92–93).

A spectacular scale transformation occurs in the legend of the Crane-bag, in *Duanaire Finn*. Iuchra turns the maiden Aoife, her rival in love, into a crane:

> *Iuchra, enraged, beguiled Aoife to come swimming, it was no happy visit: when she drove her fiercely forth in the form of a crane over the moorlands. Aoife then demanded of the beautiful daughter of Abhartach: 'How long am I to be in this form, woman, beautiful breast-white Iuchra?'*
> *'The term I will fix will not be short for thee, Aoife of the slow-glancing eyes: thou shalt be two hundred white years in the noble house of Manannán.*
> *'Thou shalt be always in that house with everyone mocking thee, a crane that does not visit every land: thou shalt not reach any land...'*[43]

This metamorphosis is not the end; when Aoife dies:

> *'A good vessel of treasures will be made of thy skin... in distant times the Crane-bag...'*

This Crane-bag [*corrbolg*], infinite in size and capacity, is thus the magical skin of a waterbird-woman. In it, the sea god Manannán keeps mythic and royal possessions.[44] Structurally, then, this inexhaustible bag resembles the

Greek Cornucopia, which also has an aquatic pedigree: it is the horn Herakles tears from Acheloos, shapeshifting river-god (and father of Sirens), in a fight motivated by love-rivalry.

The Crane-bag's impossible topology is tied to the ocean: "When the sea was full, its treasures were visible in its middle: when the fierce sea was in ebb, the Crane-bag in turn was empty."[45] This recalls the Norse legend of the magic drinking-horn, which Thor cannot drain because its (occluded) end draws from the sea.[46] The Crane-bag passes around the heroes (always retrieved by Manannán), until, as Conaire sleeps on Tara, he wakes to find it round his neck.

In the time of Gerald of Wales (1146–1223), it was remembered that crane-flesh had been *tabu* in Ireland. In Scots folklore, the crane [*cor-*; =crane, heron, etc] signified a mean, parsimonious woman, and/or death.[47] In the Scottish Highlands:

> *If a person is thought to be too long alive, and it becomes desirable to get rid of him, his death can be ensured by bawling to him thrice through the key-hole of the room in which he is bedrid[den]:*
>
> *"Will you come or will you go? / Or will you eat the flesh of cranes?"*
>
> (Campbell 1900: 240)

European folktales and ballads are, of course, full of enchanted waterbird-women, driven into non-human shapes, like Aoife, by malign intent (desire) on the part of a magic-worker. Swan-maidens (ATU D36.1) form a subgenre here. Merwomen, like seal-women [*selkies*], feature in tales and lore as a type of Animal Bride.[48] As Darwin (2019: 5) argues, ML4080 (*The Seal Woman*) could be more accurately titled, *The Mermaid Legend*: a man takes and hides a watermaid's possession (skin, garment etc), compelling her to be his wife, until the object is found, or some other prohibition broken. Mélusine is a water-bride of this kind, famous in 14C romance for conferring authority and prosperity, and typically represented visually in hybrid form (fig. 10a).[49]

The Irish and Gaelic terminology for *mermaid*, like the 14C English word, consists of compounds of words for women and water: thus *maighdean mhara* [sea-maiden], *maighdean chuain* [bay-maiden], *bean na fairrge* [woman of the sea]; in Danish, *havfru* [sea-woman]; Swedish *havstroll* [sea troll/magical being], *sjöjungfru* [sea-maiden], and *sjörå* [lake-spirit] (Darwin 2019: 35–36). Interestingly, in this last exemplar, the second element *rå* derives from *råda* [to rule, to advise] (Klintberg 2010: 97; Darwin 2019: 36).[50]

In legends concerning more elemental waterwomen figures, such as the (ugly) *vodianikha* of Northern Great Russia (Ivanits 1992: 77; Hilton 2011 [1995]: 143–146), or the Estonian Mistress of Water, the ingredients are arranged

differently. Here is an account of a meeting with the latter, told by 42-year-old Emilie Kruuspak in 1929:

> *My great-grandmother was on her way to the town. Near the bridge of Saula she saw a woman in the river washing her breasts, standing with her back towards her. She had yellow hair and broad hips.* [Though] *she had not seen her before, Great-grandmother shouted: "Good morning, Mistress of Water (*vee-emand*)!" The woman answered through her nose: "Good day to you. Let your grandchildren live a happy life until the fourth and fifth generation; they will not die a watery death!" This happened in summer-time at sunrise. In the evening the grandmother heard that, in the place where the water-spirit (*vee-vaim*) had sat, a girl had drowned while washing the sheep. This unlucky girl also had long yellow hair.*[51]

Key details here include the liminal time/place, and the elements of deflection/duplication, death and prophecy. The Mistress faces backwards, taking the likeness of a particular woman-type, one of which she will kill later on that day. When greeted properly, her power to harm is averted onto this other victim; she grants also a (time-sensitive) boon: grandchildren protected, descendants safe from drowning.

In a mid-19C Gotland story, a boy who plays the flute meets a mermaid at the shore; there they make music together and she sings.[52] After several encounters, he becomes obsessed and tries to seize her. As she turns to flee, he sees her back is hollow; like the *boss-backed* [bow-backed] elves of Scotland and certain kinds of *incubi*.[53]

Issues of scale and shapeshifting are clear in a mid-19C tale collected from a Highland fisherman, near Inverary, Scotland. A princess seeking her lost husband plays her harp on the shore:

> *the sea-maiden came up to listen, for* [they] *are fonder of music than any other creatures, and when* [the princess] *saw the sea-maiden she stopped. The sea-maiden said "Play on", but she said 'No, not till I see my man again'. So the sea-maiden put up his head. (Who do you mean? Out of her mouth, to be sure. She had swallowed him.) She played again, and stopped, and the sea-maiden put him up to the waist. Then she played again and stopped, and the sea-maiden placed him on her palm. Then he thought of the falcon, and became one, and flew on shore. But the sea-maiden took the wife.* (after Campbell 1994 [1860]: I, 98)

This presents a topological transformation and complication of the *figura* (cf. fig. 10b). Bewitching music emanates from the human woman, not the sea-maid. What emerges from the Siren's mouth is not magical song (provoking desire), but her male human victim, himself the object of the beholder's desire. And it is this original victim who then shapeshifts into a bird, by "thought". Subsequently, the man kills the sea-maiden by finding her detached soul, hidden in an egg (ATU 302, E710), but the mortal female harpist dies.

The variable forms of thousands of mermaid-sirens, created during the Middle Ages, parallel and prefigure this capacity for topological diversification (cf. figs. 10b–i).[54] As a hybrid, evidently, the womanfish/bird could "speciate" in many directions, and remain recognisable as a mermaid/siren, as long as a minimal two recognisable referents were conserved. As monastic authors battled to reconcile competing fish-versus-bird accounts in their antique sources, the Romance languages adopted *sirena* – as in the French *sirène-oiseau, sirène-poisson* – to denote all waterwoman exemplars, however visually diverse. Leclercq-Marx (2002b: 64) sees the medieval proliferation as resulting from the collision of two distinct and contradictory traditions. The first is the hugely popular bestiary genre, from the late Classical *Physiologus* to the 14C encyclopedists.[55] Such writers moralised Sirens as emblematic of vice – usually Lust [=appetite, desire] – and tried also to reconcile them with biblical references, guided by St. Jerome's translations of Old Testament monsters (e.g. Isaiah 13:22) as Classical types.[56] New waterwoman-variants combining bird and fish (cf. fig. 10a, g–h) are evidence of cross-stimulation in the interartefactual domains of church sculptural decoration and manuscript illumination. The other tradition motivating this visual radiation Leclercq-Marx (2002: 59–64) calls "Nordic-Germanic": that is, more positive (or at least ambivalent) views of waterwomen as sources of occult power (cf. selkie brides, Mélusine), bringing prosperity, healing, prophecy or help at sea.

Emblematic of this strand, she observes, are medieval innovations such as the lactating *sirène-poisson* (fig. 10c–e). While the medieval motif has an independent evolution, Buschor (1944: 36–37) discusses Classical Siren-types, for example, on the corners of this Lycian tomb (5C BCE, Lycia, Turkey), where flying women-birds each clutch a small human or child to their breasts (fig. 22a).[57] In context, the diminutive humans must stand here for (dead) souls; but visually the arrangement resembles the medieval lactating mermaid-siren. The later child-at-breast variants clearly express – make visible – the raw potential fertility characteristic of folk-waterwoman. The idea resonates with the prominence of midwifery in tales of Basque "sirens" [*laminak*]. Though often indistinguishable from fairies, around the Bay of Biscay, *laminak* may appear as half-woman, half-fish. Some dwell in wells, rivers and caves. They can

change size and shape, and, like Mélusine, they build towers and gift wealth (Echeverria 2016; Williams 1989: 109–125).

THE SIREN

I want now to argue that we can take further the clue that waterwomen power derives from unused fertility, and consider the *figura* as a whole as encoding desire in various ways. In Barber's terms, the potential energy of the waterwoman has an inherent charge of desire. Changes in how such creatures are visualised – mentally and in material culture – could then be expected to register changing views about passion and longing, in the framework of gender binaries. Let us start with the evolutionary history of the familiar Classical Siren-image (fig. 11a).

As with medieval mermaid-sirens, the ancient variety came in many shapes. An early depiction of the *Odyssey* episode demonstrates that, like later waterwomen, Sirens could be represented as double in form. On this *aryballos* (fig. 12a–b), along with Odysseus, his ship and companions, the Sirens appear twice: as two hybrids, sitting on the rock at right, and as two huge birds, attacking the boat.[58] The (loan) word, *ΣIPEN*, is attached to human-headed bird-figures on two extant 6C BCE vases (e.g. fig. 13a); without these, perhaps, we would not now be referring to every similar hybrid before them as Sirens.[59]

The key context colouring the name is, of course, Homer (c. 200 years before the first labelled vases). His Sirens say to Odysseus:

> *Come here to us…heave your ship so you may hear the song we sing. Never yet has anyone passed by here in his black ship until he has heard the honey-sweet voice from our mouths; instead he goes home filled with delight and knowing much more.* [For] *we have foreknowledge of all that is going to happen on this fruitful earth ...* (Odyssey XII.182-91)[60]

Homer's Sirens are plural – minimally two – later turned into the folktale number of three.[61] As often noted, Homer provides few visual details. Apollonius of Rhodes (3C BCE; IV.896-900) is the earliest Greek author to explicitly describe them as hybrid. Homer's Sirens are monsters mainly because of what they do; their "honey-sweet" song is a fatal trap. Odysseus fills his sailors' ears with beeswax – itself "honey-sweet" (sympathetic magic, perhaps, as well as practical) – rendering his men deaf and immune. Otherwise, those who hear the song dive overboard to reach its source; to die, it seems, without gaining

any of the objects of desire promised by the singers. Longing, magical coercion, death, duplicity, prophecy and hallucination are thus built into this passage.

But not sleep. That element emerges in a later era, from the *Physiologus* tradition, supported by Leclercq-Marx's "Nordic-Germanic" ideas. Medieval Irish writers draw on the Homeric episode, adding this further oneiric twist. In the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*Book of Invasions of Ireland*, 11C), when an ancestral chieftain and his men encounter the Sirens in the Caspian Sea, they are impelled to sleep, not to dive and die on the rocks:

> *It is Caicher the druid who gave the remedy to them, when the Siren(s?) was / were making melody to them: sleep was overcoming them at the music. This is the remedy Caicher found for them, to melt wax in their ears.*[62]

The idea recurs in other sources from the 12C on. In verses from the *Book of Leinster*, only Odysseus puts wax in his ears to encounter the Sirens.[63] So strong is the association that some manuscript illustrations of Homer depict the Siren episode with sleeping sailors, in direct contradiction to the action in the text (cf. fig. 14a–b).

In a version of the popular *Voyage of St. Brendan*,[64] Brendan and his monks encounter a mermaid who sends them to sleep:

> *...they saw a beast coming towards them with a human body and face, but from the waist downwards it was a fish. It is called a siren, a very lovely creature with a beautiful human shape; it sings so well and its voice is so sweet that whoever hears it cannot resist sleep and does not know what he is doing. When this sea monster approached them, the sailors fell asleep and let the ship drift: the monks too forgot themselves completely because of its voice and did not know where they were* (Middle High German, 14C).[65]

Diverting the direct way desire works in Homer, rather than suicidal action, medieval siren-songs compel loss of consciousness in their listeners, who, like Rúad, are in some sense both entranced and drowned. Indigenous concepts to do with the drone-like "music" of the sea and its power to lull or enchant, supported by the synthetic monastic tradition,[66] seem to inform this perception of the Sirens, creating a more circuitous and complex vector for desire than the original.

From Hellenistic times, around the boot of Italy, death and unrequited love were attached to the Siren-mythos in a different way, through a rearrangement of subjectivity: here, it was the Sirens themselves who felt strong emotion and met with doom. The Sirens' names become (relatively) fixed; one is Parthenope,

represented as suiciding into the sea, motivated by fatal passion for Odysseus himself (e.g. fig. 11a). Greek colonial cities on the coasts of Campania and Calabria sanctified places where Siren-bodies were said to have washed ashore: annual games and a temple on the Sorrentine peninsula; Parthenope's tomb near Naples (Neapolis).[67] Taking the Sirens as founding water-nymphs in this way, they "killed the monster inside the Sirens [and] remade them into useful tools of redemption" (Taylor 2014: 187). This development moved them closer to the *vily / rusalka* template.

Neapolitan coins carry both the heads of Parthenope (fig. 15a), and of the horned river-god, Sebothos (fig. 15b). South of Campania, on another Siren coast, the head on Terinan coins is that of their patron water-nymph, Terina (fig. 15c). While the Neapolitan Parthenope reverse has a man-headed river-god, other city coins of the region display winged Sirens, seated on flowing jars (fig. 15b–c; cf. 7c). Thus identified as river-nymphs, their recuperation into benevolent waterwomen is complete.[68] Into the 20C, women in Naples and Campania wore *sirena*-charms – stamped from tin or silver – against the Evil Eye (Berry 1968: 252–256). Equipped with bells and crown, the bodies of these twin-tailed *sirene* extend into double-headed hippocampi, or morph into foliate shapes (figs. 15d–e). The stamped charms have identical backs and fronts; in a sense, these too are waterwomen with only one surface.

Effectively, then, it is "invented tradition" (cf. Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012 [1983]) which connects figures such as this bearded human-headed bird (fig. 16a),[69] Homer's Sirens, and the later cascades of fish-tailed and bird-bodied creatures. However, a common association with death – more precisely, with transit to the Otherworld – is contained, as it were, in the DNA of the form. The human-headed bird predates the *Odyssey* by millennia; the word, *siren*, also seems to be a Near-Eastern borrowing (Luján & Vita 2018). Somewhere in the ancestry of this image is the *ba* of the Egyptians (fig. 5), an undying part of the human ghost.[70] The Siren-forms were "selected for" in funerary visual culture over an enormous territory and time period (cf. fig. 17) – appearing on *Totenmahl* cauldrons and tomb cisterns (figs. 18a–c; cf. figs. 22a–b, 23a–b)[71] – maintaining their strong connection with death, that ultimate transformation, into the Classical and later eras.

The ubiquity of Sirens in ancient visual culture demonstrates also their affinity with *paratactic*[72] mythic figuration (cf. figs. 16a–b, 19a–b, 20). Siren-imagery was part of the craft repertoire of "decorative" elements (rosettes, palm-fronds, panthers etc.). In the domain of vase-painting, for instance, such motifs were arranged to create imagistic (paratactic) rather than narrational (syntactic) signifying fields.[73] Thousands of Siren-bearing objects exemplify this associative approach to the mythic. Thus, a jar bearing a bearded Siren (fig. 16a)

between two panthers has on the reverse a bull (fig. 16b) – a common form for water-gods such as Acheloos (cf. fig. 20, 32b–d) – and a common sacrificial animal. Another *aryballos* (fig. 19a-b) presents a Siren on one side, a waterbird on the other. The Siren is also often paired with Eros (fig. 16c). In a complex use of what Sourvinou-Inwood (1990: 396) calls an "iconographic schema without a fixed meaning but with a basic semantic core", consider how the siren-image is placed above the main scene on this South Italian neckamphora (fig. 20). Directly below it, Eros hovers over a fountain, flanked by nymphs bearing jugs; one rides a human-headed bull (=water-god).[74] Above right, a muffled face in a window frame makes the funerary context clear.

From the late 5C BCE on, Greeks, Etruscans and Romans foregrounded Sirens along with waterwomen – and marine imagery generally – in funerary sculpture. There, Nereids on dolphins or hippocamps (fig. 21a) sing for the dead,[75] and the *Odyssey* Siren episode is deployed as a ready-made set-piece, both of song and sea (e.g. fig. 22b). Sophocles (c. 496–406 BCE) has his Odysseus call the Sirens "daughters of Phorkys" (an old sea-god), who "sing the lays of Hades" at the gates to the underworld.[76] As solo statues-in-the-round, siren-forms were placed atop grave monuments (e.g. figs. 23a–b), and inserted into or beside banquet scenes.[77] The same associations which Homer attributed to his Sirens – second sight, extreme emotion – inform the "immanent context"[78] of such funerary imagery; a Siren with a lyre is both psychopomp and mourner.

Both degree and kind of anthropomorphism vary in these depictions. Sirens on Etruscan sarcophagi (e.g. fig. 22b) are typically fully human. The Romans preferred to represent water-deities as humans with standard props – the jar flowing with water (figs. 7c, 15b–c) – or aquatic (often hybrid) steeds: so sea-nymphs ride sea-monsters (figs. 21a–c); Sequana stands in a duck-prowed boat (fig. 8b).

EXCURSUS ON DESIRE

Evidently the corpus of waterwomen considered so far – river-spirits, sea-women, swan-maidens and Sirens – turns on, and so configures, aspects of dangerous, unrequited, wild desire in various ways. Mortals whose fertility is unconsummated (abandoned or ill-fated lovers) may become waterwomen; represented visually as human women, or with one unearthly quality (green hair, hollow back), or as hybrid. The bird-humans used to illustrate Homer's Sirens – usually with woman's head and breasts – make themselves objects of desire through song. Can we then read "selections for" changes in topological complexity – favouring particular forms (or formulae) in our mythos – in relation

to shifting conceptualisations of desire? Is there a discernable relationship between the shapes of the waterwoman and different configurations of desire?

Weiss's analysis of ancient Greek concepts of desire starts with the names of the three *erotes* [*ἔρωτες*], the gods of desire: Eros [*ἔρος*], Pothos [*Πόθος*] and [H]Imeros [*ἵμερος*]. Visually, the *erotes* seem interchangeable (three winged youths). In vase-painting, they appear among Aphrodite's "train of erotic personifications" (cf. Stafford 2013: 176 n. 6; Breitenberger 2007). Their wings, Shapiro thinks (1993: 110–124), are an "orientalizing" borrowing. When Pausanias (1.43.6) mentions their statues (at Aphrodite's shrine in Megara), he is skeptical that one can distinguish among them.[79] However, in fact, their differences are important. Though he may pull Aphrodite's chariot, Pothos, for instance, never denotes physical desire. He represents longing for an absent object; hence his role in funerary art.[80]

The other two are both attested much earlier. Hesiod places Eros – *limb-melter...who overpowers the mind*[81] – among the four primeval gods; his earliest cult in Athens (c. 540–520 BCE) celebrates this capacity.[82] Older than Aphrodite, whose birth they attend (*Theogony* 201–202), both Eros and Imeros denote aspects of sexual passion. They also share an etymology. According to Weiss (1998: 50), the key distinction between them is this:

> ἔρος *is desire conceived of as subject-internal in its origin and its end.*
> ἵμερος *on the other hand, is a compulsive desire of external origin.*

It transpires that Indo-European words for *love / desire* (transitive verb) have varied sources. The Greek root *ἐρ(α)- (love) – hence, *eros* and *imeros* – like Latin *delegere* (love/desire) – descends from a PIE root, *$*h_1erh_2$* (take/choose [a]part); (cf. Hittite *arhāŝ* [border], Latin *ōra* [border/divide], Old Irish *or*, Lithuanian *ìrti*).[83] This root carries the idea of division: to divide (a desired object) for one's self. The semantic evolution, then, is: *takes apart* (for oneself) > *enjoys* > *loves*. Verbal roots meaning *divide,* then *cut* (for oneself), develop to mean *enjoy / seek to enjoy*, and finally, *seek to enjoy / love*. So, the sister words *ἔρος* and *ἵμερος* came to mean *desire*, *use*, *need*, developing from *have enjoyment of / carry off* (e.g. as booty).[84]

One thing we know about the original Indo-Europeans – because it figures large in both the myths (cf. Dagda's hostel; Odin's Valhalla) and the cultures (Anthony 2007: 160–192, 263–307) of their descendants – is the importance of the feast. From the Bronze Age to the Viking era, chiefs consolidated power by apportioning choice cuts of the meat (cattle) to followers as marks of favour. Greek banqueting nomenclature preserved this sense of *$*h_1erh_2$*- [divide]; so *ἔρανος* is "a meal to which each contributed his share"[85] Consider the cognate

eris (*ἔρις* [discord]), where a different specialised meaning emerges from *division*: to *quarrel* (cf. ON *deila* [quarrel], from the verb *deila* [divide, deal]; Greek *ἔ-ρις* [contest, battle], from *δέρω* [flay]):

> *The antipodal* ἔρος *and* ἔρις *then... share a common root in linguistic prehistory, as they do so often in the human psyche* (Weiss 1998: 47; cf. Haudry 1993: 169–189)

In an otherwise mysterious example, stemming from the same root as *eros*, Latin *ora* [a ship's rope], is the rope that is cut (apart) or untied to release the ship.[86] This usage – possibly originally sailors' slang – conveys ideas of release from tension, along with unstoppable directed movement; helping us to see how the root sense, *divide*, came to mean *long for, yearn, take pleasure in*.

Weiss (1998: 50) explains:

> ἵμερος *is said to be a condition stirred up by someone's words (the verb used is* ὦρσε *Odyssey 4.113, 4.183; Iliad 23.14, 23.108, 23.153) [or] thrown into someone's θυμός [thûmos = heart / mind / will], by a god (*Iliad *3.139; Hymn to Aphrodite 45, 53, 73, 143). This is never the case for* ἔρος.

There are important differences, then, in how the two forms of desire are seen as starting, and how they end. The formula for the end of an attack of *ἔρος* is *to put away* [or *pack up*] *desire*; e.g.:

> *αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο*
> [when they had put away their desire ...]
> (*Iliad* 1.469)

But, when *ἵμερος* ends, it "leaves of its own accord" (Weiss, loc. cit.):

> *καί οἱ ἀπὸ πραπίδων ἦλθ' ἵμερος ἠδ' ἀπὸ γυίων*
> [and the passion for it had gone from his mind and body ...]
> (*Iliad* 24.514)

The actions of gods clarify this distinction. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite 5,* the *ἔρος*-passion grips Anchises at line 5.91, when he sees the goddess [*Ἀγχίσην δ' ἔρος εἷλεν*]. Aphrodite seduces him with a deceptive speech, then sows *ἵμερος* in his *θυμός* [*thûmos*], at line 5.143:

> *Ὣς εἰποῦσα θεὰ γλυκὺν ἵμερον ἔμβαλε θυμῷ.*
> [When she had so spoken, the goddess implanted sweet lust in his bosom]

After this, his desire is imperative:[87]

> *οὔ τις ἔπειτα θεῶν οὔτε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων / ἐνθάδε με σχήσει πρὶν σῇφιλότητι μιγῆναι / αὐτίκα νῦν:*
> [then neither god nor mortal man shall here restrain me till I have lain with you in love right now] (5.149-51)

Visual conventions support the point. The oldest depictions of the Erotes are on vase paintings, in *Judgements of Paris* and *Abductions of Helen*; in both scenes, their presence became mandatory. In our two examples, the Himeros figure literally grips Paris (figs. 25–26).[88]

Further evidence for the compulsive and external character of *ἵμερος* comes from sex magic. Aphrodite's girdle, wherein *ἵμερος* abides (*Iliad* 14.216), works in this way. When Hera binds Zeus with it, Zeus says:

> *ὡς σέο νῦν ἔραμαι καί με γλυκὺς ἵμερος αἱρεῖ*
> [never have I loved any woman as I have loved you, and the sweet passion [*ἵμερον*] has taken over me]
> (*Iliad* 14.328)

Plato also chooses *ἵμερος* as the word to describe love kindled by god-like beauty (Phaedrus 251c & e), "as the effluence of beauty enters… through the eyes" (Phaedrus 251b).

Weiss deduces that an ancestor of *ἵμερος* must have been "a verbal abstract meaning 'magical binding'" (1998: 53).[89] In this context, *ἵμερος* has many attestations (and an exact parallel in English: *to spellbind / be spellbound*; cf. Versnel 1998: 217–267). Socrates speaks of the Sirens' song in this sense, calling it an incantation [*epōidē*, *ἐπ οιδή*].[90] The Nestor Cup inscription (750–700 BCE, figs. 26a–b) takes the form of a spell to create *imeros*:

Νέστορος ἑ[στ]ὶ εὔποτ[ον] ποτέριο[ν].	Nestor's cup, good to drink from.
hὸς δ' ἂν τῶδε π[ίε]σι ποτερί[ο] αὐτίκα	Whoever drinks from this cup,
κῆνον Ἱμέρ[ος hαιρ] ἑσεὶ καλλιστε	him straightaway
[φά]νο Ἀφροδίτες.[91]	the desire of beautiful-crowned Aphrodite will seize

(Watkins 1976; West 1994; Faraone 1996; Gaunt 2017).

In *defixiones* or *κατάδεσμοι* texts (curse tablets < Greek *δέω* [bind]), *κατα δέω* [bind down]), *imeros* frequently implies a sex-spell. A 3C magical-aphrodisiac Alexandrian text (*PGM* XV) exemplifies this well-known rhetoric:

> *I will bind you, Nilos, who is also* [called] *Agathos Daimon, whom Demetria bore, with great evils... you will love me, Capitolina whom Pepcrous bore, with a divine passion, and in every way you will be for me an escort, as long as I want...*[92]

Next, the speaker lists and describes specific daimons to help in this task. Their characteristics echo those of the folk-waterwomen spirits in Barber's analysis:

> I also conjure you, daimons, who are in this place, ALYĒAĒL... LIONŌ SOUAPH ALŌ LYBALOLYBĒL OIKALLISSAMAEŌ LYBALALŌNĒ LYLŌĒY LYOTHNOIS ODISSASON ALELADA. I, Capitolina, have the power... *They* [the demons] *are releasing* ***all who have drowned, have died unmarried, and have been carried away by the wind***. ... I am conjuring you, daimons, by the force and fate that constrains you. Accomplish everything for me and rush in and take away the mind of Nilos... in order that he might love me, Capitolina... I conjure you... by those carried by the wind, ... the greatest daimon... *who shakes the deep, sending out waters and winds*... Nilos shall love me with an eternal affection; immediately, immediately; quickly [quickly!] [emphasis added].

A charm against migraine from the same period (epigraph, p. 1) presents a similar constellation of elements. The demon Antaura comes from the sea, bearing pain, obliterating thought. Her bovid animal cries constitute a "message" outwith human language. Early *Physiologus* texts characterise the Sirens as shrieking *loudly*, or, in *diverse voices* [*clamitantia uocibus altis*, or, *diuersus*]; thus reversing the polarity of their irresistible song.[93] The charm next invokes Artemis of Ephesos (fig. 27a) to confront Antaura. This is a case of like fighting like; Artemis was, among other things, a Mistress of Animals and patron of fertility, whose cultic animals include snakes and waterbirds.[94] At Artemis Achna, on Cyprus, the statue of the goddess wears a crown of siren-figures (fig. 27b); elsewhere, Artemis carries a mirror and bears two sirens (fig. 27c). At Artemis Orthia, Sparta, among the votive offerings in the archaic style is a limestone fish-tailed female figure (Léger 2015: App.2:11, #17). Pausanias (8.41.6) describes the cult statue of the river goddess Eurynome (another Artemis variant), paraded at her festival: "golden chains bind the wooden image... a woman as far as the hips, but below this a fish..."[95]

Antaura, the charm's sea-demon, seems to arise as a negative avatar of *Aura*. *Aura* (singular) could mean *nymph* or *maiden*; the *aurai* (plural) were wind-nymphs, daughters of Ocean.[96] Aura was also the name given to a Titan-companion of Artemis, whose legend again follows the Barber template: according to a late 4C epic, Dionysius drugs Aura into sleep and impregnates her; she then goes mad, kills their resulting offspring and throws herself into the sea.[97]

It seems, then, that by late antiquity, the mytheme-constituents of our waterwoman *figura* had already linked and coalesced: this is why the spirits invoked for sex-magic include *all who have drowned*, *have died unmarried*, *and have been carried away by the wind.* Later Christian variants of the migraine charm conserve the complex of female sea-demon / animal-noise / head-pain, substituting Mary or a specialist saint as intercessor (Barb 1966: 2–3). Like the voices of *Physiologus*'s Sirens, or spirits roll-called in spells, waterwomen tended to multiply in charms. In a widespread Orthodox icon-type (figs. 28a–b), SS. Sisinnius and Michael repel a crowd of sickness-spirits, depicted as naked women standing in water.[98] For the Southern Italians, we recall, the sirens were recuperated as benign aquatic patrons; singular, named, and silent. In the sheaf of parallel traditions attested in sex-spells and head-pain charms, watery female spirits are malignant, plural, often anonymous, and/or capable of making horrible noises.

LOCATION OF EROS/IMEROS & THE FIGURA

Further implications follow from Weiss's argument (1998: 50) that: "*ἔρος* is desire conceived of as subject-internal in its origin and its end; *ἵμερος* is a compulsive desire of external origin." The first is to do with changes in how people conceptualise particular psychological states. The second is to do with what happens when the constellation of signifiers originally used for denoting that state – its rhetoric – is pressed into service for the new conception. This has a relevance for understanding what might drive topological metamorphosis in the evolution of waterwoman *figura* variants.

This section of the argument has three parts. First, pivoting from our case-history of Eros and Imeros, we can consider this as evidence of how culture can (re-)locate the vector of emotions spatially.[99] Over time, in the IE terminology of desire, the sense of certain roots switches from external to internal.[100] The flip is in the viewpoint; in how the point of origin is ascribed to the emotion (affect), as inside or outside the subjective self. Weiss cites parallels for such changes of direction/viewpoint involving feeling:

OE *fār* [danger] → modern English *fear*
Latin *poena* [punishment] → English *pain*
Latin *odium* [hatred], but originally *disgust, repugnance*[101]

Second, the *imeros* / *eros* distinction is, at its heart, a matter of emphasis: desire is either imposed from without, or wells from within. Only in certain kinds of representation – including mythic discourse – is it necessary to decide which is which. Another way of putting this might be to say that the capacity to inflict desire on humans – effectively against their will – is itself the hallmark of a magical or occult being.[102] But, in visual media, this distinction cannot be made: images must externalise, dramatise, in order to represent inner states at all. So, for example, the lactating mermaid-siren "makes visible" latent beliefs about waterwoman fertility.

More directly, in vase-painting conventions, Erotes-figures were used as "a kind of caption for the desire of others" (Lewis 2002: 143–144);[103] thus they are depicted perched on, or hovering over, the relevant humans (figs. 25a–b; Stafford 2003: 83). The necessary visual bias towards externality is further weighted by equipping them with *iynx* wheels (tools of sex-magic), or weapons. The famous bow-and-arrow of desire, later ascribed to Cupid, is attested first (c. 480 BCE) in this context in the visual arts;[104] more commonly, an Erotes-figure would be shown wielding a whip (e.g. fig. 29a; cf. Faraone 1999: 45–46).

Third, in the modern paradigm, all types of desire can only originate in the subject experiencing the emotion. Over *longue durée* trajectories, the move towards this point of view must have involved shifts in how desire was spatially perceived, accompanying twists in terminology (such as *danger* → *fear*). What happens, during these long turns, to visual traditions for representing the action of desire? It is not simply that one archaic explanatory paradigm (*imeros*) is eclipsed by, or replaces, another (*eros*); as we have seen, these models originally co-existed.[105] Rather, I suggest, because the imagistic repertoire of *figurae* expresses a model of supernatural intrusion from outside, selective pressure for the re-location of affect in this repertoire would favour the creation of novel or updated variants, with folded or twisted topology.

Such variants generate visibly surreal or oneiric effects, which accompany and (arguably) express shifts and complications in the vector of desire. The substitution of sleep for suicidal action, in medieval encounters with sirens or singing mermaids, amounts to a deflection of desire: the victims fall first into the world of dream, not death. In the case of the Swedish Finn, the lake-spirit bird alters his consciousness (he cannot aim his gun), causing visual perceptual confusion, of the kind associated with dreams, enchantment and fever. The convoluted topology of the Scots 19C tale matches its pattern of desire:

the sea-maiden, desiring the mortal husband, has swallowed him; the mortal wife desiring the return of her man, uses music to compel the waterwoman to disgorge him; in a parallel to these containments, the sea-maid's external soul is retrieved from inside its egg.

Shakespeare stretches the elements of Cupid's arrow through a marvellous interpolation about a magical love elixir, involving dream-like convolutions of space and time (c. 1595; *Midsummer Night's Dream* II.i.165–172). Sometime in the past, Cupid misses with his arrow; it hits a plant, turning it purple; Oberon observes this. Time passes; Oberon now has a use for this plant and directs Puck to collect it by circumnavigating the globe. Puck squeezes its juice and applies it to the mortal lovers' eyes as they sleep, effectively switching their feelings from *eros* to *imeros*. This entire conceit quite literally displaces and rearranges the pattern of Eros's weapon as a *figura*. The elements are radically stretched apart, three or four mediations are introduced, great distances open in time and space; yet the daimon, his power of arousing desire, and his weapon, are all still there in the imagery.[106] In a (much less impressive) but kindred process of repression and substitution, a 19C restorer found the whip of an Eros-figure in a vase-painting too much for current sensibilities; channelling Shakespeare perhaps, he "restored" it into a flower (fig. 29b; Faraone 1999: 45).

OVID & METAMORPHOSIS

With the issue of subjective versus objective desire in mind, and the complications of form that ensue when their vectors are deflected or displaced, we can now return to Ovid and his cohort of aquatic women. In narrating about 250 watery shapechanges (for a selection, see Table 1), Ovid often improved on his late Hellenistic sources, creating metamorphoses where none existed in earlier accounts; he makes Arethusa (V. 527), for example, transformed through jealous desire (cf. Niobe; Iuthra).[107] And he uses the *imeros*/*eros* distinction to direct his changes of form (see Table 1). Salmacis wants to fuse with Hermaphroditus (driven by *ἔρος*). Hades turns Cyane into mute water as she tries to prevent Persephone's abduction (a case of *ἵμερος*). Shape-shifting Thetis is bound and raped by Peleus, on the advice of another shape-shifter, Proteus (*ἵμερος*) (Forbes-Irving 1990: 181–184). From this violent union comes Achilles. Ovid equally evokes sleep and the underworld in other aquatic stories (Syrinx, Alcyone). His Narcissus (though male) is worth noting as a watery object of desire; even when dead, he continues to see – and long for – his reflection in the river Styx.

Ovid also decides to clarify certain exceptional features in the cases of Scylla and the Sirens. In Homer, Scylla is wholly sea-monster, and malevolent appetite

incarnate. Among her other oneiric qualities, she seems to occupy several places at once. Her multiple appendages move at uncanny speed: six serpentine necks bearing many-toothed heads; twelve feet "waving in the air". Only these appendages protrude from her cave to hunt;[108] her lower body is hidden and not described.

Ovid instead has Scylla start as a maiden, who metamorphoses as a consequence of *ἵμερος*; this is one of his Hellenistic elevations (Forbes-Irving 1999: 20; Hopman 2013: 91–112, esp. 95; Buitron et al. 1992). He opens the episode – and sets its tone – with an *adynaton*.[109] Scylla has a suitor, the sea-god Glaucus, who is in turn desired by the magic-worker Circe. Glaucus repudiates Circe's advances, declaring, *Sooner shall foliage grow on the sea, and sooner shall seaweeds spring up on the mountaintops, than shall my love change while Scylla lives* (*Met.* XIV.35; cf. Forbes-Irving 1990: 177). Jealousy then moves Circe (as with Iuthra) to shapeshift her rival, but not directly; she concocts magic herbs to poison a pool where Scylla bathes (*Met.* XIV.55–65; Hopman 2013: 226; Gordon 1987: 59–60, 63–64); submersion in this charged water makes her a monster. Elsewhere in Homer, of course, Circe conducts other human-animal transformations using drugs. But Ovid choreographs the elements of Scylla's transformation quite differently. He stresses the external passion-motive, the mechanism (water on the bathing woman's skin) and its monstrous hybrid outcome, and in so doing, integrates his Scylla into the waterwoman *figura*.

Ovid also takes the details of Scylla's hybrid shape from visual tradition, rather than from Homer. In Classical art, she was usually represented as a kind of mermaid: a beautiful woman above the waist, with serpentine fish-tail and belt of dog-heads (fig. 30a–b). This pattern was followed in medieval illustration, as in this Ovid MS, where the artist poses Scylla like a mermaid, upright in the sea, wearing a skirt of tentacles, with dog-head terminals (fig. 30c). A spectacular Roman table-stand (fig. 31)[110] on the contrary emphasises Scylla's impossible monstrosity through shifts in scale as in a *phantasma* [nightmare]. This Scylla is a gigantic maiden-octopus, dismembering diminutive sailors. At the other end of the table, she is balanced by an equally huge centaur with pan-pipes; a small Eros-figure rides on his back; a bird (eagle?) flies between, holding a snake. The treatment draws together elements from the wider waterwoman mythos: music, death, desire, hybridity, change of scale, bird/snake, the sea. The Scylla hybrid form also takes on a meaning separate from the Homeric Scylla: as a type of monster associated with death and dreams, and as an exemplar of all such otherworldly impossibilities. Virgil (70–19 BCE) places "double-shaped Scyllas" [*Scyllae biforme*], along with Gorgons and Harpies, among the pack of monstrous forms stabled by the great tree of false dreams in Hades. To dream of such things as a Scylla, says Artemidorus (2C) signifies false hopes and doomed desires (2012: 230–231).[111]

THE SIRENS

Now to the Sirens. Ovid relates their transformation retrospectively, as a short episode encased in a long song voiced by Calliope, muse of eloquence and epic. He has Jupiter ask about their hybrid appearance, then answers his own question:

> *daughters of Acheloüs, why have you the feathers and feet of birds, though you still have maidens' features? Is it because, when Proserpina was gathering the spring flowers, you were among the number of her companions, ye Sirens, skilled in song? After you had sought in vain for her through all the lands, that the sea also might know your search, you prayed that you might float on beating wings above the waves: you found the gods ready, and suddenly you saw your limbs covered with golden plumage. But, that you might not lose your tuneful voices, so soothing to the ear, and that rich dower of song, maiden features and human voice remained.* (*Metamorphoses* V.552–563) [112]

So, neither *eros* nor *imeros* in Ovid's regular sense is the engine of their transformation. The change is motivated only by their desire to find Proserpina, and to travel between the elements for this purpose. Since this wish remained unfulfilled, it perhaps verges on *Πόθος*. The Sirens are in fact unique in their relations with both *imeros* and hybridity. No account of their genesis attaches *ἔρος* or *ἵμερος* directly to their metamorphosis, but the clues to their anomalous status are in their parentage. Ovid calls them daughters of the river god Acheloos. Most ancient authors agree; and most identify the mother as a Muse (Tsiafakis 2003: 92). Greek writers more often credit Acheloos as fathering the water-nymphs; the Romans foreground rather his role as progenitor of Sirens.[113] Instead of descent from a Muse, the Sirens are also described as fully chthonic, springing direct from Mother Earth: impregnated either by Ocean, or by Acheloos's blood, gushing out when Herakles breaks off one of his horns, which becomes the Cornucopia.[114] Relating that story, Ovid has Acheloos's Naiad-daughters retrieve the fallen horn and hallow it.[115] And, as we saw earlier, the Cornucopia and the Irish Crane-bag are *figurae* with parallel attributes. In the manner of dream-distortion, both are complex motifs which decompose, stretch and fold the elements they hold in common: (jealous) desire [*ἵμερος*], shapeshifting water-creature, body-part repurposed as magical treasure-receptacle.

As a major river and water-deity, Acheloos is a shapeshifter, depicted as a human-headed bull (fig. 32a; cf. figs. 20a & 32c), sometimes as a human-serpentine hybrid (fig. 32b).[116] In his fight with Herakles – impelled by mutual desire for Deinara [="man-destroyer"]) – he loses both horn and blood (figs. 32a–b),

which become magical offspring. The Sirens and the Cornucopia, then, are twin-siblings of a kind, characterised by extremes of lack and plenitude. Ancient mythographers evidently needed to account for the Sirens' power through this kind of mythic parentage. The Muse mother explains the enchanted voice; the shapeshifting river-father informs their boundary-crossing capacity; their alternate origin myths of chthonic birth, sired by Ocean, suggests the same in more primordial terms. Hence their psychopomp role, claims to prophetic omniscience, potent murderous song and winged hybridity.

Homer does not mention wings; Ovid speaks (metonymically) only of feathers and bird feet (*pluma pedesque avium*; *Met.* V.553). But the wings were older than Homer – and remained integral in visual traditions. As we have seen, Classical and medieval illustrators depict Sirens sitting on rocks (figs. 11a, 12, 22b), in or on the sea (figs. 10g, 14b), perching on or hovering over Odysseus' boat (figs. 11a, 12, 14a). Later writers, faced with inconsistencies between textual descriptions and visual depictions, concocted further answers for why the Sirens are winged. Like Ovid, they reached for non-erotic kinds of desire as a mechanism. Ovid's Sirens are said to "wish" or "pray" to receive wings (*Met.* V.558), either on their own account or to seek Persephone/Proserpina. Conversely, the winged form could be glossed rather as a punishment for failing to guard – or find – Persephone (e.g. *Hyginus* l.c). Other accounts bypass the Persephone episode altogether. The Sirens lose their wings in a singing contest with the Muses, or (in late Byzantine commentary) receive wings because they wish to remain virgin, though not under (Ovidian) pressure of desire (threat) from any named entity.[117]

The issue of the Sirens as essentially bird-formed works in relation to their other famous attribute: the power of their song. Rather than being at the centre of a metamorphosis impelled by *eros* or *imeros*, the Sirens, of course, embody desire in themselves: *ἵμερος* emanates from their interiors through their mouths, from whence comes the honey-sweet call to dream and to death. The BM painter (fig. 11a) names one of his Sirens *Himeropa* (song of desire). And, if we turn the vase around, we see he places on the other side all three Erotes (fig. 11b), naming only one: *Himeros*.

I suggest that it is their anomalous relationship to *ἵμερος* which makes the Sirens "good to think with" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 89). Their position as a special case of the waterwoman *figura* stems from their unique articulation of *ἵμερος*; their song is an inverted Cornucopia-like instrument of desire. This figuration is both stable and dynamic, inviting and enabling millennia of rhetorical variation. John Donne (1572–1631), like Ovid, frames his mermaid-sirens with a string of riddling *adynata* (*Song*, c. 1610):

> *Goe, and catche a falling starre,*
> *Get with child a mandrake roote,*
> *Tell me, where all past yeares are,*
> *Or who cleft the Divels foot,*
> *Teach me to heare Mermaides singing...*[118]

Donne's point is to characterise a faithful woman as an impossibility. He and his readers know that these cosmic impossibilities – catching falling stars, hearing mermaids sing – are metaphors for desire.

DISCOURSE AND COMMENTARY

The generation of variations on, and discussion of, the Sirens are continuous in Western literature, art, and folk culture. Foucauldian concepts of commentary and articulation are useful in understanding this aspect of Siren-imagery – and, by extension, the wider mermaid-siren *figura* – as a *discourse*. Foucault wrote his *Discourse on Language* for his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France. The relevance here for us is how he identifies as central the issue of commentary:

> *the difference between primary texts and secondary texts... permits us to create new discourses ad infinitum: the top-heaviness of the original text, its permanence, its status as discourse ever capable of being brought up to date, the multiple or hidden meanings with which it is credited, the reticence and wealth it is believed to contain, all creates an open possibility for discussion. On the other hand... commentary's only role is to say finally, what has been silently articulated deep down. ... what has already been said... The infinite rippling of commentary is agitated from within by the dream of masked repetition: in the distance there is, perhaps, nothing other than what was there at the point of departure, simple recitation* (Foucault 2010 [1972]: 221).

Siren-representations, as we have seen, do much more than illustrate canonical texts (cf. Milne 2016: 120–121; 2024: Ch. 3). They emanate from, and serve to anchor, a broader visual discourse of uncanny waterwomen; for which, we could say, they work as both commentary and text.

Foucault's formulation, that commentary "must... say, for the first time, what has already been said" (2010 [1972]: 221), illuminates both how such *figurae* work – as "conceptual foci" for mythological traditions – and suggests how best to understand them. The pre-Homeric Sirens already belong to mythic

discourse, as our Neolithic materials make clear; recall the Lepenski Vir ovoids, the murals of Çatalhöyük, the Gotland grave (figs. 2–4). The ongoing "discourse" of the waterwoman is partly imaginary, partly literary, partly material. It is also enmeshed in lifeworld speech and practice, manifesting at non-cognitive levels; recall the Finnish-Swede unable to aim at the uncanny lake-bird. And, as we have seen, this discourse is equally a visual complex, an accumulative inter-artefactual domain. For people born into, and charged with expressing mythic systems, the inheritance is open and polyvalent. The three generations of the living access mythic discourses through inherited exemplars; the oldest of which, as with ritual and customary practices, must always appear as enigmatic. The visual traditions which represent these discourses, and make them capable of variation, can be viewed as a kind of operating system for the wider mythos; a toolkit for syntactic and paratactic manipulation.

Foucault sees the (re-)construction of discourse (by historians) as completely artificial: "the world [does not] present us with a legible face... merely to [be] decipher[ed]". Discourse, he continues, is "a violence that we do to things"; where we "think we recognise the source of discourse... we must rather recognise... [our own principles] of cutting out and rarefaction...".[119] "Rarefaction" is a term he borrows from science, meaning the process of rendering a substance less dense. While Foucault couches this activity in negative terms, his description of discourse-construction as "violence to things" illuminates how successive generations (re)visualise the waterwoman *figura*: in all our examples, we can see principles of "cutting out and rarefaction" at work.

Taking the waterwoman *figura* as both "text and commentary" helps us to think of its history in terms of a constant redeployment. Though I have, in a sense, conjured up an ur-mermaid-siren, by starting with her Neolithic roots and *loci classici*, this phantasmatic ancestor, already multi-variant, is only a placeholder for the umbilicus of the tradition, vanishing into prehistory. The *figura* of the mermaid-siren is rather constituted by its entire repertoire, comprising tens of thousands of images and texts from all levels of society. Each new visual iteration expresses a contemporary interest in this repertoire, and intervenes in its legacy of (already thoroughly) mediated forms; bringing some elements to the front and pushing others to the rear, and so changing the face of the repertoire in ways which can be paratactic or syntactic or both (with a leaning to the former).[120] We have traced some of these transformatory changes of emphasis. Thus, the Siren-song in Classical antiquity exerts *imeros* on its listeners; in the Middle Ages, it is more likely to send them to sleep. Such a shift could be likened to a kind of *rarefaction*, wherein *imeros* is, so to speak, increasingly repressed – deflected, folded in – screened and muted. This is expressed also in moves in the visual sphere towards topological complexity;

notably, when medieval artists and artisans transmutate the mermaid-siren into *sirène-oiseau/poisson*. The more visually knotted and contorted the forms are made (e.g. figs. 10b, 10c, 10f, 10i), the more dissipated their charge of desire, and (arguably) the more "illegible" they become as signifiers of the Otherworld. These are effectively "endpoints" in the discourse of waterwoman variations. Equivalent "endpoints" in literary texts could involve stretching out topological transformations through time; as in Shakespeare's distillation of *imeros* in the arrow-hit plant. Ovid himself encases the Sirens and their song inside another song, that of Calliope, placing the Sirens' transformation and its motivation, as it were, off-stage. Folk traditions meantime express and maintain both folded and basic hybrid forms. The Scots and Irish legends we have seen play with scale and topology, while Slavic folk art conserves *rusalka*-as-woman-fish and *priti-siriny* as apotropaic forms, on doorways, lintels, oars (figs. 6a–d).

What makes the mermaid-siren particularly "good to think with" is this open-ended potential: its variants are capable of speaking simultaneously of excess and lack, inside/outside, water-animal/woman. We can consider the entire *figura*, and the rhetoric of hybridity which maintains it, as a dynamic system; a carrying wave; capable of articulating a range of difficult dyads: about women who die without fruition, about the conservation of energy/desire, about the duality of desire imposed from without or welling from within. In the cohort of Ovid's metamorphic waterwomen, the Siren is therefore both an outlier and a paradigmatic template. Mysterious, condensed and oneiric in form, Sirens are always, *in potentio*, an invitation to commentary.

EPILOGUE: RENAISSANCE WATERWOMEN

A final(?) set of variations, stemming from the Renaissance revival of Classical antiquity, illuminates this sense of *figura* as discourse which is also commentary. It is the case of the sleeping nymph by her fountain. In a design by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), extant in many versions,[121] a water-nymph reclines by her fountain. Cranach depicts her as a beautiful nude, eyes closed in sleep or slit open (figs. 33a–h). A panoramic landscape unfolds behind her. The inscription on the fountain reads:

> *FONTIS NYMPHA SACRI SOMNVM NERVMPE QVIESCO*
> [I am the nymph of the spring, do not disturb my sleep, I am resting]
> (Scalabrini & Stimilli 2009: 54)

This arrangement of by-now-familiar elements has an interesting back-story. Late in the 15C, an Italian Humanist scholar, compiling a catalogue of antique epigrams, wrote this note in the margin of his manuscript:

> *On the banks of the Danube* [there is] *a sculpture of a sleeping nymph in a beautiful fountain. Under the figure is this epigram.*[122]

He writes in the verse:

> *Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis / Dormio dum blandae sentio murmur aquae. / Parce meum quisquis tangis cava marmora somnum / Rumpere; sive bibas sive lavere tace.*
> I am the nymph of this sacred place, keeper of the spring, sleeping and listening to the endearing murmur of the water. Take care, whoever approaches this marmoreal cave, not to disturb my sleep; whether you drink or bathe, keep silent![123]

The idea struck an extraordinary chord.[124] First in Italy, then across Europe, Humanists created grottos for recently-unearthed Classical statues that could be made to fit the theme (figs. 34a–c). New water-nymph statues for gardens and fountains were commissioned (e.g. fig. 34c). Having constructed his own water-nymph grotto, King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1443–1490) is credited with giving Cranach the shortened form of the epigram used in the fountain-nymph paintings.[125] There were even quests to find the original monument (Baert 2018: 153 n.6).

In fact, the scholar fabricated the story and the epigram: there was no such sculpture by the Danube. But, clearly, the consensus was that there *should* have been. The responses – in the visual arts, horticulture and literature, including the initial fabrication – both accept and announce the whole idea *as commentary*. The collective post-Ovidian, post-moralisation, understanding of the waterwoman mythos found a focus in this confection of a waterwoman goddess, explicitly framed in terms of sleep and desire.

The new package was realised in through further extrapolations, notably at Bomarzo, where Duke Vicino Orsini (1523–1583) created his sculpture garden-wilderness. Using only paratactical principles, the works arranged here include a huge sleeping nymph (35a), the Muses as Graces, and a nymphaeum (fig. 35b; cf. 7b), equipped, naturally, with fountains. Two vast hybrid waterwomen (figs. 35c–d) sit at a corner where two avenues meet. One avenue leads to Ceres on her throne, on the back of which, two mermaid-sirens hold a diminutive male figure upside down (fig. 35e). The other leads to Persephone herself,

positioned near Cerberus and the Hellmouth (fig. 35f).[126] In this way, Orsini and his team deployed our *figura* as part of a concrete fantasy, explicitly designed to evoke its associations with dreams, hybridity and the Otherworld. In this place of monstrous aquatic women, Orsini had inscribed on his Hellmouth a play on Dante's words: *lasciate ogni pensiero o voi ch'entrate* [Let all thoughts fly away, you who enter here]. The phrase resonates with the older mermaid-sirens we have visited; evoking Himeros and Eros, overpowering minds, and Brendan's sailors, spellbound by a mermaid, so they "forgot themselves completely [and] did not know where they were".

FIGURES

All figures available at https://folklore.ee/folklore/vol95/gallery/.

NOTES

[1] Object given to and described by Barb (1966: 2, no. 14).

[2] Transl. by Overing, in Lees & Overing (2017: 19–20); Krapp & Dobbie 1936: 234; cf. Niles 1998. Note: the number given to this riddle can be 73; see Niles (1998: 169–170, nn. 1 & 5). Suggestions for the answer include: *siren* (Tupper 1910: 214), *water* (Trautmann 1915: 128; Klein 2015: 1B19), *barnacle goose* (Donoghue 1998); *siren* is widely accepted.

[3] As Robert Mondi (1990: 145) observed, "a mythological system might better be seen not as a collection of discrete narratives but as a structured array of conceptual foci (god names, for instance) around each of which cluster various ideas, images, and narrative motifs." So, the hybrid waterwoman can be thought of in this way as a focus – a magnet – drawing together many visual and narrative concepts in myth and folklore.

[4] For qualitative data on folkloric mermaid-sirens, I draw on Eastern/Central European (Ivantis 1989; Hilton 2011 [1995]), and Celtic/Nordic (Darwin 2015, 2019; Lysaght et al. 1999) ethnographic studies. For Classical traditions, Larson 2001; Kosso & Scott 2009; Stafford 2003, 2013; Hopman 2013; Forbes-Irving 1999; Faraone 1995, 1999; Tsiafakis 2003. The literature on medieval mermaid-sirens, including its complex MSS materials, is not cited in similar depth here; for entry points, Rachewiltz 1983;

Krohn (1999: 545–546); Leclercq-Marx 2002a [1999], 2002b; Holford-Strevens 2006; Joyce 2015. Methodologically, I take as my starting points for this post-structuralist and inter-disciplinary approach: Foley's definition of "immanent context" (1992) for oral "texts" (see n. 78 below); Mondi (1990), Ginzburg (2002: 31–40, 65–78) and Frog (2014) for parallel theorising about myth. For theoretical parameters, I start from Vološinov (1986 [1929]: 22–23; cf. Moxey [1994: 423, 1145], Shelton [1978: 191–196]): "different social classes use one and the same language... differently oriented accents intersect in [every] sign [and so each] sign becomes an arena [of] struggle"; i.e. there are competing interpretations of the same sign active in every era (such as, in the present case, monastic versus folk), but they are all still using the same *langue*, differently inflected. I take each artwork (including folk art) as a "theoretical object" wherein "the reflexivity internal to the work determines its theoretical dimension" (cf. Marin 1993, 2006: 17). Foundational here also is Sourvinou-Inwood (e.g. 1990: 396–399, 401, 427) on protocols of image-making in mythological systems; Mason (1991: 14–15), "the imaginary element in mythology provides a meaning which can only be re-presented"; and Magaña (1988: 22): imaginary beings "form a different intellectual reality because they are... independent of empirical points of reference and [thus] represent mental operations" (transl. Mason 1991: 15). Aspects of theory and methodology relating to specific locales, periods, disciplines and media are dealt with in notes as they arise.

[5] As Garrow and Gosden (2012: 26ff) summarise: "The inter-artefactual domain concerns links of style and form between objects so that they come together to form an meta-domain having influence over human actions, perceptions and modes of value creation." Part of my intention here, however, is to interpret this concept rather in the light of Davis (2007: 200); so the "meta-domain" of the mermaid-siren should be seen as a resource produced by, and under the control of, generations of human creative agency.

[6] Efforts to analyse the "rhetoric" of human hybrids often start from Pliny's Monstrous Races; e.g. Kappler (1980: 120–183), Lecouteux (1982, 1: 5), or medieval manuscript illumination, e.g. Freeman Sandler (1981) on the 14C Luttrell Psalter (BL Add MS 42130). As Mason (1991: 19) points out, the first analysis may well be that of Denis Diderot, in his *Dream of D'Alembert* (1951 [1769]), who identified "suppression, duplication, and combination" as "mutations in the bundle of threads" which constitute a human form. I have argued previously for the visual evolution of particular *figurae* as prescribed by vectors inherent in a given image-constellation (Milne 2016, 2024: Intro., Ch.2–3).

[7] Waterwomen are, of course, not the only kind of water-spirit; nor are they the only hybrid woman-animal type. But, in the European arena at least, the waterwoman outperforms other major hybrid-types (e.g. the centaur) in terms of longevity, geographical range and vitality as a visual idea. On mermaids and folkloric waterwomen: Parsons 1933; Burnell 1949; Puhvel 1963; Barb 1966; Almqvist 1991; Palmenfelt (1999: 261–268); Valk (1999: 337–348); Travis 2002; García & Colomer 2012; Darwin 2015. For the Renaissance, e.g. Enenkel & Traninger 2018.

[8] The issue of in what sense "images" in narrative (descriptions, transformations, impossibilities, *figurae* in Auerbach's sense) relate semiotically to visual representations (whose form is fixed) is complex; the same word, *image* (in English and other languages) may refer to mental image, image in a text, and image in a visual medium. Mental images are in feedback with visual and linguistic media. In myth, otherwise "un-visualisable" tropes are typically represented visually through paradox and impossibility; as in the hybrid form of the mermaidsiren, whose history, as we will see, demonstrates how a visual "solution" becomes foundational for mental, oral and literary

subsequent representations. On this see e.g. Milne 2007, 2011, 2016, 2024; Mundkur 1984; Abrahamian et al. 1985; Bremmer 2002.

[9] Mason (1991: 28); cf. Ginzburg (2002: 31–34) on Aristotle's example (*Physics* 208a. 29–31; *On Interpretation* 16a.9–18) of a non-existent hybrid, the *tragelaphos* [goat-stag], and Boethius's 6C commentary regarding this, which "adds the element of time", by referring to "chimeras and centaurs that the poets *finxerunt*" (i.e. fix [in time]); text and transl. Ginzburg op. cit, 32, 189 n. 18.

[10] As Valentsova (2019) commented, in legends, ballads and sagas, human protagonists recognise a dual-natured creature by its presence. In *Kormák's saga* (1997 [9–10C]: Ch. 18), when a walrus rises beside the ship: "the men aboard *thought that they knew its eyes* for the eyes of Thórveig the witch" (transl. McTurk; emphasis added; cf. Schlauch 1934: 5–33); Milne (2008: 77f.; 2024: Ch. 3 & 5).

[11] Freud (1953 [1900]: 436) makes the comparison: "The psychic process which occurs in the creation of composite formations [*Mischbildungen*] in dreams is... the same as that which we employ in conceiving or figuring a dragon or a centaur in our waking senses." [*Der psychische Vorgang bei der Mischbildung im Traume ist offenbar der nämliche, wie wenn wir im Wachen einen Zentauren oder Drachen uns vorstellen oder nachbilden*.]

[12] Contracted slightly from Häggman (1999: 83, nn. 5–7). The incident happened, c. 1950, to Albert Endtbacka (b. 1900); told to Häggman first by Albert's sister in 1971, then by Albert in the first person in 1973; Albert expanded details when relating the story on camera in 1974. Each redaction tied the anecdote of the non-shooting gun and the weird bird more openly to local beliefs about water-nymphs or "sea-sprites" – living around Finnsjon ("Finn Lake"). Albert, his brothers and neighbours, saw the water-nymphs' black laundry drying there on several occasions. The family lived near Hepovattnet ("Horse Water"), in the Swedish-speaking parish of Esse, west-coast Finland. Häggman (1999: 85–86) correlates these sightings with the hunters' awareness of breaking the Sabbath on these occasions.

[13] On Greek river and water hybrid deities, male and female, Aston (2017 [2011]: 55–89). On nymphs, Larson 2001. On aquatic apotheoses, Forbes-Irving (1990: 299–307), Taylor 2009. For the vast literature on Sirens: see e.g. Buitron et al. (1992: 110–153), Tsiafakis (2003: 284–303). Among the Classical kin of the mermaid-siren are Muses (often associated with springs), Gorgons (on occasion represented as mer-creatures; e.g. Vermeule (1979: 195, fig. 19), and Harpies. Harpies are storm-personifications, born in the ocean, to sea-deities Taumas and Elektra; on their medieval representations, Hartmann (1999: 287–318). Visually at least, the distinction between Sirens and Harpies is often blurred, especially in "decorative" contexts (see below on the issue of "decorative" or paratactic mythic motifs). On "nameless gods" in antiquity, see e.g. Bowden (2015: 31–42).

[14] On specific metamorphoses, Larson 2001; Taylor 2009; Forbes-Irving (1999: 299–307). Cf. Aston (2017 [2011]: 269): Greek hybrid deities, "have a particular relationship with metamorphosis, in which there is an unusual emphasis on questions of genealogy and lineage".

[15] On Ovid's sources, and his ability to construct full-blown metamorphoses where none had previously existed, see Forbes-Irving (1999: 19–24), and discussion below.

[16] On the transmission and interpretation of Ovid in the Middle Ages, see e.g.: Joyce 2015; Poiret (2011: 83–107); Boyd 2002; Hexter (2002: 413–442); Richmond (2002: 443–459, 469-474); Milne (2007: 88–100); Barkan 1986; Reynolds 1971.

[17] Inaugural lecture, Collège de France, 2nd December 1970 (Foucault 1971a, 1971b); hereafter Foucault 2010 [1972].

[18] Pásztor 2017; Mannermaa 2003, 2008b. For Çatalhöyük, e.g. Hodder & Meskell (2010: 49; 2011: 246) discusses uses and representations of waterbirds. On deposits of crane wings, and their possible ritual uses, Russell & McGowan 2003; on bird remains generally, Hodder 2014, *passim*.

[19] "Young woman, buried in pit lined with red ochre, accompanied by 35 bone flutes and pipes, a fine comb with carved seal heads, mother-of-pearl lamellae, and a clay duck (seal?) at her feet," Gotland Historical Museum, Visby, Gotland, Sweden; http://samlingarna.gotlandsmuseum.se/index.php/Detail/objects/123509. See Mannermaa (2008a: 219–220) for summary of bird symbolism in N. European prehistory.

[20] The figure in the cart wears a long skirt, underneath which are male genitals, hidden from view (fig. 4). Gimbutas (1956, 1974, 1991, 1999) interpreted a range of Neolithic figurines as representing a widespread "bird-headed" goddess; the heads of these figures are now often rather seen as representing masks, their "beaks" as stylized noses. However, the archaeologist Ochsenschlager (2002: 155, n.1) observed at the site of ancient Lagash (c. 2900–2350 BCE, al-Hiba, Iraq), in 1968, local children making "toys out of mud [including] human figurines [with] schematic, bird-like heads almost identical to those found in the excavations..." (cited Pásztor 2017: 198). On prehistoric female figurines generally, see e.g. Bailey 2005.

[21] Kristensen & Holly (2013: 41–53); Mannermaa (2008a: 201–225). On the issue of gender, Bergerbrant 2007.

[22] In these traditions, "Birds became... metaphors for crossing various cosmic spheres... water birds could visit each of the three basic realms, the underworld, the earth and the upper world," Pásztor (2017: 199); cf. Rozwadowski (2014: 108), Vinogradov (2004: 13).

[23] Hopman (2013: 106–107): "the visual type of a monster is fashioned through a creative bricolage of earlier types known to the artists", using visual [units of signification] (tails, horns etc) which "often have no literal or immediate equivalent in the textual sources"; "template" rather than "type" would perhaps work better here. Cf. Tsiafakis (2003: 97–98); Amyx (1988: ii, 661–662). My focus here, however, will be on more internal – or topological – evolution in *waterwoman* "templates". On *Mischwesen* as "bundles of conceptual domains", Hopman (2013: 259–262).

[24] Frontisi-Ducroux (2003: 40): "L'hybridité est inhérente au monde des divinités marines au même titre que la polymorphie. Ces deux notions sont en fait deux modalités, l'une spatiale, l'autre temporelle, d'une même réalité: la nature polyvalente et mouvante des créatures marines, fluides comme l'eau, changeantes comme la mer, se renouvellent sans cesse comme les vagues."

[25] The earliest mer-humans are male or indeterminate in gender. For their transmission into the Hellenic cultural sphere as "oriental" imports, Shepard 2011 [1940]; Barnett 1956; Vermeule 1979; Papalexandrou 2010. See also nn. 69–71 below.

[26] Ivanits (1992: 77) says that the name is not attested in Russian before the 18C; Dynda (2017: 86) has it as 17C, citing the accepted etymology (via medieval Greek) from the Spring Festival of *rusallii* (=Pentecost, "Easter of the Roses"); cf. Juric 2010, for distinctions among N. & S. Slav versions of *vily*.

[27] The narratives collected by Zelenin (1995 [1916]: 1–100) from which he deduced the connection with the "unclean dead" – stress the identity of such spirits as drowned maidens/unbaptised children, though many do not mention the resulting *rusalki* as young or beautiful (e.g. Narratives 72 & 73); cf. Ivanits 1992: 76–77; Juric 2010; Dynda 2017.

[28] The starting point for my earlier work on mermaids and dreams, expanded and now revised as Milne (2024: Ch. 3).

[29] On medieval documents about these festivals (*rusalii*), see Mansikka (1922: 96-7, 106, 254-8); on the 18C as first reference to modern names for these, Ivanits (1992: 79-81); for the 19C, Zelenin (1995[1916]: 127, 217-82); for modern festivals, Dynda 2017.

[30] Described by Kemp (1935: 94–95): "In Srem, on Ascension Day, the sick slept in a field where dittany (*jasenak*) grew, bread, water and wine... placed beside them... In Bulgaria at the feast of the *Rusalje* or *Samovile*, *Vile* [dates vary] ... on the eve of the feast a person suffering from a *vila* disease went to a field near water where the *Vila*'s plant Rosen, Dittany – grew, with someone of the opposite sex [to act as ritual-] brother or sister. [They] offer[ed] food and wine [and a *vila*] flower... balanced over a new vessel of unbroken water, beside which the sick person lay down and slept while the other watched..." And, "In Bosnia and Hercegovina lakes are avoided on Saturday because then they seek life, [and] where there exists a *vila* cult, each spring has its day and its prescribed offerings" (ibid, 98; cf. Barber 1997: 25, n. 14).

[31] Håland (2009: 119–131) lists Classical authorities for the perception of springs as female and discusses ancient and modern Greek female water rituals; cf. Larson (2001), ch. 3 & 4, for Greek water-nymph sites and customs; Taylor (2009, 2014), on the Romans and South Italy.

[32] For incubation sites and practices, Renberg (2017: 656–657, nn. 10–11); Sherwin-White (1978: 328–329) and Van Straten (1976); on curses and dreams, Milne (2024: Ch. 6–7); for *defixiones*, Tomlin 1993, and http://curses.csad.ox.ac.uk/sites/. On Gallo-Roman and Celtic curses related to water, Mees (2009: 29–41, 47–49). Mees (2011: 87–108) discusses the strength of the language involved as expressing overwhelming desires; cf. Faraone 1991, 1996.

[33] In fact, not a well as such, but a rectangular reservoir enclosing several small springs, itself enclosed in a rectangular building, probably open to the sky; Allason-Jones (1996: 107–108).

[34] On the "Shrine of the Nymphs", Smith 1962, Allason-Jones 1996, Mayers 2017. On Minerva-Sulis, Cunliffe et al. 1985; Cunliffe 1995. On the excavations at Fons Sequana, Green (1999: 37–40, 69). Sirona's main sanctuaries include Corseul (Brittany), Hochscheid (Moselle valley), Bamburg, Noricum (Austria) and Brigetio (Hungary); at these, Sirona was worshipped alone; elsewhere she appears as a couple with a Celticised Apollo; Green (1995a: 102–104).

[35] According to Ross (1992: 351), "Long-legged marsh birds figure with other aquatic birds on cult objects dating from the Urnfield period onwards... this cult of water birds [was] associated [with] gods of healing... [And] during the Gallo-Roman and Romano-British period... the crane and related species continue to be represented... evidence for a continuity in the cult importance of these marsh birds." On Celtic gods, water and crane-symbolism, cf. Ó Cuív (1963: 338), Bernhardt-House (2009: 9–10, 15, n. 26); on Celtic water-goddesses and their symbolism, Green (1995a: 90–105).

[36] Discovered in 1711 in the choir of the church of Notre Dame, Paris (Ross 1992: 351, n. 148); now part of the reconstructed Pillar of Nautes. According to the Musée Cluny, "Dating from the 1C, the Pillar of Nautes... is an offering to the boatmen [*nautes*] of the Seine, from the Roman emperor Tiberius, ruler of the province of Gaul. Their allegiance is ambiguous: the pillar, or dedication stone, represents both the Celtic pantheon and that of the new governing Romans. The [Celtic figures on the] fragments of the pillar of Saint-Landry, discovered in 1829 during works on the Île de la Cité,

appear only among the Roman gods" (transl. after: https://www.musee-moyenage.fr/collection/oeuvre/pilier-des-nautes.html). The word *Esus* may mean *Master*; so not a name but a title (Green 1995b: 473; 1992: 93–94), though this is disputed (Duval 1989: 464–46).

[37] Four-sided block carved in relief on three sides (fourth damaged), discovered at Trèves in 1895: side 1, Mercury wearing a torc, with his consort Rosmerta & and his cockeral; side 2, Esus with willowtree, bull-head and three wading birds; side 3, damaged female figure (Ross 1992: 351–352, nn. 149). Another crane appears by a female head on a relief from Narbonne (Ross 1992: 353, fig. 166). On Esus, see n. 36.

[38] *Dindshenchas Érenn* [*The Lore of Places of Ireland*], c. 12C, collects c. 200 legends of significant Irish placenames.

[39] On Bóand, Carey 1983, Theuerkauf (2017: 49–97). Cf. the early 11C (cf. Thurneysen 1921: 520; Gwynn 1903–1935: 10.480; MacNeill 1908: 10.440) poem, *Sid Nechtain sund forsin tsléib* (Gwynn 1903–1935: 10.26–32): "The well of Segais is in a fairy mound, guarded by Nechtan and his three cupbearers. The eyes of whoever gazes into it burst. Nechtan's wife Bóand... defies the well's power by walking around it three times... three waves spring from it, tearing away one of her feet, a hand and an eye. She flees; the water pursues her as far as the sea; thus the river Boyne [*Bóand*] is formed... two of the reaches of the Boyne are called 'the arm and calf of Nuadu's wife' (*rig mná Nuadat 's a colptha*)" (adapted from Carey (1983: 215, nn. 13–15)); the phrase, *rig mná Nuadat*, re the Boyne appears in the 9C *Immacaldam in Dá Thúarad* (LL [Dublin ed.] lines 24340-2). On *imbas forosnai*, water and magical waterwomen, Bernhardt-House (2009: 7–11, 15); Carey (1991: 165–172; 2004: 13–15).

[40] Stokes (1895: 31–32), translates *dord na samguba* as "mermaid's melody" but, as Darwin (2019: 157) observes, neither word can mean "mermaid": "*Samguba* is a compound noun formed from *sam* 'joint, united, whole', and *guba* 'mourning, sighing, lamenting',and therefore indicates some sort of mournful sound... *dord* 'buzzing, droning, intoning' is used [for] the song of the *murdúchann* in *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, it can also indicate natural sounds such as the bellowing of stags or bulls." The earliest attestation of the Middle Irish term, *murdúchann*, is 12C; the word is used to translate (Classical) Siren; cf. Bowen (1978: 142–148).

[41] Nagy (1986: 161–182); Gwynn 1903; Stokes (1892: 489–490): *Is ed in fuath atconnairc i. in murduchund fo deilb ingine mac[d]acta. Is blaithem [u]as lind 7 ichtar brotharluibnech biastaide fothi fo lind. Co n[d]uadar na biasda he, co ndaralsat he ina aigib, co ruige in fairge a da lairg cosin port hut, 7 no[t]hallad da[il] ced for mael gach cnama. Unde Port Lairge dicitur*.

[42] For analogous legends concerning women who drown their babies in streams, rivers or lakes, then haunt these places, e.g. "La Llorona" in Spain/Mexico, see Leavy (1994: 140, 186–188, 198, 326–327, nn. 134–135).

[43] Transl. here and in successive quotes, MacNeill (1908: 16–27), Aodh Ó Dochartaigh: *Cealguis Iúchra chum snámha Aíffe nocar chuairt ágha / dar cuir hí tré luinne amoigh a riocht cuirre fo chuirrchib. / Fíefraighis Aoíffe íer sin d'ingin áluinn Ábhartaigh / ga fad bhíad sa riocht so a bhen a Iuchra áloinn uichtgheal / / An críoch chuirfet ní ba gerr ort a Aoíffe na rosc ró-mhall / beir-si da ched blíadhuin bán a tigh mhíadhaigh Mhanannán / Bíaidh tú sa tigh sin do gnáth ag fanamhat fút do chách / ad chuirr nach dtaistil gach tír noch attacfainn tú entír...*

[44] Viz: his shirt and knife, Goibhne's girdle, a smith's hook from the "fierce man": *Léine Mhanannáin sa sgien is crios Goibhnionn / ...duphán gabhann ón fhior bhorb / .... Crios do dhruimnibh an mhíl mhóir do bhoí sa Chorrbholg chóir...*

[45] Transl. MacNeill (1908: 118–120): *In tan do bhíodh in muir lán ba follus a hseóid ar a lár / inuair fa tráigh in muir borb folamh fo deóidh in Corrbholg…*

[46] In Snorri Sturluson (1923 [13C]: 63–64), *Gylfaginning* XLVI.

[47] To eat crane-flesh was to invite death (Ross 1992: 355). Campbell (1902: 113) tells of a "parsimonious, disagreeable daughter of MacDougall of Lome [with] three nicknames: *Corra thón dubh* [the Black-bottomed Crane], *Gortag, an droch chorra dhubh* [Parsimony, the evil black Crane] and *Corra Dhughaill* [the MacDougal Crane]." It seems women were more likely to be disparaged as crane-like.

[48] For (watery) animal brides: ATU B650; T16; K1335.1; D721; D361.1; D361.1.1; ML4080; for swan-maidens acting as sirens in Spain and Portugal, Leavy (1994: 198, 327, n. 11); on selkies [seal-maidens], Puhvel 1963; Bruford (1974: 63 [F75]); Klintberg (2010: 117 [F51]).

[49] On Mélusine variants, Wood 1992; Almqvist 1999; Darwin 2015, 2019; Urban 2017; Soverino 2020. Marriage to Mélusine (in France especially) brings prosperity. She builds castles and founds churches. Her "horrible" sons include one with three horns. The 14C Lusignan rulers commissioned Jean d'Arras to write his *Mélusine* about their mythical great-grandmother; his romance is extant in many copies (e.g. fig. 10a); a stream of printed editions and translations followed.

[50] The second branch of nomenclature compounds "woman" and "seal" – hence *maighdean ron* [seal-maiden] etc. – legends rooted in regions (NW Atlantic seaboard) where seals have an economic and cultural importance; cf. n. 48 above. Seals were also Poseidon's flocks, kept by his son, the shapechanger Proteus (e.g. *Odyssey* 4. 365ff.).

[51] Emilie Kruuspak, recorded by Rudolf Põldmäe, Harju-Jaani parish, N. Estonia, 1929. I ERA 18, 481/2 (1) (1929); cited in Valk (1999: 337).

[52] Palmenfelt (1999: 264); first published in Gustavson & Nyman (1959: 165–166).

[53] Re the incubus, Caesarius of Heisterbach (VI.132; cited in Milne (2017: 94; 2024: 73); re the elves: on trial for witchcraft (Scotland 1662), the Highlander Issobel Goudie said that, on her night-travels, in the "house of the elves" she saw "little ones, hollow, and boss-backed" [=concave or hollow backs]; cf. Hall 2004: 182–183; Pitcairn 1833: III, 607.

[54] My earlier study of waterwomen (Milne 2008; rev. as Milne 2024: Ch. 3) focused on the enormous medieval visual repertoire of mermaid-sirens as a barometer of changing dream-cultures. For paths of diversification in hybrid templates, see e.g. Milne (2016: 159; 2024).

[55] Very briefly: both moralising (*Physiologus* [="Naturalist"], in Greek by 2C, Latin, c. 600), and rationalising (e.g. Servius, *Commentary on Vergil*, after 400), interpretations of Sirens emerge in late antiquity, setting the pattern for medieval writers. Key authorities include: Isidore of Seville (d. 636; *Etymologiae* 11.3.301, 12.4.29), Fulgentius (late 5C; *Mythologies* 2.8 [1971: 73–74]), the three "Vatican Mythographers" (c. 875–1075, late 11c, mid-12C). On this complex tradition re Sirens, see Pakis 2010 (on *Physiologus*), Leclercq-Marx (2002 [1997]: Part 1), Travis (2002: 35–36); on its literature, e.g. Holford-Strevens (2006: 23–51), Barkan (1986: 94–136), Rachewiltz (1983: 67–69), Müller & Wunderlich 1999.

[56] E.g. the Middle English *Mirroure of the Worlde* (Bodley MS 283; lines 5920–5924): *wee fynde in thee Booke of Bestes that ther be a maner of beestes in the see that men calle meremaydynes the whiche hatthe bodye of a womman and tayle of a fisshe and cleys liche an egle, and theye synge soo swetely that theye make marynerys for too sleepe and [then] devoureth theyme* (2015: 197–198); cf. Holford-Strevens 2006; Joyce 2015. Old

High German versions of *Physiologus* translated Jerome's *Sirenae* (at Isaiah 13:22), as *mermaid*: *merimenni*, *meriminni*, *meriminnun*, *meriminna*, *merminno* etc.; cf. Pakis (2010: 126), Krohn (1999: 545–546). Yet the effort to see Homer's island-dwelling monsters as Harpies and Sirens, inhabiting a Biblical desert, had lasting impact; Blanchot (2003: 4) appears to have this in mind when he characterises the desire compelled by the Sirens as sterile and contradictory: "hope and desire for a wonderful beyond... [but] this beyond [is] represented [as] a desert, as if the motherland of music were [a] place completely deprived of music, a place of aridity and dryness…"

[57] Buschor (1944: 36–37, Abb. 26–28); these creatures were previously identified as Harpies rather than Sirens, hence its common name, the "Harpy Tomb" (BM 1848,1020.1).

[58] This *aryballos* has some other peculiar features, discussed by Pollard (1949: 357–359; 1965: 138): notably the female figure behind the Sirens on the rock, and the chequerboard at right (probably, respectively, Circe and her palace). As far as I know, no one has identified the birds as Siren-avatars; though Harrison (1957 [1908]: 200) intuits that they "in a sense, duplicate the Sirens". There is a certain reluctance to connect Sirens and their bird-forms with marine or aquatic contexts; see discussion below on later accretions of meaning due to legends of their parentage, deaths, and use in post-mortem cultic practices.

[59] On the inscribed vases, Tsiafakis (2003: 75, 99 n. 25). Attic vases have the variant *σιρην*, Homer uses *σειρήν*. The history and etymology of the word is obscure. Luján & Vita (2018: 234–240) derive it from Ugaritic *šrm*, a dual or plural of the word *šr*>singer, and support the argument that Linear B inventory entries from the Mycenaean Palace of Pylos (destroyed c. 1200 BCE) refer to furniture adorned with siren-heads (*seremokaraore* [PY Ta 707.2; 714.2], *seremokaraapi* [PY Ta 707.2]). If so, these would be the earliest attestations of a link between word and image; but, since the artefacts are not extant, their visual form is unknown. For alternative translations, Hart (1990), Tsagraki (2012: 326).

[60] *δεῦρ᾽ ἄγ᾽ ἰών, πολύαιν᾽ Ὀδυσεῦ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν / νῆα κατάστησον, ἵνα νωιτέρην ὄπ ἀκούσῃς. / οὐ γάρ πώ τις τῇδε παρήλασε νηὶ μελαίνῃ / πρίν γ᾽ ἠμέων μελίγηρυν ἀπὸ στομάτων ὄπ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι / ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γε τερψάμενος νεῖται καὶ πλείονα εἰδώς. / ἴδμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ / Ἀργεῖοι Τρῶές τε θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησαν / ἴδμεν δ᾽, ὅσσα γένηται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ.*

[61] Plural is "indicated twice with the genitive dual *Σειρήνοιιν* (v.167), 'of the two Sirens,' once with *Σειρήνων* (v.158), 'of us two'" Holford-Strevens (2006: 40 n. 6); Neils (1995: 179).

[62] *Is é in Cacher drui dorat in leges dóib, dia mboí in murdúchand oca medrad, .i. bói in cotlud oca forrach frisin ceól. Is é in leiges fuair Caicher dóib, .i. céir do legad na clúasaib*; first recension of *Lebor gabála Érenn* (Macalister 2010 [1939]: ii. 201); related texts include versions where the *murdúchainn* hold the ship, and the crew hit on the wax remedy before the druid arrives (cf. ibid.: ii. 6871, 1001).

[63] "Achilochus [=Acheloos] and Tribonna long ago / Were father and mother of the sirens. Odysseus put wax in his ears..." [*Achilochus Tribonna tall / athair mathair murduchand. / Ulixes tuc céir na chlúais*...], attr. to 12C poet, *Book of Leinster*; Best et al. (1954: II, 17813–17818); cf. Bowen (1978: 143).

[64] Available in many vernaculars from 12C; Barron & Burgess (2005: 103–106) argue convincing this 13C Middle Dutch version reflects a lost 12C German original.

[65] Transl. W. P. Gerritsen & C. Strijbosch, in Barron & Burgess (2005: 141). Cf. The Middle Dutch 13C version, where Brendan and his monks meet "a fearful monster, coming towards the ship as if to capsize it. 'There is no need to be afraid' said Brendan, 'we have done nothing to harm it...' The monster was half-fish, half-woman with a hir-

sute body, [it] kept circling the ship. [They] fell to their knees... until God heard their prayer [the] fearful monster dived down next to the ship; all day long they heard it gurgling on the sea bed." (op. cit, 110).

[66] See n. 56 above.

[67] Lycophron (*Alexandra* 71229) names the Sirens as he gives the landing places of their bodies, specifying that rivers and streams wash each resting spot; e.g. Ligeia on the Tyrrhenian shore, south of Naples: "her shall sailormen bury on the stony beach nigh to the eddies of Ocinarus; and an oxhorned Aresi shall lave her tomb with his streams, cleansing with his waters the foundation of her whose children were turned into birds" (ibid.: 725–730); cf. Taylor (2009: 25–27). For attestations of their names, e.g. Smith (1870: III, 840). On Parthenope's tomb, Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* III.62), Strabo (*Geog.* V.4.7).

[68] The winged female figures vary on different coins – some hold birds, some lack the urn B but, as Taylor (2014: 185) notes, the sideways urn flowing with water "is not a generically interchangeable attribute: it bears a single, unmistakable association with flowing water". Another Terinan coin, whose obverse is the nymph Terina, has a reverse wherein a winged female fills an urn with water from a fountain, on which swims a swan (http://www.magnagraecia.nl/coins/Bruttium_map/Terina_map/descrTer_HJ038.html) On Campanian hybrid male gods on coins, Taylor (2009: 26). Parthenope appears also on the 19C coinage of the first modern republic of Naples.

[69] Holford-Strevens (2006: 39, n. 5) points out that a "silver Siren dedicated to Hera at Samos," c. 58–70 BCE is referred to with the masculine gender (*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 12: 391). Pollard (1965: 137) notes that the absence or presence of a beard is not an infallible mark of gender (e.g. Pedasian priestesses could wear beards). By the 5C BCE, "only female sirens were... represented, and the bearded males... disappeared", according to Tsifiakis (2003: 75).

[70] Weicker (1902) made this connection, to lasting general assent. Pollard (1965: 141–144) summarises that debate; cf. Holford-Strevens (2006: 41, n. 18), who sees the idea as out of fashion. Vermeule (1979: 75–76) found "little doubt that the Egyptian *ba*-soul was the model for the Greek soul-bird [and] its mythological offshoots the Siren and the Harpy, both of whom had intense... relations with the dead" (cf. ibid.: 230–231, n. 69). For Greek depictions of the *eidolon* [soul image] as a small winged human, see e.g. Stafford (2003: 77–80, fig. 2).

[71] Woman-headed birds as attachments [*Henkelattaschen*], for cauldrons and cisterns, apparently often of Near Eastern manufacture, are "found in all the principal sanctuaries of Greece and in some burials in distant Etruria" (Barnett 1956: 231); also bearded human- and demon-headed examples (see also n. 25 above). On "siren"-attachments as evidence of interchange with the Near East, Muscarella (1962, 2013); Romano & Pigott (1983); Papalexandrou (2010: 31–48). On their possible use at Mycenaean Pylos, see n. 59 above.

[72] Cf. *parataxis* in grammar: "the placing of propositions or clauses one after another, without indicating by connecting words the relation (of coordination or subordination)" (Oxford English Dictionary).

[73] Cf. Shanks (1999: 73–76); Milne (2016: 121–122). Lyric poets similarly juxtapose images to evoke a mythic ambience, often with explicit reference to the world of sleep and dreams; thus, for Sappho (*Fragments* 2, c. 630–570 BCE), apple grove, altars, cold running water, sleep, breezes, roses, are felt to belong together: *.ρανοθεν κατιου[σ- / δευρυμ†μεκρητᾳσ.π [ ] ναῦον / ἄγνον ὅππ[αι] χάριεν μὲν ἄλσος / μαλί[αν], βῶμοι †δεμιθυμιάμε-νοι [λι]βανώτωι· / ἐν δ' ὕδωρ ψῦχρον κελάδει δι' ὕσδων / μαλίνων, βρόδοισι δὲ*

παῖς ὁ χῶρος / ἑσκίαστ', αἰθυσσομένων δὲ φύλλων / κῶμα †καταγριον· / ἐν δὲ λείμων ἱππόβοτος τέθαλε / †τῳτ... ιριννοις† ἄνθεσιν, αἱ δ' ἄηται / μέλλιχα πνέοισιν...; [Come] to me from Crete to this holy temple, where is your delightful grove of apple trees, and altars smoking with incense; therein cold water babbles through apple branches, and the whole place is shadowed by roses, and from the shimmering leaves the sleep of enchantment comes down; therein too a meadow, where horses graze, blossoms with spring flowers, and the winds blow gently... (*Fragments* 2.1–13), transl. McEvilley (2008: 28–29).

[74] Beazley (1945: 75), BM 1867,0508.1311; the first BM curator to discuss the imagery identified the man-bull as an incarnation of Dionysius; the current BM view cites both this and the water-god identification. On visualisations of Acheloos, Secci 2009; Clarke 2004; Tsiafakis (2003: 92). For other ox-horned river-gods, cf. n. 67 above and our figs. 20, 32a.

[75] This is a revival of Homeric imagery; on 5C *lekythos* paintings, for instance, Nereids on dolphins attend Thetis, to mourn Achilles (*Iliad* 18. 37ff.; Vermeule (1979: 22–23, fig. 18)).

[76] Sophocles (*Fragments* 861); cf. Plutarch (*Symposiacs* 9.14), cited in Holford-Strevens (2006: 40, n. 12). Buschor (1944) argued that Sirens were "infernal counterparts of the heavenly Muses", charming dead souls and escorting them between worlds; though probably mistaken on the relationship with Muses – cf. Pollard (1952: 60; 1965: 141–143) – this is effectively their role in Greek and Italian funerary art. See also nn. 70–71 above. On Phorkys (shapeshifting Old Man of the Sea, father of Gorgons and monsters) as an archaic power, Forbes-Irving (1999: 174–179).

[77] See n. 63 above. Pavlou (2012: 404), commenting on Louvre E667 (blackfigure Laconian cylix, attr. Naucratis Painter c. 565 BCE) – wherein Sirens carry garlands at a feast – summarises theories on the Sirens' connections with death. Cf. Vermeule (1979).

[78] Foley (1992: 276ff): "oral traditional forms are situated... within a set of associations and expectations formally extrinsic but metonymically intrinsic to their experience as works [of] art... [each] traditional [referent has] an indexical meaning vis-à-vis the immanent tradition; each integer reaches beyond the confines of the individual performance [or] text to a set of traditional ideas much larger and richer than any single performance or text."

[79] Cf. Chamoux on Pausanius (1992: 267): *entre lesquelles Pausanias doute qu'on puisse distinguer vraiment*.

[80] Vermeule (1979: 154f.) explains the connection: Pothos is "a feeling of longing in the nighttime for someone... not there [such as] the absent dead" e.g. what Achilles feels for the dead Patroklos (*Iliad* 24.3). On Pothos in monumental sculpture, Lattimore 1987; Palagia 2000; in drama, Sfyroeras 2008.

[81] *ἤτοι μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ'· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα / Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ / ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου / Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῷ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης / ἠδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι / λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπ ων / δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν*... [In truth, first of all Chasm came to be, and then broad breasted Earth, the ever immovable seat of all the immortals who possess snowy Olympus' peak and murky Tartarus in the depths of the broad pathed earth, and Eros, who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the limb melter C he overpowers the mind and the thoughtful counsel of all the gods and of all human beings in their breasts...] *Theogony* 116–122; transl. Most (2013: 164).

[82] Eros had two altars in Athens: the earlier (from c. 540–520 BCE) associated with the Academy, Athena (Pausanias, 1.30.1) and homoeroticism (understood as primeval power); the later (from c. 420 BCE) associated with Aphrodite's festival and fertility; Eros imagery shifts correspondingly over this period from homoerotic to nuptial contexts; Stafford (2013: 179–201).

[83] Weiss (1998: 40): "Latin *diligo*, according to Cicero (*Ad Brut*. 1.1.1), expresses a milder emotion than *amo*... [still] this word often occurs simply in the sense 'love,' e.g. (Plautus, *Amphitryon* 509 [Juppiter to Alcumena]): *Satin habes, si feminarum nulla est quam aeque diligam? Diligo* [as] a compound of the preverb *dis-* and *lego*, *legere* [should] mean as the sum of its parts 'to take or choose apart.' ... [cf. passage quoted in] Nonius 290: Plautus, *Curculio* 424: *clupeatus elephantum machaera diligit* ... Compare [English] colloquial 'to take someone apart,' meaning 'to tear to pieces.'" Cf. "the active of the root aorist **(é-)$h_1$erh$_2$t* / (*é-)h_1r̥h_2-ent* is probably inferable from Lithuanian *ìrti*, *iriù* (to tear open) (said of an anchor tearing the ground, and of a mole)" (ibid.: 41, n.17).

[84] Weiss (1998: 41); "Greek *ἀπολαύω* (have enjoyment of) is related to *ληίζομαι* (carry off as booty) and Old Church Slavonic *loviti* (capture)"; to describe Odysseus, *yearning for his wife and home* (*νόστου κεχρημένον ἠδὲ γυναικὸς*, *Odyssey* 1.13), Homer uses the verb *χράομαι* in the perfect, with a genitive, to mean *desires* (cf. *πατρίδος ἦραν*, Euripides, *Phaedra* 359); the same word with a dative means *enjoy the use of*: cf. *οὐδὲ συβώτης / λήθετ' ἄρ' ἀθανάτων · φρεσὶ γὰρ κέχρητ' ἀγαθῇσιν* (*Odyssey* 14.420-1)."

[85] As Weiss (1998: 46) points out, another Greek banquet name, *δάϊς*, comes from root *δαίομαι* [divide, distribute, feast on]; so, an *ἔρανος* is the reciprocal mirror image of a *δάϊς*: "In the former everyone gives his share, in the latter everyone gets his share."

[86] Weiss (1998: 44, n. 28): on the "derivation of Latin *ōra* 'border' (& therefore Hittite *arhās)* from verbal root meaning 'divide' ... the word *ora*$_2$ [is] traditionally glossed as *rope*... [probably] Celtic preserves a member of the family of *h$_1$erh$_2$- in Old Irish *or* m. -'border' Welsh *or* f. 'border' *eirion-yn*, Old Breton *orion*, Mod. Bret. *erien*..."

[87] In relation to the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, Van der Ben (1986: 10–11) argues "*ἵμερος* differs from *ἔρος* in that the former ... requires immediate satisfaction and cannot be refused"; Weiss (1998: 50, n. 45).

[88] See Shapiro (1993: 186–207); illustrated in Rosenzweig (2004: 20–21, fig. 7), Stafford (2012: 198–200, fig 9).

[89] Weiss (1998: 53): "the -r/-n-stem ancestor of *ἵμερος* must have looked like this: nom. acc. *séh$_2$i-mr$_o$*, gen. *sih$_2$-mén-s55* – and would have been a verbal abstract meaning 'magical binding.'"

[90] Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 2.6.11-12): *Ἃ μὲν αἱ Σειρῆνες ἐπῇδον τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ ἥκουσας Ὁμήρου, / ὧν ἐστιν ἀρχὴ τοιάδε τις ·/*
Δεῦρ' ἄγε δή, πολύαιν' Ὀδυσεῦ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν. / Ταύτην οὖν, ἔφη, τὴν ἐπῳδήν, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις / ἀνθρώποις αἱ Σειρῆνες ἐπᾴδουσαι κατεῖχον, ὥστε μὴ ἀπιέναι / ἀπ' αὐτῶν τοὺς ἑπᾳσθέντας; Οὐκ ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐπ' ἀρετῇ/φιλοτιμουμένοις οὕτως ἐπῇδον ["You have heard from Homer the spell that the Sirens put on Odysseus. It begins like this: 'This way, come this way, renowned Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans.'" "Then did the Sirens chant this spell for other people too, Socrates, so as to keep the spellbound from leaving them?" "No, only for those who yearned for the fame that virtue gives"]; Faraone (1999: 6, n. 15). Gordon (1999: 220–221) discusses references to the Sirens' song as examples of how 5C Greeks perceived inspired rhetoric as incantatory, mind-changing "brilliant deception."

[91] *ΝΕΣΤΟΡΟΣ:...:ΕΥΠΟΤΟΝ:ΠΟΤΕΡΙΟΝ / ΗΟΣΔΑΤΟΔΕΠΙΕΣΙ:ΠΟΤΕΡΙ..: ΑΥΤΙΚΑΚΕΝΟΝ / ΗΙΜΕΡΟΣΗΑΙΡΕΣΣΕΙ : ΚΑΛΛΙΣΤΕΦΑΝΟ : ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΕΣ* (Archaeological Museum of Pithecusae, Ischia, Naples, Italy: http://www.pithecusae.it/)

[92] Emphasis added. Transl. by R. F. Hock, in Betz (1985: PGM XV 1–21, 251); cf. Faraone (1995: 10–11; 10, n. 33); Pachoumi (2013: 322). Greeks and Romans shared beliefs prevalent in later cultures about types of restless dead (e.g. suicides): unburied dead, including the lost drowned, cannot enter Hades; Forbes-Irving (1990: 123–125; citing *Iliad* 23.71; Lucian, *Philops*. 29; Achilles Tatius 5.16, *Anthologia Palatina* 7.285, 374). Though only a few sections, whose meaning is clear, concern us here, PGM XV as a whole is so obscure that it seems best to give it in full from Preisendanz (1931: 133–134):

...ἵνα κατα] δήςωςι Νῖ λον [τόν] καὶ Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμον[α],ὃν ἔτεκε Δημητρία, κακοῖς μεγάλοις, οὐδὲ θεῶν | οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπων εὐρήςω καθαρὰν λύςιν, ἀλλὰ

φιλήςῃ ἐμέ, Καπιτωλίνα[ν, ἣν] ἔτεκε Πεπεροῦς, | θεῖον ἔρωτα καὶ ἔςῃ μοι κατὰ πάντα ἀκόλουθος, ἕως ἂν ἔτι βούλωμαι ἵνα μοι ποιήςῃ ,[ἃ] ἐγὼ θέλω, | καὶ μηδενί ἄλλῃ, καὶ μηδενὸς ἀκούςῃ, εἰ μὴ ἐ[μο] ῦ μόν[ης], Καπιτωλίνς, ἐπιλήςῃ γονέων, || τέκνων, φίλων. π[ροc]εξορκίζω ὑμᾶς, δαίμονες, τοὺς ἐν τὲ τόπῳ [5] *τούτῳ, λυηαηλ | ..... cου αφαλω λυβαλο λυβαλ[α], καὶ λίccομαι λυβαλα τωνη [.] πυ-λ[υ]νυλυ, ὁ ἐνοῖς, | ὁ διccᾶς ονα̣λελα καὶ παραιτῶ τ] ὴν εὕροιαν καὶ [τάς ἔρτός μου] ἀποδόςεις τὰς | Χάριτας. πάντας ἐcῆτε ἄπαιδας, ἀγάμους, καὶ ἀνεμοφορήτους ἀφ[ῆ]τε, ὡς ἂν θῶ τὴν παρακατα |θήκην αὐτήν, ἵνα μοι τελέcητε πάντα τὰέν τῷ πιττακίῳ γεγραμμένα, δι' ἃ δρκίζω || ὑμ□c, δαίμονες, τὴν cυνέχουcαν ὑμᾶς Βίαν* [10] *καὶ Ἀ[νά]νκην· τελέcατέ μοι πάντα |κ]αὶ εἰcπηδήcατε καὶ περιέλετε Νίλου, οῦ ἔcτιν ἡ οὐcία [ἐκεί] νου, ἵνα μου ἐρᾷ, Καπιτωλίνα[c,| κ]αὶ ἀcάλευτός μου ἡν Νῖλος, δν ἔτεκε Δημητρία πάcῃ ὥρᾳ καί πάcῃ ἡμέρᾳ. | διορκίζω ὑμᾶς, δαίμονες, κατά τῶν πικρῶν Ἀναγκῶν, τῶν ἐχουcῶν | ὑμᾶς, καί ἀνεμοφορήτων ιω ιωε,*

Φθούθι, εω Φρῆ, δ μέγιcτος δαίμων Ἰάω, Cαβαὼ[θ || Βαρβαρεθιωθ Λαιλαμψ [15] *Ὄcορνωφρι, Ἔμφερα, ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ θεὸc δ μονο[γ]ενής, | δ ἑκαλεύων τὸν βυθόν, ἐξαποcτέλλων ὕδατα καί ἀνέμουc· ἔξαφες τὰ πνεύμα τα τῶν δαιμόνων τούτων, ὅπου μοῦ ἔcτιν º πυξίc, ἵνα μοι τελέcωcι τὰ ἐν τῷ | πυξιδίῳ ὄντα, ἤτε ἄρcενες ἤτε θήλιαι, ἤτε μεικροὶ ἤτε μεγάλοι, ἵνα ἑλθόν|τες τελέcωcι τὰ ἐν τῷ πυξιδίῳ τούτῳ καὶ καταδήcωcι Νῖλον τὸν καὶ || Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα, δν ἔτεκε Δημητρία, ἐμοὶ Καπιτω-λίνᾳ,* [20] *[ἣ]ν ἔτεκε Πεπεροῦς, | ὅλο]ν τῆc ζωῆc α<ύ>τοῦ χρόνον φιλῇ με Νῖλος φίλτρον αἰώνιον. ἤδη, ἤδη, τα[χύ, ταχύ*. Faraone (1995: 10) gives an emended Greek opening and translation. Many thanks to Steve Farmer and Veronica Capriotti for their help with this text.

[93] Holford-Strevens (2006: 27, 45, nn. 76–77) on MSS of these short versions of *Physiologus* (=Version Y or A).

[94] On Artemis as a patron of fertility, Barb (1966); Léger (2015: 213–214); hence the famous statue at Ephesos (modern Selçuk, Turkey), festooned with breast-like shapes, which in fact represent bull's testicles.

[95] Pausanius (1971, II, 473), transl. Levi.

[96] The Sirens, according to Hesiod (frag. 28; Vermeule 1979: 137), could charm the winds. To the main sense of *aura* as *breeze*, there are further connotations: "*αὔρα* (Ion.) *αὔρη*, breeze, esp. a cool breeze from water (Aristotle, *On the Cosmos* 394b13), the fresh air of morning (*Odyssey* 5.469, *αὔρη δ' ἑκ ποταμοῦ ψυχρὴ πνέειé*; cf. Hesiod, *Works & Days* 670, etc.); used metaphorically, *aura* can refer to the attractive influence of the female (*αὔρῃ φιλοτησίῃ*; Oppian. *Halieutica* 4.114); or to a changeful course of events, bodily thrill, guileless movements of soul, even the epileptic *aura* (Galen *De locis affectis* (*Opera omnia* VIII (1821: 194)). For *Αὖραι* personified (*Argonautica Orphica,* 340.5)" (expanded from Liddell & Scott (2011 [1843], with thanks to Vaclav Blazek).

[97] For Aura the Titan, Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 48.240–260 (late 4C–early 5C); for the name Antaura, *ant(i)* (=contra-/against)+*aura* (=wind/breeze/steam), Barb (1966: 3); cf. n. 95 above.

[98] On the huge international and geographical range of the St. Sisinnius type, see Toporkov 2011, 2019. Proliferation of supernatural entities – both malignant and protective – seems to be a feature of charm discourse generally. For an account of the tendency for illness demons, such as fever-demons, to move from solo to multiple before dispersal, Milne (2019: 6–8). The multiplication of antagonists is a notable element, linked in complex ways, perhaps, with the shift from positive to negative in a particular topos or *figura*, as in the Antaura tradition sketched here. Leavy (1994: 159, 322, n. 17) cites a Georgian legend wherein a multitude of evil shapeshifting swans trample a sleeping princess; a multiple swan-maiden performing the typical action of the nightmare-demon.

[99] Relevant scholarship includes histories of sexuality, gender and the emotions generally; too extensive to summarise here: a key landmark is Foucault (1976–2018); for the Classical world, Winkler (1990: 17-44, 71-98); Faraone 1999; for entry-points by period, e.g. Peakman (2010–2011: I–III).

[100] Weiss (1998: 54, n. 58): the "semantic change from 'external attraction' to 'internal desire'...one can observe taking place within the documented history of Greek".

[101] On *odium*, Skutsch (1914: 389–404); Sturtevant (1913: 29) comments: "In only 3 of the 37 attestations in Plautus can *odium* naturally be translated by 'hate'. It means rather "disgust" [as in Plautus, *Curculio* 501]... *Odium* was always associated with odor..."; i.e. a response to external stimulus.

[102] Metaphorically, by extension, it can always be claimed that it is a quality in X (beauty, preciousness etc.) that is the cause of arousing desire in Y; however, this is really a way of claiming mythic or occult status for X.

[103] Visually, Eros-figures may merge into a crowd of personified emotions [*pâthemata*]. Despite the use of labels, where several Erotes are depicted, Imeros may be the only one named (see e.g. our figs. 24–25). In her survey of visual Erotes, Stafford (2013: 199) notes distinguishing labels as they occur, but considers them all as "Eros-figures". Faraone (1999: 43–46), similarly, in his account of *ἔρως* the disease, cites among evidence for the power of Eros the god a passage (*Iliad* 14.217, discussed above), which in fact names Imeros. On the issue of personifications as gods, Stafford (2003: 90–91); cf. Plutarch (*Kleomenes* 9.1): the Spartans "have shrines to Fear, Death, Laughter and other states (*pâthemata*) of the sort."

[104] Fifty years before the first literary reference (Euripides, *Medea* 529–531; Stafford 2013: 179, n.19); bow-and-arrow became the standard prop in Greek art from the 4C BCE.

[105] Templates for, and exemplars of, desire-related *figurae* do not merely fall out of use; they are supplemented rather than supplanted by topologically complex exemplars. Cupids continue to shoot arrows directly at lovers, half-and-half mermaid-sirens continue to be represented in visual culture, especially folk-culture. These are conserved through inter-artefactual domains; reified in popular media such as prints and chapbooks.

[106] We see aspects of this process in action e.g. in 16C debates about the causes of witchcraft (satanic others v. hallucinations; for summary, Milne (2007: 182–203, 303–304), and in the history of theorising about the causes of dreams; e.g. Schmitt (1999: 274–275), for examples, Milne (2007: 120–132). As a general observation, this can be couched in different terms, e.g. Ginzburg (2002 [1998]: 37): "in our intellectual tradition, a consciousness of the mendacious nature of myths... has accompanied, like a shadow, the conviction that they contain a hidden truth."

[107] Forbes-Irving (1990: 7–17) points out that earlier sources, from Hesiod to 5C drama, relate only about 35 transformation stories; he goes on to suggest (ibid.: 19–24, 305–307) that Ovid elevates certain water-women legends into transformations episodes following Hellenic enthusiasm for etiology, and resulting expansion of narratives featuring metamorphosis. On Ovid's sources, e.g. Herter (1980: 185–228); Barkan 1986.

[108] *τῆς ἦ τοι πόδες εἰσὶ δυώδεκα πάντες ἄωροι, / ἓξ δέ τέ οἱ δειραὶ περιμήκεες, ἐν δὲ ἑκάστῃ / σμερδαλέη κεφαλή, ἐν δὲ τρίστοιχοι ὀδόντες / πυκνοὶ καὶ θαμέες, πλεῖοι μέλανος θανάτοιο. / μέσση μέν τε κατὰ σπείους κοίλοιο δέδυκεν, / ἔξω δ' ἐξίσχει κεφαλὰς δεινοῖο βερέθρου, / αὐτοῦ δ' ἰχθυάᾳ, σκόπελον περιμαιμώωσα, / δελφῖνάς τε κύνας τε, καὶ εἴ ποθι μεῖζον ἕλῃσι / κῆτος, ἃ μυρία βόσκει ἀγάστονος Ἀμφιτρίτη.* [She has twelve feet, all of which wave in the air / and six necks, extremely long, on each of which / is a horrible head; in it are teeth in two triple rows / crowded closely together, full of the blackness of death. / To her middle she is buried inside her hollow cave. / Outside, she puts forth her heads from the terrible cavern. / There she does her fishing, peering all round her crag / for dolphins or dogfish or what bigger creature she may catch / of those roaring Amphitrite nourishes in such numbers]. *Odyssey* XII.89–97; transl. in Buitron & Cohen (1992: 13).

[109] Curtius (1967 [1953]: 94–104) cites Archilochus, 648 BCE, as the earliest example of *adynaton* use in the Western tradition.

[110] Villing et al. (2019: 118–119, fig. 101). This object is probably a copy after a Hellenistic original; the restorer Carlo Albacini (1734–1813) reconstructed parts of the centaur, and for the scylla, her missing nose, an arm, and one of her dog-heads.

[111] The *phantasma* [nightmare] is defined by Macrobius (1952 [c. 400–430]: I.3) as: *forms, distorted in appearance and out of all natural proportions in size... kaleidoscopically changing things*. Cf. Milne (2014: 168; 2007: Intro. & Ch. 2; 2024). For Artemidorus (2C; 2.44): *[To dream of] what is monstrous and not possible [such as a] Scylla and the like, means one's hopes will be false and unfulfilled* (2012: 230–231). Cf. Virgil (70–19 BCE) Aeneid VI.282–291: *In medio ramos annosaque bracchia pandit / ulmus opaca, ingens, quam sedem Somnia vulgo / ...multaque praeterea variarum monstra ferarum / Centauri in foribus stabulant Scyllaeque biformes / ...Gorgones Harpyiaeque…* [In the midst [of Hades] an elm, shadowy and vast, spreads her boughs and aged arms, the home [of] false Dreams... And many monstrous forms [are there] Centaurs and double-shaped Scyllas / ...Gorgons and Harpies... .

[112] *vobis, Acheloides, unde / pluma pedesque avium, cum virginis ora geratis? / an quia, cum legeret vernos Proserpina flores / in comitum numero, doctae Sirenes, eratis? / quam postquam toto frustra quaesistis in orbe / protinus, et vestram sentirent aequora curam / posse super fluctus alarum insistere remis / optastis facilesque deos habuistis et artus / vidistis vestros subitis flavescere pennis. / ne tamen ille canor mulcendas natus ad aures / tantaque dos oris linguae deperderet usum / virginei vultus et vox humana remansit*.

[113] For Phorkys as father of the Sirens, see above n. 76. For Acheloos as father: Apollonius Rhodius 4.896; Ovid *Met.* V.552-3, XIV.87.88; Silius Italicus 12.33-36; Lucian, *The Dance* 50; Libanius (2008 [late 4C]: 10–11). For Acheloos as father of nymphs: Plato *Phaedrus* 263d; Euripides *Bacchae* 519–520; Virgil *Copa* 15; Columella *De re rustica* 10.263-74. For the greater prominence in Roman times of Archeloos as father of Sirens, Taylor (2009: 26, n. 19).

[114] For Earth and Ocean as parents, Fowler (2000: I.96, frag. #8); see also Lycophron (as in n. 67 above). Born of Earth: Euripides calls them *winged maidens, virgin daughters of Gaia* (*Helen* 167–168); *progeny of Earth and Acheloos's horn-wound* (Libanius (2008 [late 4C]: 10–11); Holford-Strevens 2006: 40, n. 12). Muses named as mother:

Melpomene (Apollodorus 1.18, 1.63: Lycophron 712 ff.; Hyginus Fabulae 141), Calliope (e.g. Servius), Terpsicore (Apollonius Rhodius 4.896; Nonnus Dionysiaca 13.313), Sterope (Hesiod *Cat. of Women* 38; Apollodorus 1.63), unnamed Muse (Ovid, *Met*. V. 552; Apollodorus I. 7. 10); cf. Pollard (1952: 60); Tsiafakis (2003: 92).

[115] The Naiads then give it to Demeter [Ceres]: *naides hoc, pomis et odoro flore repletum / sacrarunt; divesque meo Bona Copia cornu est* (*Met*. IX.87–88). Elsewhere, Ovid (*Fasti* 5.115-24) and others derive the Cornucopia from Amalthea (either a Naiad with a magical goat, or the goat itself), who suckled Zeus (cf. PseudoApollodorus *Bibliotheca* 2.148; Strabo *Geog*. 10. 2.19; Aratus *Phaenomena* 161–165; Callimachus *Hymn 1 to Zeus* 47–48).

[116] On his shapeshifting and man-faced bull form, Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 94; Ovid *Met*. XIV.85–87; Forbes-Irving (1990: 172–173); Clarke 2004. The three female faces on our stele (fig. 32c) may represent his Nereid daughters.

[117] Eustathius of Thessalonica (12C) refers to Sirens in various incommensurable ways: Homer's Sirens have the "nature of birds" [*ὀρνιθοφυεῖς*]; so they have wings; but also they must have been wingless, "otherwise they would have pursued Odysseus"; and they forfeit their wings as punishment after singing in competition with the Muses (in Cesaretti 2015: 255, n. 11); he mentions the motif of them wanting to remain virgin as well, though this must be a Christian era addition to the story (*Ep*. 45; ibid.: 264, n. 51). Pausanias (9.34.3) describes a statue of Hera carrying Sirens in her hand, and relates the contest story, adding that the Muses make themselves crowns from the feathers of the Sirens. On this, see our fig. 27b (Artemis crowned in sirens).

[118] Donne (1977: 77–78) concludes: *If thou beest borne to strange sights... when thou retorn'st, wilt ... sweare / No where / Lives a woman true, and faire...* .

[119] Foucault (2010 [1972]: 229). He recommends that we attend, rather, to principles of reversal and discontinuity; this means also attending to exteriority (i.e. context in the real world). Since we cannot "burrow to the hidden core of discourse... [to] the thought or meaning manifested in it; instead we should look for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to the chance series of these events and fixes their limits" (loc. cit).

[120] Cf. Eliot (1950 [1919]: 4–6): "what happens when a new work of art is created happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form [an] order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new... work of art among them. [Their] order is complete before the new work arrives; [after the] novelty, the whole existing order must [be] altered; [and] the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted...the mind of Europe [rather] than [the] private mind [of the artist] is a mind which changes [and] abandons nothing en route. [Any new] development [is] complication certainly [but] not... improvement... perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery." For our purposes, we can take Eliot's *mind of Europe* to be synonymous with *discourse / commentary* or *collective corpus*.

[121] Matsche (2007: 160) describes fourteen extant versions. Sometimes a pair of partridges, alluding to lovers, are included at lower right (cf. Liebmann 1968: 437). For entry-points to the substantial literature on the design: MacDougall 1975; Bober 1977; Barkan 1999; Scalabrini & Stimilli 2009; Baert 2018.

[122] MS, c. 1477–1484, probably by Michael Fabricius Ferrarinus (Kurz 1953: 171; MacDougall 1975: 356, n. 4, 357–358; Baert 2018: 152–153); other candidates include

Michele Ferrarini, Giovanni Campani, or the Veronese antiquarian, Felice Feliciani (Ritoók-Szalay 1983: 67–74).

[123] Transl. Barkan (1999: 242). More briefly: *I am the custodian of the sacred spring… do not disturb my sleep, if you drink or bathe keep silent*; MacDougall (1975: 357, n. 4): "Paris, Bibi. nat. lat. 6128, fol. 114r and Reggio, Bibi. comm. cod. C. 398, fol. 28r. The Paris manuscript is after 1477, the Reggio is dated 1486. The epigram appears in *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum…* I. 5, 3e."

[124] Resonating with interest in recently-discovered Classical sculpture, notably the reclining female nude then identified as Cleopatra, currently as Ariadne. On the vogue for installing this and other Classical figures as fountains in gardens, Kurz (1953: 171–177); Bober 1977; Godwin 2005; Baert 2018.

[125] Scalabrini & Stimilli (2009: 53, n. 72); Ritoók-Szalay (1983); Ricci (2002: 131–138). Matsche (2007: 1823) suggests Cranach modelled his nymph on a relief (now lost) he saw in Buda. On the spread of the motif, MacDougall (1975: 357–365); Bober (1977: 223–239); Baert 2018.

[126] Pier Francesco Orsini, also called Vicino Orsini; on Bomarzo, Godwin (2005: 169–172); Darnall & Weil (1984: 194); De Mandiargues 1969; on Hellmouths as dream-imagery, Milne (2007: 235–253, 305–315; Ch. 2).

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ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE BALKAN CULTS IN ABRUZZI AND MOLISE (ITALY): TWO CASE-STUDIES

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Abstract: This article reveals the mechanisms of rooting the rituals of migrants in new places. We present two case-studies and from there we develop a wider scenario of cultural dynamics. The arrival of the Slavs and Albanians from the other side of the Adriatic toward the coasts of the Abruzzi (from which Molise separated in 1963) has been documented as early as the 14th century. It continues until the 20th century, and it is continually remembered by local historians and ethnographers to underline that the history of resettlement is a preserved component of culture which is reproduced in texts and ritual actions. Along with the memory of the migration process itself, religion often becomes the symbolical centre of the migrant's life. Therefore, religious rituals are often more preserved than others.

Keywords: religious cults, Abruzzi, Molise, Balkans, migrations, cultural adaptations

INTRODUCTION

The topic of this article is important and relevant as it reveals the mechanisms of rooting the rituals of migrants in new places[1]. We present two case-studies and from there we develop a wider scenario of cultural dynamics. We have taken several points into account. The arrival of the Slavs and Albanians from the other side of the Adriatic to the coasts of the Abruzzi (from which Molise separated in 1963) has been documented as early as the 14th century and is continually remembered by local historians. At the end of the 19th century, historian Gennaro Finamore wrote:

"Near the centre of the country, our people have had ancient relations with Puglia, with Naples, with Rome; and the main maritime municipalities, with the Dalmatian coast, with Venice and the Marca di Ancona, as well as with Slavonian and Albanian colonies. Thus, we can understand how our popular lyrics give clear indications of having been affected by peripheral and distant influences, which manifest themselves no less in the modalities of some spoken words" (Finamore 1886: 4–7).

There were five large waves of Albanian migration to the Italian territory. They began in the 14th century before the birth of the national Albanian hero Giorgio Castrioto Skanderbeg, who died in 1468. The reason for the resettlement in Italy was the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans. A significant number of Albanians moved from Albanian lands, first to Morea (the modern Peloponnese), and, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, from Morea to Italy. In order to better understand the migration process, it is necessary to consider not only the Greek resettlement after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, but also the long-time Byzantine domination over the entire south of Italy. The Greeks of Italy (in many settlements) preserved the old Greek word *hydra* as the name for water in their language (whereas in Modern Greek it is *nero*). There are many similar examples. This is the evidence that the language in these Italian settlements has existed since the Byzantine period (i.e. before 1453), and that the people speaking this language are not new settlers who appeared here after the conquest of the Balkans by the Turks. The same processes could take place with the rituals.

So, the first Balkan settlers to arrive in Italy were Greeks and Albanians. They constituted, in the southern territories of the Adriatic coast of Italy, the ethno-linguistic minority of the Arbëreshë, the Albanians of Italy. Coming from Albania, from the historic Albanian region of Epirus and from the numerous Albanian communities of Attica and Morea in today's Greece, they settled in Italy between the 14th and 18th centuries, following the death of the national hero Giorgio Castriota Skanderbeg and the progressive conquest of the territories of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottomans. Many villages and districts in the Abruzzi have been populated by Albanians[2].

Then the Croats also arrived, and they settled mainly in the territory between the Biferno and Trigno rivers, in the towns of Acquaviva Collecroce, Montemitro and San Felice del Molise, Palata, Tavenna, Mafalda, Montelongo, Petacciato, San Biase and San Giacomo degli Schiavoni, reaching inland up to Schiavi d'Abruzzo, and in the north of the Abruzzi up to Cappelle sul Tavo[3].

The most consistent migratory waves occurred after the conquest of Constantinople, which took place in 1453, when the Turks began their expansion toward the northern territories. The Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Naples

facilitated the settlements along the Adriatic coast of Italy to repopulate the lands that, in those years, had remained abandoned following the earthquake of 1456 and the plague of 1495.

The Albanian, Serbian, and Croatian minorities almost always found themselves rebuilding and repopulating ancient villages abandoned due to earthquakes and plagues. This is, for instance, the case of Acquaviva Collecroce which – although it already existed in the same place at the end of the 13th century – would have been depopulated following different dramatic events and then would have been repopulated by Croatian refugees coming directly from Dalmatia between the 15th and 16th centuries[4].

First, religion helped the exiles to settle on Italian territories because, for having fought against the Ottomans, they had been welcomed as heroes of Christianity. Second, migrant families found it advantageous to move to lands known as fertile. Third, the isolation of the hill and mountain villages also favoured the adaptation of the migrants and the maintenance of their linguistic and cultural identity.

The Italo-Albanians formed the Italo-Albanian Catholic Church of Byzantine tradition, made up of three ecclesiastical districts and two eparchies. The Albanian ethno-linguistic group has managed to maintain its identity by having in the clergy the strongest tutor and the fulcrum of ethnic identification and of the Arbëreshë idiom. More specifically, the Arbërëshë minority preserved the Byzantine rite under the formal leadership of the Pope, without any official union with him. Therefore, the Arbërëshë of Italy have not one idiom but several. After all, they are the descendants of immigrants from different regions of the Albanian lands – there are Tosks and Ghegs, but the latter are fewer. It is estimated that the Albanians of Italy are about 100,000 and constitute one of the largest among the historical ethno-linguistic minorities of Italy. The Serbo-Croatians are fewer in number.

In this article we focus on two sorts of rituals which have been brought to Italy by the Slavic settlers of the last centuries. First, the ritual of the *Verde Giorgio* (eng. Green George) will be examined. Second, we will describe the Orthodox cult of the Madonna Odigitria, which is of Byzantine descent. These two examples will enable us to make a series of remarks concerning the adaptation of eastern European rituals in the western parts of Europe.

1. THE RITUAL OF THE *VERDE GIORGIO*

Among the remains of the Slavic culture in Abruzzi and Molise, the ritual of the *Verde Giorgio* should be mentioned first. It conveys the spirit of vegetation in its phase of rebirth during the spring. In addition to the ancient diffusion of certain European cults, it signals the ambiguous transience of current culture, which is adapting to industrial and post-industrial rhythms while maintaining some profound peasant and pastoral symbols; these are an evident expression of the need to maintain a link with the rhythms of nature.

The cultural theme of *Verde Giorgio*, present throughout eastern Europe, has its centre in Russia, Romania, and Slovenia, where on April 23rd, for the eve of St. George's Day, a young boy was covered with branches and, walking around the village, he wished and announced the arrival of spring (metaphorically, the victory of light-cosmos over darkness-chaos). He usually received some food in exchange. The ritual is widespread on the Adriatic coast of Italy in various forms. Some are more evident and have moved to May 1st, such as the *May Tree* festivals. In these festivals, a tree is carried in procession; the people perform propitiatory dances (in Accettura village, in Lucania), and propitiatory customs surround the tree (as in the *Cuccagna tree* of many countries and the love ties of Penna S. Andrea). Some other forms are more discrete, such as pilgrimages to rural sanctuaries or circumambulatory journeys in the fields, requesting shelter from local families in exchange for a prayer of good wishes, all happening from the end of April to the beginning of May.

Until a few years ago, the Slavic custom of the itinerant youth covered with branches was active only in the Slavic communities of Molise. This aroused the interest of Alberto Mario Cirese who, in 1954, conducted a survey in Acquaviva Collecroce, Montemitro and San Felice Slavo, and suggested a strong relationship between the Saint George rituals (April 23rd) and the May Day rituals. The ritual studied by Cirese, called "*strawra*" or "*majo*", marked May 1st with the procession of a young man who, wearing a "hut mask" made of reeds, twigs, and leaves, went dancing and singing a rhyme in the Slavic dialect through the streets of the town. The rhyme went like this: "Whoever said May wouldn't come / go out and find him dressed". In San Felice Slavo, the song "*Maja, kata maja, oteja maja*" (May, here is May that is back) was performed by boys who, hopping, accompanied a young man wearing a wicker cone like a tunic, on which were hung cherry tree branches, broad bean plants and flowering branches. In the 1980s, this festival was reintroduced in some towns by the Pro Loco, who surrounded it with typical folk elements and tourist attractions, such as a music band, accordion playing, and costume dances[5].

This ritual is also active around Schiavi d'Abruzzo, an ancient eastern colony on the border with Molise. In San Giovanni Lipioni, which overlooks the Trigno Valley, the five hundred people of the village continue to give life, every May 1st, to a ceremony which is at once religious and pagan. The feast survived without the need for external interventions because it was grafted onto the local religious celebrations, typical of the Latin liturgy, in honour of S. Liberata and S. Giovanni. The statues of these saints are transferred on this occasion to a chapel outside the town, where they stay for the whole summer. The protective aura of the religious symbol is therefore extended to the whole community, as the statues move from the local church to the outside chapel. Together with the statues, the *majo* also goes in procession. The *majo* is a large and auspicious garland of flowers, broad beans, and branches, through which protection is requested from the saints for the coming season. The *majo* party, preceded by the band, stops in front of each of the houses in the village, where they sing a begging song, receive eggs and other food as gifts and seal the wish by donating a bunch of flowers from the garland, which will bring luck to the village families all year round[6].

North of Schiavi d'Abruzzo, however, the ethnographic data collected since the 19th century did not indicate the active presence of this cult, even in the villages of the Chieti area which were certainly born from Slavic immigration at the end of the 15th century, namely the so-called *Villae* of Cupello degli Schiavoni, Mozzagrogna and Villa Stanazzo. According to some informants, the villages of Villalfonsina, Santa Maria Imbaro, Villa Scorciosa, Schiavoni, Sant'Apollinare, Caldari and Treglio are claimed to be of Dalmatian origin. In Treglio, for instance, the parish church is dedicated to St. George, which is used as a clue for claiming this origin. Indeed, historians, including Antinori (1781–1783), underlined the visible presence of foreign populations who settled "*inter Senellum et Sarum*", who communicated with each other with "*obscura vocabula*" and who soon mingled with the local population. Moreover, according to testimonies related to the Atessa area, not far from the colonies of the Chieti area, the ritual of *Verde Giorgio* did not survive beyond the first decades of the 19th century.

Here, we cannot give a detailed analysis with the description of all the different rituals which are performed in Italy. However, we can refer to the important descriptive studies made by Emiliano Giancristofaro (1972: 37–42; 2016). In a comparative perspective, we can also point out the respective rituals in the Slavic territory and the strong presence of the cultural theme of *Verde Giorgio* throughout eastern Europe.

In other places, as we have already said, the ritual was performed on May 1st. In Acquaviva Collecroce, Montemitro and S. Felice Slavo, it was customary to

make a kind of puppet with reeds, into which different sorts of food were placed (wheat, barley, oats, pears, apples and whatever could be found at the beginning of May, as well as remains from the winter stocks). A man went around the village with this puppet on his shoulders, dancing and singing in the Slavic dialect: "Who said May wouldn't come? Come out from your houses and find him dressed". It was a propitiatory ritual for the abundance of crops in the fields, still performed in 1990, as Giancristofaro testifies in his long survey in Abruzzi and Molise (Giancristofaro 1972: 40; 2016: 27). Another typical ritual of this area, for example, is the Atess pilgrimage, in the Maiella Mountain, where pilgrims carry flowering branches (*'ndorce*) and are dressed in green cloth. This is still performed nowadays on the 23rd of April (Giancristofaro 2016: 27).

Of course, the comparison with other Slavic rituals, which plays the key role in our analysis, requires additional argumentation, looking for the sources related to comparable rituals in Russia and Romania. Of course, St. George's Day is usually considered as a great holiday, but it is not always a "Green George", which is very restricted to some specific geographical areas. *Verde Giorgio* is usually documented as Slovenian and Croatian. Alberto M. Cirese found out that this tradition was strongly connected with the Adriatic region and has parallels in Croatia and Slovenia, but not in all of eastern Europe (Cirese 1995/1996: 47–48)[7]. The same conclusions (about the location of Zeleni Juraj/ Green George festivities in Croatia and Slovenia) can be found in an article summarizing different versions of St. George's festivities throughout all Slavic lands (Tolstoi 1995).

Of course, the May tree, the pilgrimages and the Green George are not the same rituals even if they occur around the same season, between April 23rd and May 1st. Some fragments are similar, and the same is true of other European spring customs using greenery. But we cannot draw general conclusions from the observation of such different ritual actions. So, before postulating that the transformation of the rituals is the result of ethnic contacts, it is important to understand the areal distribution of the different versions of the St. George's Day celebrations on both sides of the Adriatic and, possibly, in a wider perspective. However, St. George's Day has a special meaning in Balkan traditions since it marks the boundary between two seasons and two halves of the year (the winter and the summer), and therefore it accumulates different symbolic meanings and forms of ritual expression. In this respect, we suggest that it has more chances to be maintained by migrant populations than other festivals.

2. THE ORTHODOX CULT OF THE *MADONNA ODIGITRIA*

In Abruzzi, it is interesting to compare the *Verde Giorgio* celebrations with the other rituals which were historically imported from eastern Europe. For instance, the most relevant Greek-Albanian survivals are connected to the Orthodox cult of the *Madonna Odigitria* (also known as the Black Madonna and Hodegetria). The refugee communities coming from the eastern coasts invaded by the Turks believed they were enlightened by the *Madonna Odigitria* on their journey in search of places to stop. Under this aegis, in the Valpescara area, there is the village of Villa Badessa which, included in the municipality of Rosciano, is currently the northernmost Albanian Orthodox community in Italy[8]. As such, its traditionalism, which is generally typical of more isolated and southern areas, would seem unusual, but it is easily explained by the fact that the colony is of recent emigration (1743). On the feast of the patron saint S. Maria Kìmisis (Assumption into heaven), on September 8th, after the ceremonial in the Greek language, an ancient icon, object of great veneration, is carried in procession around the streets of Villa Badessa. It is believed to have been brought to Italy by the Albanian refugees, founders of the community, who fled from Epirus in 1743 due to Ottoman persecutions. In the same village, an icon of the Madonna Hodegetria is also placed in the hands of the deceased along with a penny and bread, which would be used to pay Charon, according to Greek custom. Among the local funerary uses, there are also the so-called *colivi*, a sort of sweet wafer, which bear imprinted figures of saints. These are of the same family as the Greek *colivi*, home-made to celebrate the funerals. However, these are usually cooked grains, not in the form of wafers.

In this village, the Greek-style costume, noticed by English travellers and worn until the 20th century, has now become an emblem of folklore and education. The media, mixed marriages and working in the cities of the coast have accelerated the processes of change among the 30 families who, in 1964, were registered as speaking Albanian Tosk (the Tosks are one of two major dialectal subgroups of Albanians). The most recent surveys (Piccoli & Sammartino 2000) show that today, only elderly speakers remain, with the younger persons abandoning what they reduce to an "old dialect".

Another oriental ritual in honour of the Madonna Odigitria survives in the Valle del Foro, where every year, the night before the second Sunday in May, a Byzantine image (traced from the original which, according to oral tradition, depicted a black Madonna), surrounded by a wreath, is led on a nocturnal pilgrimage through country paths from Vacri to Francavilla. The icon, led by non-engaged girls, is preceded by men in candlelight. The married women close the procession. According to the hypotheses of some scholars, the devotion of

the village of Vacri is explained by the fact that the small church of *S. Maria della Croce* on the outskirts of Francavilla, already closed and semi-destroyed in the 19th century, had been built in 1466 by a group of Albanians, encamped on the hill. Later they went up the valley, reached Vacri and the countryside between the villages of Ari and Semivicoli where they settled, but continued every year to go on pilgrimage to *S. Maria della Croce*, a centre of Orthodox worship, until the ceremony was absorbed by the Latin cult. Then the pilgrimage of Albanian descendants was diverted to the new church of the *Madonna delle Grazie* in Francavilla.

The model of the allocation of refugees through the intercession of the Madonna Odigitria also recurs in the Biferno Valley, where the community of Portocannone still uses, to remember the Albanian diaspora, the motto "*ghjaku i shprijshur*" (shed blood) as an expression of greeting. According to the collective memory, supported by historical sources, from Albania the fugitives landed in Campomarino, in the Piana del Saccione (San Martino in Pensilis) and then, stopping in the Ramitelli wood, they entrusted themselves to the Madonna of Constantinople for the choice of the place where they should build their settlement. The icon of the protector, the patroness of refugees and pilgrims, was placed on a cart pulled by oxen that stopped in a clearing where the chapel was then built, a symbol of the group's religious identity, which was surrounded by the 38 "fires" (families) that made up the community. Even today, in Portocannone, which has about two thousand inhabitants, on the days of the observance of the celebration of the Madonna of Constantinople, tradition requires recalling these mythical origins of the settlement. This observance is common to all the settlements we are considering in this article, where an animal is used as a good omen for the foundation of a *civitas*, concluding a wandering quest steeped in pain, poverty and the risk of cultural dispersion.

We already indicated that this icon is also known as the "Black Madonna", but our further argumentation concerning ethnic interaction does not rely only on this assumption. Hodegetria, or Virgin Hodegetria, is an iconographic depiction of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus at her side while pointing at him as the source of salvation for humankind. On the icons the Virgin's head usually inclines toward the child, who raises his hand in a gesture of blessing. In the western church this type of icon is sometimes called *Our Lady of the Way*. In western Christendom, the term Black Madonna (or Black Virgin) tends to refer to statues or paintings of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus, where both figures are depicted as black. Some of the images of Black Madonnas belong to the iconographic type Hodegetria, but not all Hodegetrias are Black Madonnas.

3. ADAPTATIONS AND LOSSES

Therefore, upon a brief evaluation of the two cults taken into consideration (the Green George and the Madonna Odigitria), it is evident that although the language was preserved in the Greek Orthodox communities of Molise, the Orthodox liturgy was lost due to the greater coercive force that the Latin church exerted in the 16th and 17th centuries. This is confirmed by the fact that the Albanians of Campomarino, Ururi, Santa Croce di Magliano, Montecilfone and Portocannone practiced the Greek rite only until the first twenty years of the 19th century. These villages are located on the spurs of mountains and thus experience a radical difficulty in communicating with the outside. Despite the prohibitions and ordinances of the Catholic Church, due to the isolation of the region, the communities have retained other rituals, for instance the *carrese* (ox cart racing) in honour of the Black Madonna, or the Greek life-cycle custom of mourning the dead with threnodies by hired mourners, which is unpopular within the Roman church.

The proverbial indifference of the Albanians toward religious issues is also contradicted by the exceptional case of Villa Badessa, near Pescara, where the Orthodox rite has survived for three centuries, becoming the main symbol of the cultural identity of the group, and confirming the fact that even Villa Badessa, located in the fertile and busy Valpescara, has remained isolated from the socio-anthropological boundary. Moreover, the thrust for linguistic autonomy, still present both in the Serbo-Croatian communities of Molise and in the Albanian communities of both regions, confirms how the distinctive features were internalized as an identity and individualistic resource. This was already cryptically suggested by the English traveller Lear, citing the words of his Italian guide in the village of Montenerodomo, and documenting how, in 1846, the dominant culture demonized the multilingualism and cultural self-defence of the Badessani: "When they want to make themselves understood, they speak as Christians; but among themselves, like devils!" (1988: 121).

At the same time, other factors that may influence the processes of adaptation of traditions to a new cultural context should be considered. In the Orthodox Church, there is an elaborated tradition of processions of the Cross, timed to patron saint celebrations and other great festivals. The icons of the saints are indispensable participants in such processions. The popularity of this type of procession in the homeland may influence the degree of its preservation at the new dwelling place[9].

Since the 1980s, globalization and cultural homogenization have begun to show their effects on the younger generations. In this context, the need to enhance specific cultures has resulted in various initiatives for the defence of

cultural diversity, each group claiming the right to externalize its own cultural history. This externalization, which was sometimes translated into socio-anthropological research and museum projects, today leads the eastern communities in Italy to value their identity as migrants in a way that is different from other, more visible communities, such as Africans. In the current context of the migration crisis, it is important to underline the integration of populations from the other side of the Adriatic (Albania, ex-Yugoslavia, ex-Republic of Macedonia), corresponding to an ancient process.

First, it would be interesting to investigate the reported cases of wealthy Albanian young people who, due to their linguistic affinity with the eastern communities of Abruzzi and Molise, moved to Italy to study medicine at the D'Annunzio University in Chieti. Second, it would be interesting to document what are the effective possibilities of communication between young foreign males who, with medium-low educational qualifications, dazzled by the glittering image of Italy conveyed by the mass media, got into trouble and were rescued by charities and assistance. Third, it would be useful to compare the difficult situation of the "new" Albanian migrants with the claims of the "old" Albanians from Italy who, despite having been naturalized for centuries, still proudly emphasize that they belong to an "other" identity. Today, Italian populist politicians stigmatize the "hordes of Albanians" who seek their fortune in the West, but they do not remember that, four hundred years ago, the Italian people who today bear the surnames Jubatti, Iurisci, Staniscia, Radoccia, Schiavoni, Di Spalatro or Albanese were already refugees looking for some chance of survival on the Italian coasts.

The history of adaptations of Eastern rituals in Italy ultimately teaches us much about the need to understand current migration issues. And to guarantee social and human justice, a great scholar, Alfonso Di Nola, already affirmed in the 1990s: "we must be ready to pay for ourselves" (Di Nola 2001). In fact, we are all immigrants: no one is born and stays in the same place, and it is precisely this continuous shift of territories and cultures that is the basis of the development of humanity.

4. DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL DISSEMINATION

What is interesting in the examples reported above is not that they retain archaic Slavic features as mere "survivals" in the host country. If the preservation of certain linguistic aspects suggests that there are many survivals, the situation of the rituals examined does not necessarily verify this situation. Rather, the rituals that followed the Slavic populations in Italy managed to blend into the

ritual landscape of the host country. There was syncretism, or hybridization of forms, which is insufficiently accounted for by the notion of survival. In the same way, to speak of Slavic "islands" is misleading, because it seems difficult to speak of insularity in the cases observed, and such a vocabulary seems to reinforce the idea according to which the immigrant populations would have developed in a completely autonomous way with respect to the natives who welcomed them.

However, the historical situation was quite different, with early contacts that lasted for several centuries. In such a situation of interculturality, the rituals that survived are those whose formal characteristics made them easily understandable in the new context. The ritual of the "*Verde Giorgio*", as we have already stated, is a typical rite of Slavic and Orthodox Europe, but it is immediately understandable in the context of a seasonal bipartition which is universal in popular folklore, as it comes from concrete observations of natural cycles. It is therefore not surprising that the rite can continue to function by accompanying the displacement of populations. Thus, the "*Verde Giorgio*" had all the more force in the new context as it could be identified with other rituals dedicated to maypoles or other processions of the fields typical of the European spring ritual cycle. In a way, this rite was in line with the old European cultural fund, which gave it advantages to be transferred to the Italian context.

In the same way, the Orthodox cults of the Madonna Odigitria were even more accepted, no doubt because they echoed Italian Catholic cults devoted to local Black Madonnas. What is interesting here is the way in which, over the long term, the maintenance of community social structures has contributed to the transmission of these cults. Despite the separation and "insularity" of the Slavic communities, the latter obviously represented the "near other" for the Italians of the region, who themselves were not yet "Italianized" in the modern sense of the term. In early modern times, Italy being divided into various influences, it is likely that close strangers from the other side of the Adriatic were easier to assimilate than the representatives of power who came from faraway Naples, Sicily, or overseas Spain.

Until the 19th century the local populations of Abruzzi were administered by a distant power; they constituted a peripheral region at the extreme north of the Kingdom of Naples. There could thus be a certain proximity between them and the Christian populations of the East, which did not exist between the two shores of the Italian peninsula. This hypothesis is consistent with the theories of Van Gennep (1998) and other folklorists who indicate, for early modern times, that trade by sea was often more successful than trade by land. Modern ferries at the narrowest point between Durres and Bari take 7 hours. To cross the Adriatic in the 17th century it would be a longer journey, around

12–14 hours, but it took several days to cross the Apennines and to reach Naples, the capital of the kingdom on which Abruzzi depended. In winter, the journey to Naples was even longer when the mountains were snow-capped. For the ethnography of this region, it is therefore probably advisable to pay attention to Slavic influences more than to Italian and Spanish influences. Beyond the well-identified Slavic "islands", it would be useful to list all the diffuse cultural traits shared by the populations of Abruzzi and those of eastern Europe, on the other side of the Adriatic and in the Balkans.

After all, in many migrant communities, the history of resettlement is preserved with a lot of care as an essential component of culture and, as such, it is reproduced in texts and ritual actions. Along with the memory of the migration process itself, religion often becomes the symbolical centre of the migrant's life. Therefore, religious rituals are often more preserved than other kinds of rituals (see, e.g. Mihaylova 2017).

5. CONSEQUENCES FOR THE STUDY OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

These case-studies of rituals of Slavic origin in Italy remind us of the need, in the European context, to always keep in mind historical depth, which is a necessity to interpret the various concrete modalities of cultural contacts in the past. An ethnographer too centred on the present might be surprised by the cultural similarities that exist between one shore of the Adriatic and the other. Yet, before the invention of railways and highways, this proximity was evident. The same observations have been made about the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Greek islands, and the Baltic Sea. The Mediterranean civilization was first a maritime civilization because the effort of displacement by boats was much less important than the effort of displacement by land.

To this historical reality must be added the conclusions of specialists in interethnic and intercultural relations. Since the works of Fredrik Barth (1998 [1969]), it has been accepted that primordialism and instrumentalist approaches to ethnicities are insufficient for the understanding of the concrete dynamics of intercultural contact. Rather, it is interactions that drive interethnic relations, so that ethnicity only makes sense from its borders. In other words, it is by being confronted with otherness that groups become aware of their specificities. It is therefore necessary, when studying the cultural characteristics of a given population, to first ask the question of how this population communicates with surrounding groups. In addition, in the cases studied here, it is necessary not to rely on the notion of "island" which is often used in common language in

the field. The insularity of the Slavic populations of Abruzzi, claimed by the populations themselves for the purposes of cultural differentiation, hides the reality of a complex adaptation of these populations over the long term. The reality of this insularity corresponds to continual cultural contacts over a long historical period, which have led to the preservation of rituals that combine Slavic origins and adaptations to the Italian Catholic context.

Thus, the example of Abruzzi recalls the importance of studying cultural identities not only for what they are, but also for what they represent and with reference to the borders that divide them. These borders can be institutional, but they are also realities experienced or perceived by the populations. In an important collective work, a team of French anthropologists has insisted on this shifting nature of cultural borders (Bromberger & Morel 2001). They recalled that, even if modernity and the established powers have taught us to think of the world in a fragmented way by valuing the mountains, the rivers and the seas as border lines, cultural realities have much more blurred limits: "Faced with spatial divisions considered intentional or the fruit of decrees and treaties, cultural behaviours draw other maps whose contours seem erratic, spontaneous, involuntary, capricious" (Ibid.: 3–4).

It is therefore quite logical, when carrying out an ethnology of the Balkan cults in Italy, not to base the analysis on the observation of a difference between the cultures of eastern Europe and the cultures of western Europe, but rather to take note of the entanglement of cultural references which is explained by a long-term historical co-presence. In other words, thinking of the two cultures as separate does not do justice to their long-term relationship; on the contrary, we should rather think of the two cultures as complementary to understand how they were brought to define each other reciprocally in an old confrontation with close otherness.

NOTES

[1] This article has been prepared during a Erasmus exchange in European ethnology between University Côte d'Azur and University Chieti-Pescara. L. Giancristofaro has written § 1-2-3 and L. S. Fournier has written § 4-5.

[2] On the emigration of Albanians in Italy, see Merkaj 2020 and http://www.diaspora.gov.al/diaspora-e-vjeter-shqiptare-ne-bote-2/, last accessed on 31 May 2022. For more information on these communities see also Di Lena 1972; Flocco 1985; Stella 2004. See also a photo depicting Albanian girls in festive clothes, made by J. V. Ivanova, in *Vajza shqiptare me kostume kombëtare festive*, Tirana, 1949, which is useful as a comparison with the Albanian communities' customs in Italy.

[3] Concerning the Croat and Serbo-Croat communities in Italy, see Genova 1990; Rešetar 1997.

[4] For an historical overview of the relations between the eastern Adriatic and Abruzzi, see Marciani 1974.

[5] In Italy, the Pro Loco are grass-roots organizations that seek to promote some particular place, almost always a little town and its immediate area; "*pro loco*" is a Latin phrase that may be roughly translated "in favour of the place". Usually, the Pro Loco represents a village with a high level of civic pride.

[6] On the Festa del Majo in San Giovanni Lipioni, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNcshJEiRjw, last accessed on 2 June 2022.

[7] Available at https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/90179, last accessed on 14 February 2025.

[8] On the case of Villa Badessa, see Bellizzi, 1994. A local film describing the religious rituals in Villa Badessa is accessible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIyIVVWevz8 (last accessed on 14 February 2022).

[9] On Orthodox processions of the Cross, their commemorative function and the roles and meanings of religious practices in the process of settlement, see Kalkun & Kupari & Vuola 2018: 1–23; and Romanov 1997.

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DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS ACCORDING TO JOSEF MLACEK'S CLASSIFICATION IN DICTIONARIES AND PAREMIOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS: THE CASE OF EXPLANATIONS OF MEANING IN TWO SLOVENIAN DICTIONARIES

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Abstract: Among the genre characteristics of proverbs and sayings in Slavic paremiology, this article focuses mainly on the question of the generality or concretisation of the meanings of the expressions denoted by these two terms, which is one of the key criteria of the terminological distinctions between proverbs and sayings in Jozef Mlacek's theory. These criteria are used when explanations of meaning are prepared for paremiological expressions in eSSKJ (Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language) and SPP (Dictionary of Proverbs and Similar Paremiological Expressions). Both Slovenian dictionaries rely on the analysis of the paremiological expressions in language corpora. In the beginning of the article, three theoretical classifications of sayings (by Grigory Permyakov, Jan Mukařovský and Jozef Mlacek) according to the relationship between phrasemes with texteme status and phrasemes with the status of a sentence element are compared. In the article, examples of prototypical sayings and prototypical proverbs are presented, as well as borderline cases where the very formulation of a dictionary explanation of meaning reveals key differences that allow for a more certain determination whether the expression in question is a saying or proverb. The article presents three groups of prototypical sayings that differ in how they achieve semantic concretisation: through a time-limit on the developments, through a highlighted relationship between the developments and the utterance and through criticising a certain modus operandi.

Keywords: dictionary, paremiology, paremiography, proverb, saying, semantics, semantic concretisation

1. DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS IN THE SLAVIC RESEARCH CONTEXT

Proverbs present an important type of expressions studied by linguistics and are also considered as a part of folklore. Folklore research includes proverbs as a collecting material and also as an analysed material:

> *Proverbs fulfil the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs.* [...] (Mieder 2008: 9)

Proverbs are not mere statements, but also traces of a society's thinking, normative systems, and historical facts (Babič, Voolaid 2023).

The term *saying* in English has a different meaning from its Slavic equivalents (Slovenian *rek*, Slovak *porekadlo*, Russian *pogovorka* etc.); in English texts, both non-professional and linguistic (Norrick 2015: 7), it acts as a hypernym for a wide range of different (both paremiological and non-paremiological) expressions with the value of a sentence, covering proverbs as well. The use of the term in Slavic languages is characterised by its pairing with the term *proverb* (Slovenian *pregovor*, Slovak *príslovie*, Russian *poslovica*), which is strongly perceived as the central paremiological genre in these languages. Permyakov (1970: 8) highlights that the phrase *proverbs and sayings* (in Russian) often appears as a single multi-word term, which comes as no surprise considering the proximity of the two genres. The same applies to Slovenian and a multitude of other Slavic languages, for example, Slovenian *pregovori in reki* or Slovak *príslovia a porekadlá*. Many phraseological and paremiological theories include a definition of proverbs but offer no definition of sayings, and the term *proverb* (in Slavic languages) is often understood very broadly (Mlacek 1983: 130) – almost as a synonym of the term *paremia*.

An analysis of the term *saying* in the role of paremiological text introducer in modern and earlier Slovenian texts (Meterc 2016: 186) has shown that it often even introduces prototypical proverbs in texts, but very frequently it acts as a concept covering everything that is not sufficiently proverbial. The reverse applies as well; the text introducer *proverb* can introduce expressions that could, according to the criteria presented in this article, be termed sayings, as well as various other paremiological and even non-paremiological expressions.

Vis-à-vis proverbs, to which are traditionally ascribed the conveyance of a rule of life or ethical judgement (Mukarovský 1971: 278; Mieder 2004: 3; Kržišnik 2008: 38; Norrick 2015: 11) and can because of their heterosituativity, polyfunctionality, and polysemanticity (Krikmann 1974) adjust their meaning to

different situations (Granbom-Herranen 2010: 57–63), Mlacek's definition (1981: 131) of saying denotes an expression with a texteme status conveying a typification of a specific situation that is not valid as absolutely as a proverbial situation; a saying's message thus does not carry the status of a general law of life that the participants in the communication convey as a lesson, guidance or ethical judgement. Expressions that differ from proverbs in their semantic concretisation and a lack of didactic value are denoted with different terms in English:

> *Requiring didactic tendency would eliminate some items often included in the category of proverbs, in particular those bound to specific situations like* Long time no see *as a greeting formula or* A little bird told me *as a way to avoid divulging the source of information. Sayings like these lacking any didactic potential are perhaps better separated from proverbs proper and labeled clichés or conversational gambits.* (Norrick 2015: 11–12)

Sentential phrasemes that have a purely pragmatic function instead of a denotative meaning (such as the greeting formula in the quote above) are considered pragmatic phrasemes (Jakop 2005); in addition, however, there are many phrasemes that do have a denotative meaning, but the latter is not didactic and is less general than in proverbs (e.g. *A little bird told me*). Some of them belong to a group of multiword units whose authorship is known (Diadechko 2010).

In the author's opinion, the following expressions, which are discussed in the following sections in terms of their dictionary explanations of meanings, can hardly be considered proverbs, but they are phrasemes with a sentence or texteme status, so they can be considered sayings according to Mlacek's definition (only those examples from the article that have English paremiological equivalents are listed):

The comedy is over;
Mountains will go into labour, and a silly little mouse will be born;
Much fuss about nothing;
The night is young;
Said and done;
The rest is history;
And then there was silence;
The emperor has no clothes;
An eye for an eye;
Bread and circuses;
Who is not with us is against us;
Money doesn't stink.

In addition to such obvious cases, this paper is interested in borderline cases, where the very formulation of a dictionary explanation of meaning reveals key differences that allow for a more certain determination whether the expression in question is a saying or proverb. Concrete examples demonstrate how two dictionaries employ the formulation *izraža, da* (*expresses that*), which is better suited to proverbs, and the formulation *opisuje situacijo* (*describes a situation*) which is better suited to sayings.

1.1 Proverbs and Sayings and the Question of Texteme Status in Three Different Concepts

Before focusing on the semantic distinctions between proverbs and sayings, it is worth taking a look at three different theoretical classifications of sayings according to the relationship between phrasemes with texteme status and phrasemes with the status of a sentence element (a building block of a texteme) in Slavic phraseology. There follows a comparison of how this relationship was reflected on by Grigory Permyakov, Jan Mukařovský and Jozef Mlacek.

In Permyakov's paremiological theory (1970: 7), both paremias and phrasemes in the narrow sense of the word are clichés that are used as signs; among them, proverbs and sayings are used as the signs of situations or particular relationships between things (1970: 19). According to Permyakov (1970: 8–9; 1988: 83–84), proverbs are fixed sentential units that need no contextual complement, while sayings are established sentential units that do need such a complement. In this context, Permyakov (1970: 19) lists concrete realisations of verbal phrasemes (e.g. *delaet iz muhi slona*, lit. *makes an elephant out of a fly*) as sayings, contrary to his distinction of paremias from other phrasemes based on their being a complete text (texteme) and not merely part of a text (a string of lexemes) (1970: 9–10).

Similar cases are labelled sayings by Mukařovský (1971: 285), who stresses that a saying (Czech: *pořekadlo*) is incomplete without context and rarely has the value of a sentence, more often that of a sentence element. Mlacek (1983: 131, 138) stresses that a proverb (Slovak: *príslovie*) is a complete thought with a generally valid logical judgement, whereas a saying (Slovak: *porekadlo*) is a semantically complete thought whose meaning depends on a very concrete situation or context. In addition, Mlacek claims the two can also be distinguished based on how proverbs carry a didactic message due to their general validity (Mlacek 1983: 131), while sayings do not convey such a message because their meaning is, to a large extent, concretised. Typical sayings are not hard to recognise, but transitional occurrences complicate the matter (Mlacek 1983: 138).

In delineating between proverbs and sayings, Mlacek (1983: 133), just like Mukařovský and Permyakov, also wonders about the boundary between sentential and phrasal phrasemes. While agreeing with Permyakov (1970: 8–9; 1988: 83–84) that proverbs are established sentential units that need no contextual complement and that sayings are established sentential units that do need such a complement, he nonetheless advocates a stricter adherence to Permyakov's (1988: 83) criterion that both paremia genres are textemes and not textual elements. Unlike Permyakov, Mlacek thus cites no examples of expressions that are completely inflectable (e.g. verbal phrasemes), as is evident from his cited examples. Because he is more strict in adhering to the classic linguistic opposition between the system and use, or *langue* and *parole*, a contextual complement in Mlacek's theory does not entail that expressions can have completely free and arbitrary realisations of forms in their paradigm; it is merely a matter of mandatorily filling in certain blanks (Mlacek 1983: 132–133) – of pragmatic variation (e.g. *The night was young* in addition to *The night is young*) – and in addition, of contextually complementing the meaning, which is necessary exactly due to the semantic concretisation.

Mukařovský (1971: 285) stresses the fluidity of the genres: as the scholar includes expressions that do not necessarily have the value of a sentence among sayings, he highlights cases where a minor change turns the saying into a proverb, e.g. by singling out the imperative mood from a diverse set of the verb forms of a particular verbal phraseme. Mlacek (1983:139) criticises such a view of the almost mechanical transitioning of phrasal phrasemes to proverbs in Permyakov's and Mukařovský's theories, pointing out that it is necessary to distinguish between the potential transitioning of any expression between genres and the concrete realisation of such a transition, which occurs only in some expressions.

1.2 Types of Paremiological Expressions in the eSSKJ General Dictionary, the SPP Paremiological Dictionary and a Paremiological Collection *Pregovori*

Both dictionaries – *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, tretja izdaja* eSSKJ (Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language, third edition) and *Slovar pregovorov in sorodnih paremioloških izrazov* SPP (Dictionary of Proverbs and Similar Paremiological Expressions) (Meterc 2020) – are published on the Fran.si webpage of the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language which is a part of Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti ZRC SAZU (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

with new dictionary entries being added every year: to eSSKJ from 2015 and to SPP from 2020. Both dictionaries rely on the analysis of the paremiological expressions in language corpora. With language corpora, paremiology has gained the ability to thoroughly examine the variants of a proverb, which was previously impossible (Čermák 2003: 15–16).

For eSSKJ, the Gigafida 2.0 corpus is used in particular, plus other corpora in an auxiliary role. In addition, to analyse the formal properties of paremiological expressions, the work on both eSSKJ and SPP relies on the findings of a survey on the Slovenian paremiological minimum and optimum (Meterc 2017: 49), in which more than 550 respondents assessed the familiarity of 918 paremiological expressions, also providing a multitude of their variants. eSSKJ presents those variants of paremiological expressions that are the most frequent in standard language and thus the most relevant to users; the threshold for an individual form (both the basic dictionary form and a variant) to be included in the dictionary is approximately five prototypical instances sharing the same form (Meterc 2019: 35). Many well-known paremiological expressions appear in the corpus materials in the same form in the hundreds, while less familiar ones include expressions that barely, if at all, reach the threshold. This threshold minimises the possibility for including other types of paremiological expressions than proverbs, such as established antiproverbs, wellerisms etc.

SPP is a specialised paremiological dictionary that is more inclusive in terms of the breadth of paremiological genres presented: it includes proverbs, sayings, fixed antiproverbs, wellerisms, weather proverbs, slogans, folk beliefs and unconventional replies, and it is also open to peripheral, less frequent paremiological genres (Meterc 2021: 47). In order to include more paremiology, the threshold for the inclusion of an individual expression and its variant in SPP is lower than for a general dictionary. Because the threshold is lower, a wider range of linguistic corpora for modern Slovenian and additional resources are employed to confirm that an expression is established (Meterc 2019: 36; 2021: 47). SPP presents all the variants of a particular expression that can be confirmed as established through at least a few prototypical examples of usage.

In 2022, the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts published an open-access paremiological collection entitled *Pregovori* (lit. Proverbs) (Babič et al. 2022; Babič & Erjavec 2022), which has been organised as a linguistic corpus through lemmatisation. It has taken shape over more than 50 years and contains around 37000 forms of Slovenian paremiological expressions, which includes different recorded variants of some recorded expressions. In addition to proverbs, this paremiological collection encompasses sayings, while wellerisms (e.g. *"Bolje je le bolje!" je rekel tisti, ki je špeh na maslu cvrl*, lit. "The more, the better", said

someone frying bacon in butter) and antiproverbs (e.g. *Kdor ne dela, naj vsaj je*, lit. He who does not work shall at least eat, which originates in the proverb *Kdor ne dela, naj ne je*, lit. He who does not work, neither shall he eat) are rarer, but still present. The number of sayings is definitely lower than the number of proverbs in this collection. The collection is also used when analysing the paremiology for the dictionaries mentioned above; even though the sources are mostly older, sometimes much older, than the materials used for both dictionaries, it is useful, allowing us, for example, to check whether previously recorded variants of paremiological expressions are also used in modern texts (roughly from 1990 onwards).

The expressions in the article are written in the form that appears the most representative in terms of frequency in the linguistic corpora for modern Slovenian, namely Gigafida (approximately 1.3 billion tokens) and Metafida (approximately 4.4 billion tokens). In the collection, they are often found in variants that are rarer or do not appear at all in contemporary usage. The search for the saying *Mi o volku, volk iz gozda* (by searching for the phrase *o volku*) yields a multitude of variants: instead of the *gozd* (forest) component, there are also the synonyms *hosta* (colloquially gozd) and *les* (woods) in the same meaning. In addition, the collection includes a few pragmatic variants, e.g. *Ti o volku, volk iz gozda* (lit. You [speak] of the wolf, the wolf [comes] from the forest, with the *ti* (*you*) pronoun instead of *mi* (*we*)), which indicate a (partial) openness of the saying, in line with its semantic concretisation in every use. There are also several variants including verbs (e.g. Če *o volku govoriš, volk pride*, lit. If you speak of the wolf, the wolf comes) and Če *govoriš o hudiču, hudič pride*, lit. If you speak of the devil, the devil comes. Due to their explicitly expressed causality, these two forms are closer to proverbs, while the form with the reference to the devil is akin to a Slovenian folk belief that is formulated the most frequently as *Ne kliči hudiča* (lit. Don't call the devil). Variants containing the verb *govoriti* 'to speak', which demonstrate a transition between these two expressions, are infrequent in or even completely absent from today's usage.

The *Pregovori* collection also reveals forms that are not necessarily fixed variants but merely adaptations to the text, as discussed by Mukařovský, Permyakov and Mlacek, e.g. *Iz tiste moke ne bo kruha.* (tiste (that) = adaptation to context).

2. DICTIONARY EXPLANATIONS OF MEANING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GENERALITY OF MEANING AND DIDACTIC VALUE

The following chapters present examples of prototypical sayings and prototypical proverbs, as well as borderline expressions in the case of which we are able to rely on certain clues that contribute to categorising a particular expression as belonging to one genre or the other. Explanations of meaning were drafted by examining multiple instances of the usage of a particular expression in a linguistic corpus which cannot be cited in the article due to space constraints.

2.1 Examples of Prototypical Sayings That Do Not Fit an Explanation of Meaning for Proverbs

The following subchapters present three groups of prototypical sayings that differ in how they achieve semantic concretisation: through a time-limit on the developments (2.1.1), through a highlighted relationship between the developments and the utterance (2.1.2) and through criticising a certain modus operandi (2.1.3). In the future, it will probably be possible to identify groups of prototypical sayings with different semantic concretisations, so these groups are presented merely as some of the most recognisable ones in our paremiographic work so far.

2.1.1 Semantic Concretisation through a Time-Limit on the Event

The semantic concretisation of the prototypical sayings presented in this subchapter stems from a time-limit on the event. In most of the examples below, the most frequent, basic form is about already completed developments (e.g. *The operation was a success, but the patient died*), which is characteristic of sayings from a formal viewpoint according to Mlacek (1981: 292, 298) as well, but it can also refer to developments that are ongoing at the time the saying is being uttered (e.g. *The night is young*). While some synonymous expressions are presented as well, the examples mostly do not quite overlap in meaning, are not interchangeable and differ substantially in certain semantic features.

The following expressions have similar meanings, because they describe a specific manner of completing certain developments:

> *Operacija uspela, pacient umrl* (The operation was a success, but the patient died) – describes a situation in which the positive evaluation of an act does not reflect its actual effects or consequences;
>
> *Kocka je padla* (The die is cast) – describes a situation in which someone takes a decision that strongly influences further developments; depicts a situation in which something key, decisive, fateful happens;
>
> *Komedija je končana* (The comedy is over) – describes a situation in which something exciting, dramatic or problematic comes to a close;
>
> *Vrag je odnesel šalo* (lit. The devil has taken the joke away) – describes a situation in which it becomes clear or obvious that something key, decisive, fateful has happened, especially when it hurts or burdens someone;
>
> *Tresla se je gora, rodila se je miš* (Mountains will go into labour, and a silly little mouse will be born) – describes a situation in which the developments promise a lot, but the results are meagre; refers to a situation in which something is met with overreaction, overexcitement.

The explanation of meaning of the saying *Tresla se je gora, rodila se je miš* also applies to its synonyms, which are similar in structure but different in their imagery: *Veliko hrupa za nič* (*Much fuss about nothing*), *Veliko grmenja, malo dežja* (lit. Much thunder, little rain) and *Veliko kokodakanja, malo jajc* (lit. Much clucking, few eggs).

The next saying describes a situation that deviates from what is expected, so interpreting the expression as a proverb (in the sense of a general law) is impossible:

> *Jajce več od kure ve* (lit. The egg knows more than the hen) – describes a situation in which it surprisingly turns out that a younger person has superior knowledge to someone older.

The example given below does not refer to already completed developments, but rather to an ongoing state (night):

> *Noč je še mlada* (The night is young) – describes a situation in which there is still enough time for something, especially something fun, in the evening or night.

As has already been mentioned, sayings, whose basic form contains a past-tense verb, express already completed developments and predominate in the analysed Slovenian materials. It is worth adding that some of these expressions are found in (much less frequent) pragmatic variants with other tense forms, e.g. *Kocka bo padla* (*The die will be cast*) in addition to *Kocka je padla*. There is a different situation in the case of the following saying, where the basic form with a future-tense verb is much more frequent than pragmatic variants with the verb in other tenses (e.g. the past tense) according to linguistic corpus data:

> *Iz te moke ne bo kruha* (lit. There will be no bread from this flour) – describes a situation in which it is clear that a wish or prediction will not come true or that an effort will not be successful.

2.1.2 Concretisation through a Highlighted Relationship between the Developments and the Utterance

This group consists of sayings characterised by the fact that their meaning is concretised through expressing a relationship between a concrete statement and a performed act:

> *Beseda je meso postala* (lit. The word became flesh) – describes a situation in which something said, a promise or agreement, is realised;
>
> *Beseda je dala besedo* (lit. The word has given a word; *One thing leads to another*) – describes a situation in which talking leads to an action, the realisation of something or a decision about something;
>
> *Rečeno, storjeno* (Said and done) – describes a situation in which an expressed intention is soon followed by the performance of the deed;
>
> *Vse drugo je zgodovina* (The rest is history) – describes a situation in which something that follows the utterance is well known, famous;
>
> *Mi o volku, volk iz gozda* (lit. We [speak] of the wolf, the wolf [comes] from the forest; Speak of the devil) – describes a situation in which someone who has been mentioned suddenly and unexpectedly appears.

It is observed that some sayings have variants with other tenses. Nonetheless, these expressions are not without grammatical limitations: for example, the

expression *Vse drugo je zgodovina* (The rest is history) is not attested in the hypothetical future tense form *Vse drugo bo zgodovina* (The rest will be history)*.

There is often a statement in the text where the saying is used, either preceding or following it, as in the two following examples of usage (in the quote, the statement is underlined, and the saying is shown in italics):

> *Said and done.* Police officers lived up to their promise that they would reinforce checks of drivers on weekends during grape harvest season.

The following saying comments on an unspoken statement that is expected in the given situation:

> *In potem vse tiho je bilo* (And then there was silence) – describes a situation in which silence falls suddenly and very noticeably, especially when there is something delicate or problematic going on or there is no interest in or response to something.

2.1.3 Semantic Concretisation through Criticising a Certain Modus Operandi by Seeming Affirmation

This group of prototypical sayings consists of expressions seemingly voicing a particular belief, guidance or call; however, this is not a message the speaker using the saying identifies with (unlike in proverbs), but rather a description of the modus operandi of someone else whom the first speaker distances themselves from, derides or even condemns. It is worth noting the relationship of many expressions in this group to the slogan genre as they seemingly call for a certain modus operandi, which is a defining characteristic of slogans (Norrick 2015: 8), but actually they criticise the modus operandi. They could even be termed *quasi-slogans*. Unambiguous derision of a certain modus operandi appears in the following Slovenian sayings:

> *Naj sosedu krava crkne* (lit. May the neighbour's cow drop dead) – describes a situation in which someone wishes another person would fare worse than them or acts gleefully about someone's misfortune;

> *Če sam ne znam, bom pa druge učil* (lit. If I can't do it myself, I'll teach it to others) – describes a situation in which someone attempts to set an example to others even though their abilities are lacking.

The last example is special, because verbs in the first person (*znam*, *bom učil*) give a particular indication that this could be a thought that the speaker of the saying identifies with; however, on the contrary, the expression criticises the way of thinking or modus operandi it describes.

Some sayings from this group even originate in former slogans to which the speakers have developed a new attitude due to societal developments and changes in value systems that have occurred since their primary, original historical use:

> *Oko za oko, zob za zob* (An eye for an eye)
> – contemporary prototypical usage: describes a situation in which someone acts uncompromisingly, vengefully or answers violence with violence;
> – historical usage: expresses a call for a punishment to be equal to or equally harsh as a given crime.

> *Kruha in iger* (Bread and circuses)
> – contemporary prototypical usage: describes a situation in which someone, especially a large group of people, prioritises the need for something superficial, particularly physical pleasure or entertainment, over a need for something complex or difficult;
> – historical usage: expresses a call for providing physical pleasure and entertainment.

If such sayings are used in their original, historical meaning in contemporary usage, this is not their typical, prototypical use but rather the use that tends to be accompanied by historical commentary:

> *While, in the olden days, people were able to use the words bread and circuses to concisely explain what they wanted in life, much else needs to be added nowadays.*

> *He doesn't care about basic civilisational and legal norms, instead reviving primitive behavioural patterns of the "eye for an eye" or "who is not with us is against us" type.*

The following expression is rather ambivalent in contemporary usage, making it hard to say whether it should be classified as a saying or slogan:

> *Kdor ni z nami, je proti nam* (Who is not with us is against us)
> – describes a situation in which someone behaves uncompromisingly regarding another person agreeing or disagreeing with them

– expresses a call for someone choosing either to cooperate and agree with or disagree with and work against someone, especially a group of people.

We assess that it would be advisable to provide both explanations of meaning in a dictionary for the last examples cited: the one better suited to slogans and the one better suited to sayings.

2.2 Borderline Cases: Sayings with the Possibility of an Alternative Explanation of Meaning Following the Model for Proverbs

This chapter presents examples of sayings that border on proverbs, as their explanation of meaning could be formulated as a kind of general law from which a specific moral could derive; however, as shown below, such explanations of meaning appear inaccurate and strained. The eSSKJ and SPP paremiographic practice so far has revealed that situations when an explanation of meaning appears imperfect without (in this context, rather weak) expressions such as *včasih* ('sometimes'), *ponavadi* ('usually'), *pogosto* ('often') etc. are strong signs that this is not a proverb but rather a saying. In an explanation, such expressions relativise the general validity without any substantial contribution to describing the meaning: there is no clear criterion on how frequent or rare a phenomenon must be to be described with *včasih* ('sometimes') or *pogosto* ('often'). The following examples cite sayings with an appropriate explanation of meaning and an alternative explanation including superfluous features (which are underlined):

Na jeziku med, v srcu led (lit. Honey on the tongue, ice in the heart)
– describes a situation in which bad, hostile, injurious intentions lie behind kindness, flattery;
– alternative explanation: – expresses that bad, hostile, injurious intentions <u>can</u> lie behind kindness, flattery;

Denar ne smrdi (Money doesn't stink)
– describes a situation in which someone does not spurn profit even if it can be questionable;
– alternative explanation: – expresses that someone <u>might</u> not spurn profit even if it is questionable;

Sova sinici pravi, da ima veliko glavo (lit. The owl says to the tit that it has a big head)
– describes a situation in which someone criticises another person for flaws or features that they themselves have to an even greater degree;
– alternative explanation: – expresses that sometimes someone criticises another person for flaws or features that they themselves have to an even greater degree;

Vsako prase rije zase (lit. Every pig roots for itself)
– describes a situation in which someone acts selfishly;
– alternative explanation: – expresses that people often act selfishly.

What the cited sayings have in common is that they convey a negative evaluation of the situation, which is hard to generalise to all people in the sense of a proverbial moral; instead, they can only be attributed to a particular person in a concrete situation through a saying.

2.3 Borderline Cases: Proverbs with the Possibility of an Alternative Explanation of Meaning Following the Model for Sayings

This subchapter takes a look at non-prototypical, borderline cases that could be described as sayings, but we judge that an explanation of meaning for proverbs would suit them better because they express general laws that can apply to anyone at any time. They do not feature the modes of distinct semantic concretisation described in subchapter 2.1. In the eSSKJ and SPP dictionaries, when both an explanation closer to sayings and an explanation closer to proverbs are possible, we have decided to use the latter and label the expression as a proverb.

Non-prototypical proverbs often express a general law on the possibility of something happening in a particular way; to express this possibility in the explanation of meaning, we prefer not to use the expressions pogosto '*often*' or včasih '*sometimes*' but rather only *lahko* ('can') or *praviloma* ('as a rule') (underlined in the examples below):

Strup je v majhnih stekleničkah (lit. Poison comes in small bottles)
– expresses that someone of short stature can show great strength or energy, especially if provoked; expresses that something small can turn out to have surprising strength, intensity;

– alternative explanation: – describes a situation in which someone of short stature shows great strength or energy, especially if provoked; describes a situation in which something small turns out to have surprising strength, intensity;

Dobrota je sirota (lit. Benevolence is an orphan, *No good deed goes unpunished*)
– expresses that benevolence can be a burden to someone, that they can face disapproval or be ridiculed for it;
– alternative explanation: – describes a situation when someone's well-intentioned deed does not pay off or is not met with the proper and expected recognition or gratitude.

The two alternative explanations above are not wrong, as they explain situations in which a certain general law applies. Yet, the descriptions do not suffice exactly, because they do not express this general law or common applicability. The proverb comparing a short person or sometimes objects to a small bottle provides a characterisation of short people or objects in general; in the same vein, the second proverb describes a general law about a problem faced by those who act benevolently towards someone – this is not just a random, isolated situation in which a benevolent deed does not pay off to a given person.

In the following proverb, the generality of the law conveyed by the proverb is expressed explicitly through the adverb of time *nikoli* ('never') (underlined):

Nesreča nikoli ne pride sama (Misfortunes never come singly)
– expresses that, as a rule, a negative event is followed by another or more negative events;
– alternative explanation: – describes a situation in which a negative event is followed by another or more negative events.

The next proverb on treachery, dishonesty can be compared to the sayings about the same property presented in subchapter 2.2 (*Na jeziku med, v srcu med* and *Kadar prosi, zlata usta nosi, kadar vrača, hrbet obrača*). It can be observed that in this proverb, possibility is expressed explicitly with the word *rada* ('tends') (underlined), which reinforces the status of an expression conveying a general law:

Laskava beseda je rada zaseda (lit. A flattering word tends to be an ambush) – expresses that bad, hostile or injurious intentions can lie behind kindness and flattery.

2.4 Examples of Prototypical Proverbs That Do Not Fit an Explanation of Meaning for Sayings

In prototypical proverbs, there is no semantic concretisation arising from a temporal delimitation, highlighting the relationship between the developments and what is being said or criticising a certain modus operandi through seeming affirmation. Besides, such proverbs do not express a general law about the possibility of something happening a particular way; they express an always and unconditionally functioning principle of developments. In explanations of meaning, the feature *can / might* would be completely superfluous, for example:

> *Ena lastovka še ne prinese pomladi* (lit. A single swallow is not enough to bring about spring) – expresses that a single event is not (might not be) enough to bring about change, especially change for the better;
>
> *Kar lahko storiš danes, ne odlašaj na jutri* (Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today) – expresses that any work should be done as soon as possible.

2.5 Formal Properties through Which Distinctions Can Be Made between Proverbs and Sayings

Mlacek (1981: 292, 298) enumerates the formal properties through which distinctions can be made between proverbs and sayings: e.g. the imperative mood, the 2nd and 3rd persons in verbs as well as the future tense for proverbs and the past tense for sayings. In addition, certain syntactic patterns (e.g. He who X, Y) are characteristic of proverbs in particular. However, Mlacek (1981) stresses that when an expression has a formal property of proverbs but is, at the same time, semantically closer to sayings, the semantic criterion is the deciding factor.

In our materials, the third person in verbs is also attested in the already presented prototypical sayings in subchapter 2.1, while the second person is not. The second person of verbs is found in expressions that are prototypical proverbs in terms of meaning:

> *Česar ne veš, ne boli* (What you don't know can't hurt you) – expresses that someone cannot be bothered by, worried about or hurt by something problematic if they are not aware of it;

> *Star si toliko, kolikor se počutiš* (You're only as old as you feel) – expresses that the effect of age on someone's life is decisively influenced by how they think about this.

In our materials, present-tense verbs appear both in prototypical and borderline sayings, as well as in proverbs. As already pointed out (subchapter 2.1), the past tense is frequent in sayings, and it also appears in prototypical proverbs – even paired with the present tense, as in *Kogar je kača pičila, se boji zvite vrvi* (lit. Someone who was bitten by a snake is afraid of coiled rope; *Once bitten, twice shy*). Nonetheless, a present-tense verb is more suitable for expressing always and unconditionally valid principles of functioning, e.g. *Več jezikov znaš, več veljaš* (lit. The more languages you know, the more you're worth) and *Dejanja so glasnejša od besed* (*Actions speak louder than words*). Many typical proverbs have a didactic message expressed particularly clearly by means of the imperative mood (Mlacek 1981: 292, 298):

> *Ne hvali dneva pred večerom* (lit. Don't praise the day before nightfall) – expresses that you should be careful about giving a positive assessment of something that has not yet come to a close;
>
> *Kar lahko storiš danes, ne odlašaj na jutri* (Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today) – expresses that any work should be done as soon as possible.

Proverbs are characterised by typical syntactic patterns (1981: 292, 298), proverbial formulae (Mieder 2004: 85-86) or structural patterns (Meterc 2017: 77):

> Like X, like Y: *Kakršen oče, takšen sin* (Like father, like son);
>
> He who X, Y: *Kdor ne uboga, ga tepe nadloga* (lit. He who doesn't obey is plagued by trouble);
>
> No X without Y: *Brez dela ni jela* (lit. No food without work; *No pain without gain*);
>
> Better X than Y: *Bolje je biti prvi na vasi kot zadnji v mestu* (lit. Better to be the first one in the village than the last one in the city).

These patterns are so productive that they enable systematic searching for different proverbs in linguistic corpora (Ďurčo & Steyer & Hein 2015: 43–45; Meterc

2017: 77–83; 2019: 9). The examples listed above are principles of functioning that are so general, resulting from collective experience, that there is a clearly expressed moral or didactic instruction derived from them (Mlacek 1981: 294).

3 CONCLUSION

The article has focused primarily on the semantic attributes of sayings and proverbs, which have been ascertained by using corpus materials in order to compare many situations of their use. Moreover, several formal properties of the two paremiological genres are also mentioned. We agree with Jozef Mlacek (1983: 138) that many expressions are easy to classify as proverbs or sayings, but there is also a grey area between the genres. As regards expressions belonging to this grey area, it has been shown how certain clues about semantic concretisation and generality can be helpful. Two steps, in particular, are important in this regard: 1. a careful comparison of a large number of examples of usage (in the conducted research, the written ones) and 2. an experiment-oriented and critical approach to creating explanations of meaning or, in other words, the principle that it is useful to create a few competing explanations of meaning and to compare them critically in relation to a multitude of concrete examples of usage provided by linguistic corpora, in particular, as well as digitisation in general.

We judge that distinguishing between proverbs and sayings has a twofold usefulness: 1. Theoretically, due to differences in the function of a paremiological expression and semantic sign; 2. Practically, from the perspective of researchers' attentiveness in collecting and studying paremiological materials and of paremiographic presentation in dictionaries and collections. Both phraseology and paremiology devote too little attention to expressions that, according to Mlacek's criteria, are called *sayings*; even in the past, when there was the dominant romantic view of proverbs as carriers of a nation's wisdom and identity (Mukarovský 1971: 278), collectors were less inclined to include them in their collections in comparison with proverbs; later, the resulting domination in the materials coupled with the (too) general, too broad usage of the term *proverb* further reduced the interest in exploring this part of paremiology.

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UKRAINIAN FOLK *DUMY*: PROBLEMS OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MODERN PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: The Ukrainian *dumy* are late-stage heroic epics dating back to the 15th–17th centuries, reflecting significant historical events and figures closely related to Ukraine's history. *Dumy* exhibit a unique poetic and musical structure, characterized by uneven syllabic lines, monorhymes, the absence of stanzas, as well as a particular musical composition, ornamented cadences, and musical formulas, and the chromatized Dorian or narrow range diatonic scale. *Dumy* were performed predominantly by men in a recitative style and were accompanied by instruments such as the kobza and bandura.

An important condition for maintaining the *duma* tradition was the kobzar *tsekh* (guilds), which were associations of musicians playing the kobza, bandura, and wheel lyre. These musical unions where melodies were passed down orally existed until the early 20th century. After the establishment of Soviet rule in Ukraine, kobzar *tsekh* were destroyed. The proposed study is devoted to analyzing the ways of reviving kobzar *tsekh* in Ukraine and, along with them, the *duma* tradition as an important component of the spiritual legacy of the Ukrainian people. To highlight the role of performers in this process is also the purpose of this article. In 2024, the practices of kobza, bandura, and lyre playing were recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Keywords: Ukrainian epic songs, *dumy*, cultural heritage, kobzar *tsekh* (guilds), bandura player, kobza player, traditional performer

INTRODUCTION

The Ukrainian *dumy* represent the cultural legacy of the Ukrainian people. The *dumy* are a late-stage heroic epic dating back to the 15th–17th centuries and have become deeply intertwined with significant events in Ukrainian history: "Ukrainian folk *dumy* are epic monumental verbal and musical works of heroic, social and everyday order that reflect the modus operandi of creative thinking of the Cossack era[1], the Baroque, and the culminating stage of the formation of the ethnic group's national identity and the idea of statehood" (Dmytrenko 2009: 15).

The main peculiarities of Ukrainian *dumy* include their unique poetic form, characterized by uneven syllable lines, monorhymes, and the absence of stanzas, as well as their special musical composition, which is based on musical phrase-formulas, ornamented cadences, and uses chromatized Dorian or diatonic mode. The melody of a recitative nature is usually performed to the accompaniment of musical instruments such as the kobza, bandura, and, less often, the wheel lyre (*lira* or *relya*)[2]. Along with the general characteristics of the epic – the presence of a narrative, a large number of verses, and a narrator with his storytelling style – *dumy* possess certain distinctive characteristics, such as significant dramatization of the storyline. The main narrators of *dumy* could only be kobzars, mostly blind men. In some resources, kobzars are also called bards, rhapsodists or Ukrainian minstrels (Kononenko 2019). In total, 48 plots of Ukrainian *dumy* are known, and more than three hundred variants of those.

The performers called *dumy* differently: kozats'ki prytchi (Cossack parables), psal'my (psalms), or *staryny*, songs about old times. As a genre of purely oral tradition, the *duma* existed until the end of the 19th century. It was at this time that the first printed collections of *duma* melodies and poetry appeared, the most famous of which is Mykola Lysenko's (1874), and some kobza and bandura players began to turn to printed sources. During the Soviet period, kobzars and bandura players were forced to create 'Soviet *dumy*' that had nothing to do with the epic tradition. It was only during the period of Ukraine's independence (since 1991) that the *duma* tradition was revived and presented to a wider audience through the efforts of performers. Diatonic bandura and kobza which are part of the Ukrainian epic song tradition were also revived. Modern performers have the opportunity to learn the *duma* tradition from both audio sources and sheet music.

Thus, *dumy* occupy a significant place in Ukrainian folklore. The problem with the study of the *dumy* in Ukraine is the existence of binary concepts about their origin. Some researchers believe that the *dumy* emerged based on ancient epics, particularly the bylynas[3] of the Kyivan cycle (Hrytsa 1979, 2000, 2016, Horniatkevych 1992), while others deny this view (Kushpet 2007; Kononenko 2019).

Although bylynas and *dumy* represent different historical periods, they have many commonalities. These include similar storylines, common heroes, and shared verbal and musical compositional structures, such as metrical flexibility, types of melostrophes, and an improvisatory accompaniment of a string instrument.

The primary research aim of this article is to deepen and expand our understanding of the genesis of the Ukrainian folk epic, *dumy*. Our study builds on the work of ethnomusicologist Sofiia Hrytsa (1932–2022), a student of the founder of Ukrainian ethnomusicology, Filaret Kolessa (1871–1947), whose research included the study of *dumy*. In numerous studies by Hrytsa (1979; 2000; 2002; 2009; 2016) on various aspects of *dumy*, she emphasised the parallel existence of two melodic styles of the *duma* tradition, one of which is associated with the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle. Based on an ethnomusicological analysis of *dumy* from the northern and central regions of Ukraine and the available melodies of bylynas, recorded in northern Russia, mostly in the Arkhangelsk and Novgorod regions, i.e. in the area of 10th and 11th century Kyivan Rus', Hrytsa concluded that both genres represent one epic tradition connected to the musical traditions of the Kyivan principality. Since these genres represent different historical periods, the bylyna tradition evolved into *dumy*, and the unifying element of these genres was their specific structure of the musical composition, recitative melody, and stringed instrument accompaniment.

Our research questions are as follows: how did kobzar brotherhoods contribute to the preservation and transmission of the *duma* tradition before the 20th century, and what efforts have been made to revive this tradition in contemporary Ukraine? How has the recognition of kobzar practice by UNESCO influenced its status as an intangible cultural heritage, and what role do modern performers play in sustaining and adapting the *duma* tradition today?

The study of the Ukrainian epic tradition requires a multifaceted theoretical background due to its complexity and rich cultural context. To understand the relationship between the *duma* and bylyna genres, we compare the results of scientific studies on the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle by Ukrainian and international researchers outlining their binary positions. We will highlight signs of cultural appropriation of the bylyna genre by Russian researchers, supported by some other scholars (e.g. Novikov 2000, Torres Prieto 2022). We also present the perspectives of Ukrainian researchers, which are still *terra incognita* for the international community (e.g. Koncha 2009, 2010).

Our research is based on published and archival materials (in M. Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences, and D. Yavornytsky Dnipro National Historical Museum in Ukraine), online audio and video recordings, personal communication with contemporary performers and carriers of the tradition, and analysis of their performances.

We used the folkloristic method to study *dumy* as an epic genre and to investigate the role of kobzar, bandura, and wheel lyre players in preserving the oral tradition. Specific research methods in musicology and ethnomusicology enable us to carry out a structural and typological analysis of the tunes of *dumy*. Performance Studies has become important for the study of vocal and instrumental features of *dumy*, and for the analysis of contemporary practices of performing *dumy*. The historical method allowed us to analyse the development of the *duma* genre in historical retrospect for a deeper understanding of the roots of the Ukrainian epic tradition.

In the next section, we examine the genesis and development of *dumy* as explored by Ukrainian and international researchers. Following this, we identify the bearers of the Ukrainian *duma* tradition and their musical instruments. The subsequent section discusses the kobzar *tsekh* (guilds) and its role in preserving the *duma* tradition, focusing on the tradition bearers and the methods of transmission. Finally, we address the challenges of reviving the epic tradition and ensuring its continuity in the contemporary context.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND CURRENT STUDIES ON THE GENESIS OF UKRAINIAN *DUMY*

Since the *duma* is a significant phenomenon associated with national identity, at different historical periods it has attracted the attention of Ukrainian and international researchers, especially those of Ukrainian origin. In the first half of the 19th century, in the wake of pan-European romanticism, *dumy'* lyrics by kobzar, bandura and wheel lyre players were recorded and published (Tsertelev 1819; Metlinsky 1854). The first sheet music editions of *duma* recitations were recorded and published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Lysenko 1874; Kolessa 1969 [1910, 1913]). The Soviet time made it impossible to conduct an objective study of the heroic epic of the Ukrainian people. Unfortunately, a number of works by Soviet-era researchers contain ideological content. Nevertheless, they remain a valuable source of facts, despite the obligatory ideological component at that time (e.g. Kirdan 1962; 1965). The Ukrainian diaspora in Canada researched the literary side of the *dumy* and published them, including English translations (Ukrainian Dumy 1979).

Since Ukraine's independence (1991), various aspects of the *duma* have again attracted researchers' attention: folklorists (Lanovyk & Lanovyk 2005; Hrymych 2016; Kononenko 2019, 2022), linguists (Rosovetsky 2016; 2018; Palamarchuk et al. 2022), and archaeologists (Koncha 2008; 2009; 2010). Along with learning the melodies and texts of *dumy*, researchers, taking care of authenticity, paid

attention not only to their performers but also to the people who recorded them (Cherneta 2017). A significant contribution to the development of Ukrainian *dumy* studies was made by ethnomusicologists such as Sofiia Hrytsa (2000; 2002; 2009; 2016), who thoroughly researched the melodies of Ukrainian folk *dumy*, identified melodic types of *dumy*, and pointed out their common roots with the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle. Mykhaylo Khai (2010; 2016) studied the genesis of the ancient Kyivan gusli[4], diatonic bandura, kobza, and wheel lyre, which are part of the Ukrainian epic tradition. He developed and substantiated the hypothesis of the transformation of pentatonic gusli into diatonic bandura. Volodymyr Kushpet (2007) researched repertoire of kobzars and bandura players and their social status in society.

Ukrainian researchers of the early 20th century expressed an opinion on the link of the genesis of the *duma* to the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle (Hrushevsky 1923; Krypakevych 2002 [1937]). As mentioned by Filaret Kolessa (1969 [1910], 1913: 35, 69), the *dumy* developed from the poetic structural elements of the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle, the "glories"[5]. Kateryna Hrushevsky (1927: 153) argued that the bylynas are the basis of the ancient Ukrainian epic. Later, the Canadian researcher Andriy Horniatkevych (1992: V) called bylynas the "genre ancestors of Cossack *dumy*". According to Hrytsa's ideas, already presented above, bylynas existed in Ukraine until the early 17th century; after that, they were replaced by *dumy* (Hrytsa 2016: 189). Stanislav Rosovetsky (2018: 293) has claimed that bylynas and *dumy* existed in Ukraine in parallel.

The genesis of Ukrainian *dumy* remains hotly debated. Kushpet expressed a contrasting opinion to that of Hrytsa and others who claimed that the heroic *dumy* became a continuation of the ancient Kyivan bylynas. He pointed out that in Ukraine, neither epics nor the names of the performers were documented. He argued that isolated recordings of bylynas do not provide evidence of a tradition, and therefore, *dumy* do not share common ground with the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle (Kushpet 2007: 257). The Canadian folklorist of Ukrainian origin Natali Kononenko (2019: 292) also denies the connection between *dumy* and bylynas: "*Dumy* do indeed reflect the birth of Ukrainian national consciousness. They are unlike Russian epic songs, and they do not resemble the epic poems of Ukraine's other neighbours, both Slavic and Turkic". Iryna Zinkiv (2019: 141) investigated the etymology of the word "*duma*" and posited that the word "*duma*" is related to the Persian-Iranian culture.

As with the *dumy*, the origins of the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle and their heroes remain a subject of considerable debate (see, for instance, Koncha 2009; Petrov 2017; Balabushka 2017; Torres Prieto 2022). To provide context for these discussions, we will summarize the fundamental facts about bylynas and their historical background.

Research on the historical context of bylynas has identified the real-life prototypes of the heroes mentioned in the Kyivan cycle (Sarkanych et al. 2022). The main heroe of the bylyna is Grand Prince Volodymyr[6]. In bylynas, Grand Prince Volodymyr is often called Krasne sonechko (Volodymyr the Beautiful Sun). Other famous heroes from the Kyivan cycle include Ilya Muromets, Dobrynya, and Alyosha Popovych, who defended Kyivan Rus' from enemy attackers. The heroes of the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle were called *bohatyrs*[7]. One of the most famous researchers of the bylynas, Varvara Andrianova-Peretz (1953: 185), noted that "[...] only the heroes of the Kyivan cycle are called bohatyrs [...] Those who see primarily the reflection of 'Muscovy' in Russian epics are mistaken". According to Bohdan Kindratiuk, "Potential impulses to create bylynas as musical and poetic compositions could arise during downtime after the battle, in the field, when returning with recent impressions of the event" (Kindratiuk 2020: 207).

The fact that the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle describe the events of the Kyivan principality of the 9th–13th centuries is also evidenced by the names of the cities that were part of Kyivan Rus', such as Chernihiv, Volodymyr (in Volyn), Halych, Novgorod[8] (the northern city of the Kyivan state, see Figure 1). The attacks of the Tatar-Mongols and the Muscovite prince Yuri Dolgoruky devastated Kyivan Rus' in the 13th and 14th centuries (Pavlychko 2005: 7–20). Together with the people who survived the wars, the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle found their way to several territories: the western part (the principality of Galician-Volhynian[9]), the north of the Kyivan state (Novgorod), and Kuban (the north Caucasus).

Outlining the historical development of bylynas, Sofiia Hrytsa and Ukrainian historian and archaeologist Serhiy Koncha have revealed the noteworthy fact that the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle, the *dumy*, and Ukrainian ballads share common heroes and storylines. For instance, the bylyna "Al'osha Popovych" ("Alyosha Popovych") and the *duma* "Pro Oleksiia Popovycha" ("About Oleksiy Popovych"); the ballad about a Cossack's attack on a Turk and the liberation of his sister and the bylyna about Kazarin; the ballad about Dzhenzhura and the bylyna about Churylo (Hrytsa 1990: 69). According to Serhiy Koncha (2016: 70), the *duma* "About Oleksiy Popovych" has common parallels with the bylynas about "Dobrynya and Alyosha" or "The Marriage of Alyosha Popovych". Having analyzed and compared the narratives in detail, he noted: "Dobrynya's prayer for the sea, which has been preserved among the main corpus of bylyna examples, is almost identical to the prayer of Alyosha Popovych of the Ukrainian *duma*, indicating that the ancient epic works in question belonged to the same bylynas tradition" (Koncha 2016: 70). Instead, Oleksandr Potebnya came to the unequivocal conclusion that the image of Oleksiy Popovych from

the Ukrainian *duma* of the same name is related to Serbian songs about Leka Dukadinets and Marko Kralevic and Bulgarian songs about Stanković Duku (cited in Skrypnyk 2009: 20).

Additionally, such important facts as toponyms and hydronyms associated with the names of modern Ukrainian cities, rivers and seas were not taken into account by Russian researchers, as well as the links of bylynas to the folklore of Ukraine through the *duma* tradition (Propp 1955; Novikov 2000; Petrov 2017). These perspectives, disseminated in Russian scholarship as well as in the broader public discourse, can be regarded as a particular instance of cultural appropriation (e.g. Matthes 2016). Researchers from other countries have often adopted the views of Russian researchers without criticism (Bailey 1998; Torres Prieto 2022).

Figure 1. *Map of Kyivan Rus' (Kievan Rus') (980–1054).*[10]

The Spanish researcher Susana Torres Prieto (2022: 348), supporting the position of the origin of the Kyivan cycle in northern Russia, nevertheless stated that "[...] the bylynas constitute a very important part of the national heritage of at least one, if not two, modern countries". By these countries, the researcher means modern Russia and Ukraine. However, other views on the bylynas can be found. For example, American researcher of Estonian descent Felix Oinas argued that the bylynas are part of a broader traditional genre connected with all Slavic cultures (1997). This assertion is important in the context of our study and emphasizes the integrity of the bylyna and the *duma* epic tradition.

Until the 19th century, the singers of bylynas and *dumy* called songs of both genres *staryny* ("about the old days"), which gave grounds to interpret these genres as related. The words "bylyna" and "*duma*" entered literature at approximately the same time – the beginning of the 19th century, a period of national identity formation for many nations. For a long time, Ukrainian researchers believed that the word "*duma*" was of literary origin. However, recent scholarly research has shown that the term "*duma*" in the sense of a message, is mentioned as early as in the Ipatiev Chronicle of 1169, and in 1587 by the Polish chronicler Stanisław Sarnicki in his "Annales, sive origine et rebus gestis Polonorum et Litheanorum libri, VIII" (Hrytsa 2016: 119).

CARRIERS OF THE UKRAINIAN *DUMA* TRADITION AND THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

This section is devoted to the study of the development of the performing epic tradition of the medieval Kyivan state, which includes a close synthesis of poetic and musical components and the transformation of the tradition, accompanied by changes in the epic style and construction of the instrument.

The medieval Old Ukrainian epic tradition is represented by the bylynas of the Kyivan cycle. The earliest written mentions of epic singers in the territory of modern Ukraine appear in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign", which references the singer Boyan, who praised the heroic deeds of princes (Palamarchuk et al. 2022). In the "Galician-Volhynian Chronicle", which is part of the Hypatian Codex (The Hypatian Codex 1973), a singer named Mytusa is mentioned. He served as a court musician for Prince Danylo of Halych but faced persecution due to his political views. These sources indicate the existence of an ancient tradition of epic performers who not only preserved oral heroic narratives but also played a crucial social role as custodians of historical memory and national identity.

The carriers of the bylyna tradition in the medieval Kyivan state were the "skomorokhs"[11] (Lanovyk & Lanovyk 2005: 246). The depiction of skomorokhs – folk musicians with stringed plucked instruments – can be seen in the 14th century sacral literature of Kyivan Rus' (Uspensky 1965: 52–53). According to Mykhaylo Khai (2016: 394–395), skomorokhs were called "musicians who played to dance", but once they reached the northern territories (present-day Russia), skomorokhs became associated exclusively with court entertainers. The prohibition of *skomorokshevo* (a community of skomorokhs) in Ukraine in the 16th century contributed to the emergence of new performance forms. Kindratiuk (2000: 208) believes that "the heirs of the skomorokhs in the Carpathians were musicians' trios (*troisty muzyky*) – professional artists of a newer type, who replaced the ancient gusli and panpipes with the violin, tsymbaly and bell tambourine and played at weddings and other village parties. The skomorokhs are well reminiscent of groups of Ukrainian carolers".[12]

As noted in the previous sections, bylynas were often performed with the accompaniment of the plucked string instrument gusli. There is no consensus among researchers about the name of the instrument and its origin. Iryna Zinkiv (2014: 12) explores that:

> *a medieval term 'husly' has a very wide range of meanings, that are reduced to a single invariant – stringed musical instrument. Under this general term during Christianization of Rus', the chronicles concealed the ancient name of the pagan ritual instrument (which modern specialists in instruments conventionally define as the term 'lyre-type gusli'). The instrument remained in use almost until the 13th–14th centuries among the Slavs who had already converted to Christianity.*

The change in the performance tradition of bylynas and *dumy* was accompanied by the transformation of repertoire and musical instruments. The Ukrainian ethno-organologist Mykhailo Khai (2010: 120) considered that diatonic and pentatonic gusli were transformed into the bandura with a diatonic tuning. This idea was first expressed by bandura practitioners, reconstructors of old Ukrainian musical instruments: Heorhiy Tkachenko, in the late 1980s, and his follower Mykola Budnyk (Cheremsky 2002: 38).

Historically, only male kobza, bandura or wheel lyre players, mostly visually impaired, performed the *dumy* solo. Society recognized them as the carriers of the epic tradition and treated this category of singers as special, as "mediators" between God and people. Part of the reason for this association is that blindness was interpreted as otherness in the sense of connection with the other-worldly.[13] The Balkan countries, among the southern Slavs, also have a tradition of blind

performers of epic songs (Mykhailova 2000: 133). According to Albert Lord, Central Asian and Balkan epics are characterized by three components: a plot, a hero with a horse, and a musical instrument (1991: 211–212). These three components are also inherent in the Ukrainian *duma* tradition: the image of the narrator, the horse, and the musical instrument, the "faithful friend" – the kobza or bandura (for more information, see Kononenko 2019: 45–48).

Performers of *dumy* have a special manner of improvisation and a unique "communication" with the listener through melodies. Even in the 19th century, every performer would tune the instrument to suit his voice range. The number of strings was not fixed, and the instruments were of different sizes and tunings.

KOBZAR *TSEKH* AND THEIR ROLE IN PRESERVING *DUMA* TRADITION

This section is devoted to the study of kobzar *tsekh*, organisations that united performers of the Ukrainian epic tradition and facilitated the transmission of the *duma* tradition until the early 20th century.

In the early 18th century, Ukrainian performers of musical epic instruments[14] and *stykhivnychi* were united in a special brotherhood or *tsekh*. Kobzar *tsekh* played an important role in preserving traditions and transmitting the *dumy*. They were the centers of kobza, bandura, and wheel lyre education, where learning was carried out orally and passed on from teacher to student (see Vavryk 2006: 22–54; Kononenko 2019, 2022). As a rule, studies continued for three to five years. During the first years, the student only listened to the teacher play and sing. After the first three years, the student already knew his teacher's repertoire by memory and was given an instrument. Thus, a student would start playing the bandura when he knew all the songs and melodies. The repertoire of performers of the 18th and 19th centuries was characterized by a combination of different genres: *dumy*, historical and humorous songs, psalms, and dance music. The student also had to learn a special language called *lebiiska mova*. To get the right to play and earn money, a kobzar, bandura player or lyre player had to go through several rituals, one of which was called '*vyzvilka*' or '*odkilshchyna*' (Kushpet 2007: 278–286). After this ritual, the performer had the right to practice and earn money on his own. The obligatory and most difficult piece to perform was *dumy*.

The peculiarity of kobza and bandura performance of this period was that only people with physical disabilities, most often blind people, could play the kobza and bandura. Travelling musicians played an important role as communicators. They went from village to village to hold their musical performances

in crowded places such as markets and churchyards. This activity was called *kobzariuvannia*[15]. Kobzar, bandura and wheel lyre players earned money by performing songs, including *dumy*.

According to Kolessa (1969 [1910, 1913]), the activities of kobza workshops contributed to the emergence of regional performing schools of kobza and bandura, namely Zinkiv (later Kharkiv), Chernihiv, and Poltava. These schools were distinguished by the way the instruments were held and the way they were played. Territorial restrictions set by kobza workshops allowed performers to practice in the territory that belonged to a particular kobza workshop. In our opinion, territorial restrictions also contributed to the formation of *duma* musical styles.

Thus, *duma* melodies of the central and northern regions of Ukraine are diatonic, with a narrow ambitus and an isosyllabic rhythmic pulsation. These melodies are closely connected to the poetic text, imitate the rhythm and accents of spoken language, and are distinguished by the repetition of certain notes, giving them a monotonous character. Syllabic singing, with one note per syllable, is quite typical of diatonic melodies. An example is the *duma* "Pro Ganzhu Andyber" ("About Hanzhu Andyber", see Fig. 2). Hrytsa calls *duma* melodies of diatonic type "psalmodic" and shows their similarity to the psalmody[16], ritual songs and bylynas (Hrytsa 2002: 111).

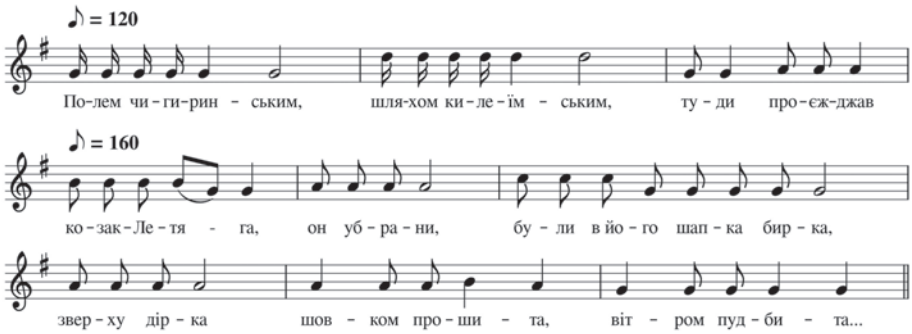

Figure 2. *A fragment of a* duma *"Pro Ganzhu Andyber" ("About Hanzhu Andyber"), recorded by Klyment Kvitka in Polissya in the early 20th century (Hrytsa 2002: 111).*

Dumy of chromatic type have a certain compositional form containing three parts. The beginning or introductory part is called *zaplachka* (lament). The main part of the *duma* is called *ustups* (in common language), which are separated by instrumental interludes. *Duma* ends with the *slavoslovie* or prayer

(Kushpet 2007 et al.). However, some traditional performers of *dumy* did not sing the *zaplachka* and *slavoslovie*.

Figure 3 shows an example of a *duma* of the chromatic type "Pro bidnu vdovu" ("About the Poor Widow") from the Poltava region, north-eastern part of Ukraine. It consists of three parts: *zaplachka* (on Fig. 3 no. 1), main part (on Fig. 3 no. 2 is the first *ustup* of the main part), *slavoslovie*. The *zaplachka* contains two melodic formulas on which the following *tirades*[17] are based. The melody is decorated with small ornaments, such as grace notes, mordents, and accents. In the example, the most common melodic pattern can be followed, in which the melody descends in a wave-like manner from high pitches, occasionally rising by a small interval. The chromatic type of *dumy* is associated with short additional words, such as "Hey!" (on Fig. 3), "Oh", "O" etc.

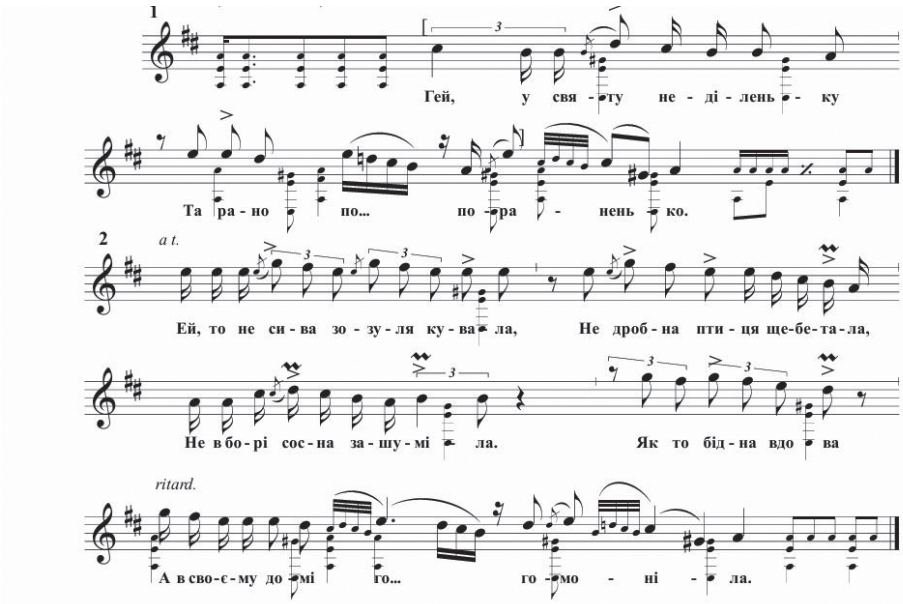

Figure 3. Duma "Pro bidnu vdovu" *("About the Poor Widow", beginning), recorded from Mykhailo Kravchenko in the Poltava region by Filaret Kolessa in 1908 (Hrytsa 2007: 223). 1 –* zaplachka *(lament); 2 –* ustup*; an incomplete vertical dash at the bottom of the staff marks the boundary of a tirade; the double vertical dash indicates a clausula. The chords performed as tremolo in the bandura part are written in a smaller size.*

Thus, the transmission of the *duma* tradition and the formation of its characteristic features were closely linked to the activities of kobzar *tsekhs*, which disappeared in the early 20th century due to the ban on street music by the Soviet authorities.

PROBLEMS OF REVIVING OF *DUMY* AND THEIR TRANSMISSION IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

This section highlights two waves of the revival of the *duma* tradition, describes contemporary methods of organizing kobzar *tsekhs*, and explores various approaches to the transmission of the *duma* tradition in the present day.

The first wave of revival of the Ukrainian epic tradition began in the early 20th century. On the wave of interest in folk themes, the Ukrainian intelligentsia was able to collect part of the material from blind musicians, and to notate *dumy* (see Lisniak 2019: 40–61). The renowned researcher of *dumy*, Kateryna Hrushevska (1927: IX), noted on this matter:

> *This is our precious cultural treasure, which has come down to us under the modest, borrowed name of 'duma', in meager remnants, in the form of several dozen records scattered across old collections. Nothing should be lost from these remnants: even the smallest fragments must be preserved! This is our duty to this undervalued treasure, which, after long neglect, must once again find its way into the consciousness of its people and take its rightful place in their cultural life.*

Figure 4. *Photo of kobzars (S. Pasyuga, I. Kuchuhura-Kucherenko, P. Hashchenko, H. Kozhushko) near the Katerynoslav Historical Museum at the beginning of the 20th century. Scientific archive of D. I. Yavornytskyi Dnipro National Historical Museum, Ф-5389.*

The materials collected by scholars laid the foundation for the development of the sciences of ethnology, folklore, and ethnomusicology. This was extremely important in view of further unfavourable developments for representatives of the epic tradition.

The carriers of the epic tradition were closely associated with Ukrainian identity, so the Soviet authorities viewed them as promoters of musical nationalism, representatives of the people, and bearers of historical traditions (Rhevska 2005: 80). In the 1930s, the Kharkiv Opera House hosted the Congress of Folk Singers of Soviet Ukraine, which brought together 337 delegates from different regions. The main task of the Congress was to actively involve folk singers in socialist ideas, break away from performing traditions, and define new ideological priorities. After the Congress, these blind singers disappeared. They, along with their minor guides, were taken out of the railroad cars to a forest and shot by soldiers of the special department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the Ukrainian SSR. Activist researchers found the scene of this crime, but written evidence was carefully destroyed or hidden in the NKVD archives (Cheremsky 1999).

Even during the Soviet era, under the pressure of ideology, the performers did not lose their inherent sense of being carriers of the epic tradition. But under the threat of physical destruction, the bearers of the tradition were forced to take the ideological side and create *dumy* about communist leaders as new heroes of the *dumy*. However, there is evidence that in private conversations, kobzars regretted this. For example, a blind bandura player, Yehor Movchan (1898–1968), was convinced that his illnesses were the result of creating a *duma* about Lenin: "The old bandura player was tormented by the sin of composing a false *duma* 'There was a winter with a thaw', which was constantly celebrated in official publications" (Vertiy 1999: 5).

The next waves of revival of the *duma* tradition began in the late 1960s and early 1970s and is linked to the name of the bandurist Heorhiy Tkachenko. An architect by training, Heorhiy Tkachenko (1898–1993) learned *dumy* from blind kobzars, bandura players, in the early 20th century in Kharkiv. He also made drawings of traditional instruments. In the late 1970s, Tkachenko founded the kobzar *tsekhs* and a workshop for traditional musical instruments. Together with his disciple Mykola Budnyk, they reconstructed wing-shaped and helmet-shaped gusli, kobzas, banduras, torbans. They researched the acoustic properties of ancient musical instruments and refined the technologies for their production. All of this contributed to a renewed interest in ancient Ukrainian instruments and performance. In the late 1980s, Tkachenko passed on his knowledge to the younger generation, maintaining the oral transmission of *dumy*. Following the model of the Kyiv kobzar *tsekhs*, similar ones were established in Kharkiv

and Lviv. Volodymyr Kushpet (2014) carried out important work with archival sources and transcriptions of kobzar Ostap Veresai.

Modern Ukrainian performers reproduce the traditional performance of *dumy* both in a traditional environment (street singing, markets, churches) and on the concert stage. There are two distinct ways of preserving the tradition that are evident in contemporary times. The first is through the kobzar *tsekh* that strive to uphold the authentic tradition. Kompanichenko defines the modern kobzar *tsekh* as "[...] an association of people who aim to preserve the Ukrainian epic tradition not only as memories but as a complex of living values: freedom, love, sacrifice, truth, brotherhood" (Sanin 2024). Sighted and blind male musicians are members of these brotherhoods, passing on the epic tradition orally, with most of them being amateurs. Blind people are actively involved in modern kobza workshops, thus reviving the traditional practice. The modern kobzar *tsekh* has a close connection with the Orthodox Church, as evidenced by their organization of festivals on major Church holidays, mainly on Church premises with the ceremony of blessing instruments (see Figure 6).

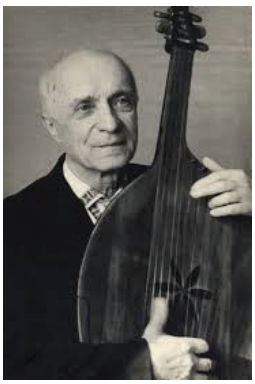

Figure 5. *Heorhiy Tkachenko (1898–1993).*

Figure 6. *Blessing of kobzar instruments during the Epic Tradition Festival "Kobzarska Triytsia-2014". Kyiv, courtyard of the St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral (Sakhno 2015).*

The second way of preserving the tradition is through its reinterpretation and widespread popularization through various means. Professional educational institutions and music studios serve as hubs for this trend, where young people (boys and girls) can learn to play traditional instruments. Both approaches are essential: one aims to preserve the tradition, while the other seeks to expand its boundaries through female performance in order to popularize it.

Important actions to preserve the *dumy*, namely the creation of a website that contains important information about the current state of Ukrainian epics, are required due to the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war (2022) and the threat of physical destruction of material artefacts. The *Duma* project (2024) contains digitised versions of about 100 vocal and instrumental pieces. Due to the use of descriptive video servers, this project is convenient for visually impaired people. In 2024, the Ukrainian kobza and wheel lyre tradition was recognized by UNESCO at the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage (Sanin 2024). The tradition, which is an integral part of Ukraine's musical and verbal heritage, was acknowledged as a practice that has survived through the centuries and was taken under the protection of this organization.

Dumy were a significant part of the repertoire of kobzar, bandura and wheel lyre players in the Middle Ages and in modern times. It is extremely important that the tradition of *dumy* was continuous, passed down from generation to generation, and that it has survived to this day in its natural, oral form. This gives grounds to consider contemporary performers as the successors of a living tradition. The interest in *dumy* as a national heritage has grown significantly in the context of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war and demonstrates their importance for Ukrainian society.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the crucial role of kobzar *tsekh* in the preservation and transmission of the *duma* tradition before the 20th century. These organisations ensured the continuity of oral epic performance by maintaining strict training systems, where apprentices learned both musical and poetic elements from master performers. Through structured rituals ("*vyzvilka*", "*odkil'shchyna*"), a special language (*lebiiska mova*) and territorial organizations (Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and Poltava kobzar *tsekh*), kobzars safeguarded the *dumy* as a living historical narrative, reflecting Ukraine's cultural memory. However, the dissolution of these kobzar *tsekh* in the Soviet time led to a significant decline

in the *duma* tradition, disrupting its organic transmission and nearly erasing its practice from public life.

Efforts to revive the kobzar tradition in contemporary Ukraine have focused on reconstructing historical performance practices and fostering new generations of performers. Folklorists, ethnomusicologists, and musicians have worked to reconstruct ancient Ukrainian instruments and restore lost melodies and techniques, often relying on archival recordings and transcriptions. In addition, modern kobzar *tsekh* in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv have played a key role in integrating the learning and performance of *dumy*, especially among blind performers, as was the case in traditional practice. The recognition of kobzar practice by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in 2024 has further strengthened these initiatives, providing international support for safeguarding this tradition and reaffirming its cultural significance.

Modern performers play a vital role in adapting the *duma* tradition to contemporary contexts while maintaining its core practice and historical essence. By incorporating traditional elements into new formats, including concert performances and digital media, they ensure the continued relevance of *dumy* for Ukrainian and global audiences.

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NOTES

[1] The Cossacks are a group of predominantly East Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christian people who created democratic, self-governing, semi-military communities in the 16th century. They inhabited the “Wild Fields”, or steppes, north of the Black Sea near the Dnipro River.

[2] Lyre, wheel lyre (or *relya*) is the Ukrainian variant of the hurdy-gurdy.

[3] Epic songs of the Eastern Slavs, in Russian “bylina”. The term *bylina* was introduced as a scholarly designation of Russian epic in the 1830s by Ivan Sakharov. The bylynas were first published in 1804 under the title of “Kirsha Danilov’s Collection”.

[4] In medieval literature, the term 'gusli' had a wide range of meanings to describe stringed musical instruments. The etymology of the word and the origin of the instrument itself are not established. For example, in the Ukrainian Carpathians, the folk violin is called *gusli*, and among the Southern Slavs, the *gusle* is a single-stringed bowed instrument.

[5] Wishing for longevity.

[6] The image of Grand Prince Volodymyr combines the features of two great princes of Kyivan Rus': Volodymyr (born unknown – died July 15, 1015), who introduced Christianity to Rus' in 988, and Volodymyr Monomakh (born 1053 – died May 19, 1125).

[7] A man of extraordinary physical strength.

[8] Novgorod was colonized by the Muscovites in 1478 (Gorelov 2013).

[9] Galician-Volhynian Rus in the second half of the 13th – first half of the 14th century.

[10] *Zhdan Mykhailo. Kyivan Rus*. 1988. The Encyclopedia of Ukraine, vol. 2. Available at https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/picturedisplay.asp?linkpath=pic%5CK%5CY%5CKyivan_Rus_Map.jpg&page=pages%5CK%5CY%5CKyivanRushDA.htm&id=7137&pid=3177&tyt=Kyivan%20Rus%E2%80%99&key=Kyivan+Rus%E2%80%99%2C+%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%97%D0%B2%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B0+%D0%A0%D1%83%D1%81%D1%8C%3B+Kyivska+Rus%2C+%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%97%D0%B2%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B0+%D0%A0%D1%83%D1%81%D1%8C%3B+Kyivska+Rus

[11] Skomorokhs (in Ukrainian – *скоморохи*) were professional artists in the Eastern Slavic countries during the times of Kyivan Rus' in medieval and early modern times.

[12] Ukrainian carolers or *koljadnyky* – a group of people who perform koljadkas. Koljadka or koljadkas (pl.) are calendar ritual songs of the winter cycle.

[13] More details about the tradition of Ukrainian blind musicians, their life, training, and social significance can be found in the book by Kostyantyn Cheremsky (2002: 12–194).

[14] Epic instruments in Ukraine are those used in performance practice to accompany *dumas*: kobza, diatonic bandura, and wheel lyre.

[15] Kobzarstvo is included in the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukraine. The procedure of submitting it to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is ongoing.

[16] Psalmody – chanting, a genre of medieval Kyivan church singing.

[17] In Ukrainian academic literature, the concept of *tirade* has been interpreted in different ways. Kolessa, followed by Hrytsa, presented the following compositional structure of *dumas*: the smallest unit is a phrase, a group of phrases forms a *tirade*, a group of *tirades* forms an *ustup* (Kolessa 1910=1969; Hrytsa 2016: 203). Ivanitskyi (2004: 122) and Bohdanova (2021: 9) consider *tirade* and *ustup* as synonyms. In our study we rely on the terminology proposed by Kolessa and Hrytsa.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Scientific archive of the Dnipro National Historical Museum named after Dmytro Yavornytskyi. Collection of manuscript documents. Ф-5389. Photo of kobzars Stepan Pasyuga, Ivan Kuchuhura-Kucherenko, Pavlo Hashchenko and Hryhorii Kozhushko near the Katerynoslav Historical Museum at the beginning of the 20th century.

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THE WEDDING WATER (*NEKE SUI*) AND THE BLENDING OF ANCESTRAL AND ISLAMIC RITUALS IN THE KAZAKH TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

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Abstract: Today the Kazakh wedding ceremony is a festival following the civil and often Muslim record of the union; it is generally organized in the groom's family with the support of the bride's side and preceded by the exchange of the brideprice and dowry. During the pre-Soviet period, the traditional wedding ceremony was matrilocal, including stages going from matchmaking and premarital rituals culminating in the patriarchal blessing (*bata*) from the bride's father and the Muslim consecration by a mullah (*neke kiyu*). It was followed by the first nuptial night, the morning paying of respects by the newlywed groom to the bride's family and the send-off ritual of the bride. Only after that would begin the patrilocal phase of the marriage, made up of the reception of the bride and the opening of her face (*Betashar*) to the groom's family. The custom in late Islamized regions to hold the religious wedding ceremony (*neke kiyu*) after the nuptial night ending the premarital meetings and the final payment of the brideprice would indicate that in ancient times, the lawful union of the consorts occurred at the performance of the last premarital game *kalindyk tartu*, the bride's capture, when possibly the groom would receive and take away the bride to his village. The use of cultural symbols in the wedding ceremony belonging to both adat and sharia repertoires underlines priority values such as harmony (binary codes of natural opposites), purity (white colour), family strength (arrow) and protection (horse bristle, arrow ribbon). The matrilocal performance of the wedding ceremony is not only conserved in China, Turkey and Iran but also partially preserved inside wedding rituals of the Aral-Caspian region as relics of an intangible cultural heritage deserving protection and the analysis proposed hereby.

Keywords: marriage, matrilocality, wedding water, ethnic symbols, adat and sharia, liminal rites

INTRODUCTION

Like other peoples, Kazakhs fostered a mystical idea about the marriage of two persons into a union. Today, the Kazakh marriage is organized in the village of the groom's father, but in the past, the key rituals of the marriage were staged in the bride's village before being celebrated in that of the groom. The whole process was made up of the following phases: 1– matchmaking and engagement, consisting in the agreement of both sides and the start of the *kalym* (brideprice) transfer by the groom's father. It included 'secret' visits of the groom to the bride and games between the future spouses; 2 – the religious wedding led by the bride's father and a mullah, the nuptial night and the bride's send-off from her village; 3 – the bride's entry into the groom's house, the wedding party in the groom's village (*aul*) and the rite of *betashar* (ceremony of opening the bride's face) – each with an appropriate set of customs (Kartaeva & Kalniyaz 2017: 195–210).

According to all accounts recorded at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, the marriage ceremony took place in the bride's father's village. But, during Soviet times, this ceremony became estranged from its tradition. It is important to identify the factors that contributed to this change and to analyze the matter historically, but we will focus here on this rarely attested wedding ceremony among the Kazakhs who preserve its observance.

The religious wedding called *neke kiyu* (kaz. *neke,* arabic – *nikah,* meaning *to gather* or *add*, and kaz. *kiyu*, ceremony) is associated with the spread of Islam, which occurred very differently in Kazakhstan, with ancient roots in the Syrdarya region and more recent diffusion in the central steppes. In fact, because many households of the 19th century did not observe it, the *neke kiyu* has been considered as not forming an organic part of the Kazakh marriage ceremony. Often, after the full payment of the *kalym* and the holding of wedding games, the bride's father would hand over his daughter to his son-in-law without ritual (Kustanaev 1894; Kislyakov 1969: 108). Nevertheless, during the pre-Soviet period the *neke kiyu* became widespread in Kazakhstan and was celebrated in various ways blending Muslim and ancestral cultural elements according to regional or tribal customs.

The purpose of this article is to systematize and analyze the available written sources and oral accounts concerning this wedding ceremony and associated symbols.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Most of the historiographical documentation concerning the traditional wedding among Kazakhs consists of information recorded by researchers at the beginning of the 19th-20th centuries. The written data of the first researchers provide accurate information about the Kazakh society of that time, because they were written from visual observation in situ. Here we use as reference the wedding ceremony before its contemporary alteration, i.e. the switch of its occurrence from the bride`s village to the groom's house.

Contemporary essays on traditional Kazakh weddings have been the object of short descriptions in collections of written sources (Kazakh halkukun … 2006) and encyclopedic works concerning Kazakh folklore (Kazaktyn etnografiyalyk… 2017), in scientific compilations on family rituals (Toleubaev 1991), in contemporary thematic books and articles about the Kazakh marriage (Argynbaev 1996; Kislyakov 1969; Katran 2010; Katran 2020; Kartaeva & Kalniyaz 2017) and in reports of ethnographic field surveys, but none of these publications has focused on the importance of water and ancestral symbols in the wedding ritual.

1.1 Written sources

Historical accounts concerning traditional Kazakh weddings dated to the medieval and pre-Russian modern time are almost absent. Scant information can be found in the epic Korkut Ata (*Book of Dede Korkut*) ascribed to the Oguz period (8th–10th centuries AD) and in the Turkic dictionary (*Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*) of al-Kashgari (1005–1102 AD).

Here we have collected, analyzed and extracted the first descriptive sources compiled at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries and made up principally of the works of Russian and Kazakh ethnographers (Lazarevskiy 1862; Altynsarin 1870; Ibragimov 1872; P [L. Poltorasskaya] 1878; Alektorov 1888; Zhetpisbaev 1893; Kustanaev 1894; Divaev 1900; Kalmakov 1910; Karuts 1911).

Among other sources are the folk songs left by the Alash party leaders Moldaniyaz Bekimov and Akhmet Baitursinov who wrote and published an ancient version of the "Wedding Song" (Bekimov 1905: 382–392; Baitursynov 1989: 253–254). Some important information can also be found in the historical novel "Abai", written about the life of the famous Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev, which describes the occurrence of Abai's marriage to Dilda in the bride's village, organized by Dilda's father Alshynbai (Auezov 1942: 258–260). Nowadays, although the mullah's wedding ritual has restarted, the "wedding songs" performed by the witnesses are only preserved in the more traditional

southern regions of Kazakhstan. Therefore, there is an urgent need to collect more ethnographic data on such wedding songs and rites for their conservation as a monument of the intangible cultural heritage of Kazakhstan.

These written documents provide crucial information about the presence of pre-Islamic relic symbols, but they do not reveal the meaning of their use. Their multifunctionality or multiplicity in the context of the traditional wedding rituals should be associated with nomadic traditions and regional peculiarities.

1.2 Fieldwork materials

Ethnographic expedition surveys conducted in the Syrdarya and Mangystau regions known as "ethnographic regions", where the Kazakh tradition is better preserved and where traditional rituals continued secretly during the Soviet era, constitute the main sources of our study. In other parts of Kazakhstan, Islamic marriage ceremonies were not preserved during the Soviet era.

Ethnographic field surveys occurred during various years in the frame of various projects aiming at collecting ethnographic material.

2018–2019: Lower Syrdarya, Kyzylorda oblast: Terenozek district;
2018: East Aral Sea region and Aral Karakum desert, Kyzylorda oblast: Aralsk, Sazdy, Karakum;
2019: West Kazakhstan, Khan Ordasy (Orda);
2019–2020: Mangystau oblast, Aktau;
2019: Turkey, Istanbul, Kazakh emigrants of Zeitunburni.

1.3 Marriage certificates

Certificates of marriage agreements concluded by mullahs are also the basis for evidence of differences in the Kazakh tradition of marriage ceremony. Marriage certificates of mullahs stored in the archives of the reserve-museum "Khan Ordasy" (West Kazakhstan oblast) constitute another source of this article. More than other regions of Kazakhstan, the activities of mosques, madrassas and religious figures such as mullahs, akhuns, ishans were especially developed in the west of the Kazakh lands. The proximity of the Kazakh-Russian borders created a great opportunity for religious dignitaries of the western part of the Kazakh land to study in the influential madrassas in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan.

2. RESULTS

2.1 Kazakh marriage according to the traditional and religious laws (*adat* and *sharia*)

Relying on the first written data and field expedition materials, the marriage process of the Kazakh people took place in the village of the bride's father before the establishment of the Soviet era. This can be explained by the fact that the main purpose of the bride's parents was to bless their daughter. The abovementioned sources recorded that at the time of the marriage ritual, the mullah would ask the bride's father, "Are there are not any obstacles to the marriage? Do you allow it?" Therefore, the marriage was concluded with the gratitude of the bride's father. The bride's father's position in the organization and blessing *(bata)* of the wedding is in fact associated with the ancestral cult, the high role of the father in the Kazakh patriarchal family.

Some basic marriage rules have been observed among the Kazakhs since ancient times. According to these customs, relatives within seven generations are forbidden from marrying. Firstly, this maintained healthy blood; secondly, the matrimonial tie would consolidate the coalition of two separate clans. The heaviest punishment was the people's imprecation. Marriage that broke the seven-generation rule was to be acknowledged as incest *kan aralastirushilik (mix of blood)* and was subject to the death penalty. In cases when the concerned families accepted such a marriage, the penalty was limited to a whipping of 90 strokes, which was, anyway, hard to survive. Witnesses of illegal marriage were subject to 30 – 70 strokes, and the mullah who concluded it was to be deprived of his position and whipped 75 to 90 times (Zagryazhski 1876: 172–178; Kartaeva & Dauitbekova 2016: 195–196). Although *adat* (the Kazakh law) considers such issues, the actual Kazakh society has no data about marriages within seven generations.

According to tradition, the marriage age for boys was 15 and 16 for girls (Zagryazhski 1876: 151). It happened, though rarely, that the bride was a girl of 13 years. There was a Kazakh saying: *"Do not keep salt too long – it will spoil the water; do not keep a girl too long – she will be spoiled by rumors"*. The marriage age was influenced by social position: the rich married their sons at 12–15 years old, the poorer people later. Nikolai Grodekov wrote about the age of 9–12 in marriages of rich peoples' sons in the Kazali district (Grodekov 1889). According to Khudabay Kustanaev, it was not rare that a girl of 12–15 was an object of matchmaking and marriage (Kustanaev 1894: 22).

Marrying at the age of 12–13 was conditioned by certain circumstances. For example, in difficult years, parents would entrust their children to future co-parents-in-law. Marriage before the age of majority meant keeping both children in the family. The daughter-in-law was always close by and under the control of her mother-in-law; only upon her gradual physical maturation would the young couple actually marry. Early marriages were not popular; girls normally married at the age of 15–17. Mullahs implemented the marriage ritual for those of the full age, according to the traditional law. In ancient times, Kazakhs often found matches for their infant daughters, and this ritual was called *atastiru*. Children themselves, aware of the fact, grew in expectation of the rendezvous with the betrothed.

2.2 The rituals of the wedding process

Among Kazakhs, the wedding union is consecrated by Islamic law although it incorporates many specific ethnic rituals. After the matchmaking initiated by the groom's father, agreement with the bride's father and the following transfer of *Kalyn mal* or *Kalym* (brideprice)[1], the groom would make several visits to the bride's aul (*uryn baru* / *uryn kelu*)[2]; these are large festive events that can last up to 10 days (Photo 1a). They were about building a firm foundation for close relationships and mutual understanding.

Following the bride's visit festivities, the wedding ritual was held in the bride's father's house. The wedding time had to be appointed by the bride's father upon full payment of *kalyn mal* (brideprice). During the ritual, newlyweds were asked for their consent to marry (Katran 2010).

In ancient times, a mullah was invited by the bride's parents to conduct the wedding ritual. The ritual was held a day prior to the bride's send-off party (*kyz uzatu*) and after the traditional ritual games of *kyz kashar* (*qyz qashar* – girl's walk off) or *tartis* (*tartys* – pulling). Usually, the wedding ceremony took place in the yurt/house of one of the father's rich relatives, especially well equipped for the games (*bolys ui* – the elder's house). In the organization of the ritual games of the *uryn baru*, the main role is played by the bride's sisters-in-law (*jenge*/*jengeler*)[3]. The sisters-in-law were like mentors to the bride; like sisters, they always accompanied her everywhere till she entered the new hearth of the groom's house (Kazaktyn etnografiyalyk … 2017 t.2: 435; Photo 1b).

According to the written and oral accounts, the *kyz kashar* ritual game took place in a yurt located outside the bride's father's house or in a brother's house of the neighboring village. Moreover, often beautifully decorated white yurts were set up outside the village to entertain young people. Carpets were

put on the floor and expensive items hung on the walls. In the morning the bride escaped from her house and went to the wedding yurt accompanied by her sisters-in-law.

The *kyz kashar* entertainment started with singing and *aitys* (musical improvisation). While village girls stayed inside the yurt, the boys remained outside. When the bottom part of the yurt was uplifted, girls looking outside started to sing. Songs were performed both individually and in groups and consisted mostly of *aitys*. The guys rewarded the girls with rings and bracelets for their songs (Grodekov 1889: 67; Divaev 1900: 19–20). But if the rhetorical duel was won by the boys, girls would offer them presents. The *kyz kashar* game would follow in and outside the yurt until dawn and elderly people would listen to the youth songs in the open.

Photo 1. a) *Groom's arrival to the bride's aul after pitching his tent;* ***b)*** *Bride's* jenge *– sisters-in-law visit the groom in his tent (Karuts 1911: 144).*

The following entertainment consisted of another ritual game called *kalindik tartu* (*qalyndyq tartu*). The young people of the wedding parties were divided into two groups, one supporting the bride and the other the groom. The first group would hide the bride, instigating a search from the groomsmen. The groom himself did not participate in this contest. After catching the bride, the groom's group would hand her back to her sisters-in-law who would then bring her to the specially erected nuptial yurt to meet shortly with the groom before the wedding ceremony (Altynsarin 1870: 5; Zhetpisbaev 1893).

But in many instances, especially among the richer herders, horse games were held in the afternoon following *kyz kashar* (Divaev 1900: 19; Grodekov 1889: 67–72).

The wedding ceremony occurred in the bride's father's home and witnesses (*kuagerler*) would be present as negotiators between the mullah and the newly-weds. Two male witnesses (some sources indicate three young men as witnesses) representing the groom expressed the formal consent of the future husband to marry the bride. Their words, belonging to the repertory of "wedding songs" (*neke zhyry*) are usually named "marriage speech" (*neke kiar soz*) or "witness words" (*kualik soz*) (Bekimov 1905: 382-392; Baitursynov 1989: 253–254). The rhymes are read aloud rhythmically:

Kua, kua, kuadirmiz,	Witnesses, witnesses it's what we are
Kualikke juredirmiz	Our art is witness-making
Munda halyq qasynda,	Before the whole world
Tanda Haq aldyna	Before the Almighty God
Aq kualigin beredurmiz.	We pass a pure witness.

Or:

Kua, kua, kuadirmiz,	Witnesses, witnesses it's what we are
Kualikke turadyrmyz,	We gather to make a witness,
Bugin tannyn atqanynan	Since today's dawn
Palenshe men túgenshenińˊ	We witness. These two young
Birin-biri qalaġanyna	Choosing each other.
kuadirmiz.	

Thus, the approvals were taken first from the bride's father, then from the groom and bride represented by witnesses before passing to the mullah. The Turks in the early days called the witnesses "*Arkushi*", those who were between the bride and the groom (Mahmut Kashgari 1997: 171).

Photo 2. a) *The "Neke kiu" (Marriage). Prayer reading by the mullah. Artist Eraly Ospanuly;* ***b)*** *Abilhan Kasteev. Prayer reading by the mullah. Museum number – KP17223 / 1. Fund collection of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan.*

However, the forms of the religious wedding differed from region to region. The military scientist Fedor Lazarevskiy, who observed the Orenburg Kazakhs, wrote that the groom sits in a separate yurt behind a curtain, invisible to guests,

while the bride with her parents stays in another yurt (Lazarevskiy 1862). According to many accounts, the bride was sitting behind a curtain "shymyldyk" woven from white fabric during the wedding ceremony (Izraztsov 1897: 78; Kislyakov 1969: 111). The mullah selected two smart boys and sent them to the bride's father with the question: *"Do you agree to give your daughter to such a man?"* On return, the messengers declared the answer aloud and this questioning was held three times. Then the mullah requested the witnesses to ask the bride's father: "*Have you received kalym in full, are there any obstacles to the marriage?"* Then, to the groom: *"Do you truly desire to marry her?"* The same question was asked of the bride. She might have answered in tears, in which case her parents soothed her by saying: *"Ainalayin (dear), please, agree, it is necessary to have your own family"* and obtained her consent.

The presence of witnesses in the marriage is carried out in accordance with *sharia* requirements. Their function was not only to hear the agreement of the newlyweds, but also to express the agreement from the two parties representing the public (Abildaev 2018: 77).

Only after having conducted this questionnaire would the mullah bring the groom, bride and relatives inside the yurt and proceed to the wedding ritual. At that time, a dish for ritual water was put before them and an arrow with a piece of cloth tied to it was stuck in the ground near the dish. The mullah would then pour water into the dish and cover it with the piece of cloth. Asking Allah to bless the newlyweds, he read the wedding prayer. Then, dipping the bride's ring in the water, he returned it to her. At that time, he advised the groom to take care of his spouse. Finally, he gave the wedding water to the groom, bride and other present relatives (Lazarevskiy 1862) (Photo 2).

In the Syrdarya – Aral region, the bride would place her silver earrings or rings in the water and cover the dish with a white shawl. The groom would attach the shawl's end to a wooden pole. After the wedding ritual, the silver was taken from the dish and kept as a marriage souvenir. The water was drunk in the following order: the groom, the bride and finally other assembled people. The witnesses would receive the white shawl. After that, the newlyweds were brought into a yurt specially erected for them and left there alone (*AFM*. *Unathan Baetov*; *Kıdırali Toksanbaev*).

N. Kalmakov witnessed this ritual and recorded that a ring and earrings were put into the water by the bride herself, the dish was covered by the shawl and, after having heard the prayer, the silver was taken out and the newlyweds drank the water (Kalmakov 1910: 228).

P. Makovetskii watched this ritual in East Kazakhstan, where the wedding was held prior to the bride's send-off, before the first nuptial night (*otau salar*) (Makovetskiy 1886: 11, 20–21).

In the Mangystau region, the groom's witnesses were first sent to the bride and she answered via girl-friends, because to give consent aloud was inappropriate. After the prayer, the water was drunk first by the mullah, then by the bride, the groom and finally by the relatives, according to elder age succession (Karuts 1889: 106).

Khudabay Kustanaev recorded that in the Syrdarya region, the mullah began the ceremony with these usual words: "*Aumin (amen), aul-akbar*". The bride with her friends were sitting behind the curtain, while the groom with his witnesses and his relatives remained in the middle of the yurt. The mullah would then proceed by enlisting the names of the bride and her parents ("that daughter of this and that") and asked the groom: "*Do you agree to make her your wife?*". The groom replied: "*Yes, I agree, I give my consent*". The same question was asked of the bride, who gave the same answer. Upon each question, the witnesses sang the obligatory "*witness song*", and the mullah read the *khutba* prayer. A wooden dish with coins, rings, and earrings was filled with water when the mullah read his conjuration, and the witnesses gave the water to the newlyweds and people who were present (Kustanaev 1894: 31–32).

Sometimes salt and sugar were added to the wedding water (*neke suy*). Water signifies the purity of the young couple; salt symbolizes damnation in case of infamous deeds; sugar means their agreeable and happy life, and the ring serves as a wedding memory, eternally reminding of the significant event. The groom and the bride had to drink from the same side of the dish to connote their future union. During field study, some informants reported that adding salt and sugar to the wedding water would punish adultery (AFM. Kıdırali Toksanbaev. Urimhan Ayazbaeva. Kosan Auesbaev). Nogaibai Zhetpisbaev also wrote that the last to drink the water was the bride, who took the ring put there by the groom (Zhetpisbaev 1893: 36–37). Aleksandr Alektorov notes that the dish with water was initially placed by the groom's father; then the mullah washed his face and read the prayer, and having received the consents of the newlyweds, he gave them the water to drink three times, before handing it to all the audience present in the yurt. If the water was not sufficient, he sprinkled it around. N. Izraztsov reports that after reading the prayer, the mullah blows on the wedding water, providing it with an illuminating energy (Izraztsov 1897: 78). Some mullahs even placed an arrow in the water to which the hair of the newlywed's horse was tied; other mullahs variously soaked paper with prayers written on it (Alektorov 1888: 11–12; Kazakh halkukun … 2006: 187).

Under Islamic law, marriage involving a mullah is called *Ak neke* (*white marriage*) (Abildaev 2018: 76–77). The sacred meaning of the word "white marriage" has a high value for a young family, it means that the consorts' ways were rightly opened to their future life.

Patsha kyzyn beredi okyp nekah	The king gives his daughter by doing *nekah*
Neke qylmaq	Doing *nikah*
Paigambar sunneti hak	Desires the Prophet

(Kissa Gulzhamila kizdin hikayasi, 2004: 95).

These lines indicate that to marry was a responsibility for a Muslim person. From the end of the 19th century, after the wedding ceremony (*neke kiyu*) the mullah registered the witnesses in a marriage book (Photo 3) with the young couple's agreement.

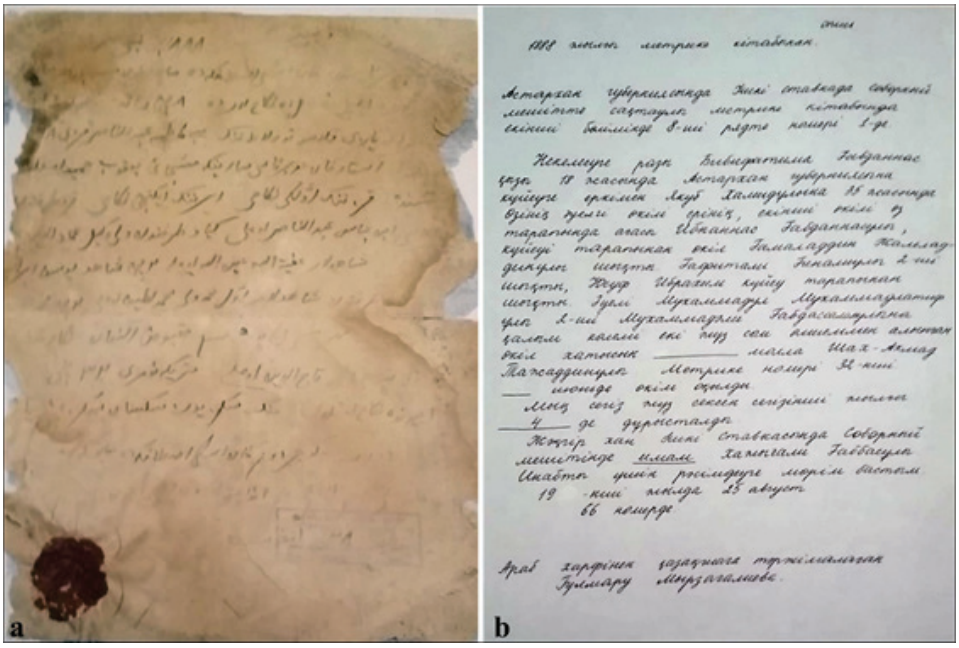

Photo 3. a) *Registration by the mullah of a marriage contract in 1888. (Museum number 3789. Written documents Fund of the Reserve – Museum of the "Khan Orda", West Kazakhstan.* ***b)*** *Translation in Cyrillic script of the contract (by Gulmaru Myrzagalieva)*[4].

Typical of Kazakh customs was the fact that the newlyweds, observing etiquette, gave consent in a low voice or just by a facial gesture. The witnesses, knowing the newlyweds' shyness, uttered loudly to the mullah: "She/he agrees".

After reading the prayer, the mullah advised the groom to observe peace in family life and to take care of his wife. Then, the girl's parents addressed the groom with these words: "*We gave a bone (*i.e. a person*) to serve you, asking to take good care after her, not beating without reason and not scolding without cause*", and addressed the girl: "*Daughter, please behave, don't attract damnation*

on us" (Grodekov 1889: 70). Although the marriage ceremony was attended by several witnesses, the couple's public announcement of their marriage, the registration of the couple in the marriage register and the signatures of the witnesses helped to ensure the stability of the marriage.

After the ritual registered by the mullah, the newlyweds were left in a separate yurt – *otau uyi* or white *otau* in the bride's father's village. They were brought there by the bride's sisters-in-law, according to ancient customs.

After the marriage night, the bride's father officially invited her husband to his home. The groom came in and bowed down to his father-in-law. The bride's sister-in-law made the ritual of anointing the fire and throwing mutton fat in it. The groom performed the rituals of bowing and pouring the liquid fat into the hearth during his first visit to the bride's father (Photo 4). This ritual was accompanied by the offering of gifts (silver rings, silk, cotton shawls, beads, etc.) to the bride's sisters-in-law, called "pouring fire" (*otka kuyar*). After that, the young bride would also pour oil into the fire, a custom still preserved in the Mangystau region (Photo 5).

Our fieldwork research and oral information show that after the *neke kiyu* ceremony, the bride and the sisters-in-law perform the ritual of *korisu* (*to embrace*, accompanied by comforting words and songs), standing for a farewell to the bride (AFM. Kalıya Adılbek. Saadat Pınar.) when she was sent in full attire to the place of her husband, together with his mother and escorting people.

Photo 4. *The groom bows in front of relatives of the bride (Turkestanskiy al'bom. 6 al'bom; Kazaktyn etnografiyalyk kategoriyalar, ugymdar men ataularynyn dastyrli zhyesi, Tom 3, 2017: 392).*

Photo 5. *The bride's ritual of pouring oil into a fire. Village Shaiur. Mangystau Ethnographic Expedition. Photo T.Kartaeva.*

A lucky wedding day was thought to be a Wednesday or a Thursday at the end of August, before winter migration because, at that time, livestock were fattening in pastures. However, our survey data reveal that summer was rarely a wedding time, but it was rather time to prepare the dowry (*zhasau*)[5]. Tools for weaving carpets and colored fabrics (*alasha*) were put in operation in the summer pastures; reed mats and felt carpets were also manufactured (AFM).

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 The blend of traditional and Islamic customs in the Kazakh wedding

As attested by historical and ethnographic accounts, the wedding ceremony celebrated with water by a mullah was introduced with Islam in Kazakhstan and some regions did not even celebrate it, considering the last games (*qalyndyq tartu*) that ended the period of the groom's visits (*Oryn tartu*) with the full payment of the brideprice as the sealing ceremony. It could be considered that in

remote times the capture of the bride by the groom's side enacted in the *qalyndyq tartu* would have represented the final union of the newlyweds. Kidnapping the bride is a typical exogamic ritual among pastoral societies (McLennan 1865). Reports recorded by N. I. Grodekov, A. Levshin and P. E. Makovetsky indicate that among some Kazakh groups, *uryn toy* could be considered as a replacement for the wedding ceremony itself.

Another argument revealing the recentness and superficiality of the *neke kiyu* is that it was often performed after the nuptial night: "the indifferent attitude to this rite should probably also explain the fact that often it was performed after all wedding ceremonies, in particular after the wedding night, which, seemingly, should have preceded as an act of legal marriage" (Kislyakov 1969: 111).

3.2 The wedding water

Water as a blessing of the marriage is very widespread among various nationalities around the world (Slavic, Ukrainian, Hindu, Thai…) and the drinking of water by newlyweds at the moment of sealing their union is found in similar forms among other peoples of Central Asia.[6] The Pashtuns and Jews of Afghanistan, for example, use water during the wedding ceremony almost identically to the Kazakh tradition. Before the marriage covenant, the Pashtuns poured water into a bowl next to a Coran and Jews to a Torah scroll; the bride and groom purified their hands with the water; sugar was put in it so "that the bride and groom would be sweet together" and inside the bowl they placed jewelry for the bride (Tapper 1991: 166).

In Kazakhstan, according to written sources and informant's data, the wedding water was drunk first by the groom, then by the bride, and then by the participants in the marriage ceremony. But in the historical novel "Abai" when Abai and Dilda got married, the participants drank water first, followed by Abai, then Dilda (Auezov 1942: 260).

Also, some written data report that the water was drunk first by the mullah, then by the participants and finally by the newlyweds (Ibragimov 1872: 144; Zhetpisbaev 1893: no 37). Nowadays, the fact that newlyweds drink the wedding water first shows that the order has been altered from its original meaning.

3.3 Characteristics of the Kazakh wedding

More characteristic of the traditional Kazakh wedding are exogamy, matrilocality of the union, long pre-marital acquaintances of the couple during the payment

of the brideprice, the blessing of the bride's father (*bata*), teasing games from the bride's side and the use of specific symbols.

Exogamy

Exogamic obligation by adat is shared by most of the world's pastoral societies according to eugenic knowledge of livestock health and lineage improvement. But exogamy might also be linked to historical circumstances involving a scarcity of women among small disseminated pastoral groups, where men had to seek wives among others, including marriage by capture, and where exogamy became the ruling custom (McLennan 1865). Marriage by capture was and is still very widespread in Kazakhstan as a cheap expedient (robbing), a reaction of the poor to an excessive brideprice or as a rearrangement of love affairs against parents' will (Werner 2004).

Matrilocality and pre-marital rituals

In all Central Asia and Kazakhstan, marriage was sealed in two phases. The first and longest one was the matrilocal stage during the payment of the brideprice, involving acquaintance, engagement and lawful union organized by the bride's father. The second, the shortest, was the festival organized in the groom's family where the bride was revealed (*Betashar*). The importance of the first phase has been considered by many ethnographers as a cultural relic of a previous matrilocal residence of the married couple in ancient societies (Kislyakov 1969: 160). It manifests itself, in the wedding of Kazakhs, Turkmens and other peoples, in various obstacles placed toward the groom and his friends, as well as in ransoms, as survival phenomena associated with the transition from matrilocal to patrilocal marriage (Vostrov 1956).

The matrilocal importance shown in the Central Asian marriage ceremony has been classified in three categories according to proximity to a primitive matrilocal stage: 1 – long matrilocal residence of the newlyweds before and after the marriage ritual (Turkmens, Tajik), 2 – long acquaintance and partial residence of newlyweds before the lawful union (Kazakh), 3 – short visits to the bride's family before sending her off to the groom's family (urban Uzbek) (Kislyakov 1969).

Bata*, the bride's father blessing*

Although bata is a typical Muslim rite (coming from *patikha…*), in the Kazakh context it highlights the importance of the bride's patriarchal support for the union expressed as requisite for the mullah consecration. In Central Asian and Kazakhstan nationalities, the role of ancestral authority in the conjugal union is always played by the blessing of the bride's father (*bata*) and by the prayer of the Mullah representing the religious seal. The bride's side's support toward the couple continued on the occasion of childbirth and in the following rituals bringing children to adulthood (circumcision, puberty, wedding...).

The duel games

The importance of the matriarchal side of the marrying consorts is also expressed in the duels opposing the groom's parties to those of the bride. Teasing words against the groom's matchmakers, repeated hidings of the bride, the necessary 'secrecy' of the groom's visits, word and song competitions between parties are expressions of the reluctance of the matriarchal side to comply with the patriarchal society.

The combination of these rituals with selected key symbols represents the cultural specificity of the Kazakh wedding.

3.4 Key symbols involved in the wedding ceremony

Key (or core) cultural symbols in Kazakh culture are organized according to a traditional cosmogony made of opposite dualities (sky and earth, sun and moon, male-female…). This antagonistic symmetry is well expressed in the powerful symbol of the yurt window (*shanyrak*) made of 4 sides, each representing an orient, a cardinal natural element, a color with an associated value, and enclosed in a circle shape on the background of a blue sky. If the symbol itself represents life and eternity, it summarizes more concretely the concept of family welfare and harmony, and as 'root metaphor' it implicates the idea of family cohesion and lineage continuity (Ortner 1973). Accordingly, the semantics of the wedding rituals is organized according to a code of binary categories: bride-groom, water-fire, phallic-vaginal symbols (like the arrow and bow), mullah - goddess of fire**.** The importance of this duality is also expressed in the premarital games and singing duels between the groom's and bride's

parties representing liminal rites involving the entrance into conjugal life and the passage from matrilocality to patrilocality (Turner 1969).

Key symbols of the Kazakh culture put on stage during the wedding ceremony highlight the ideas of purity, firmness of the household and the union, and/or they have a propitiative function.

The white colour

In Central Asia, both red and white colors are used in wedding ceremonies. The red color symbolizes fertility (virgin blood of the bride), feminine beauty and magical protection. The white color symbolizes religious priesthood, purity, old age and death. While the red color is more emphasized in settled agrarian cultures (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India, China), the white color is privileged among the Kazakhs, even if the red color appears second in some parts of the marital dress and headdress (*saukele*) (Photo 6).

Photo 6. a) *A bride with her family. Photo by Konstantin De-Lazari. Semipalatinsk region. 1898.;* ***b)*** *Bride.* XIX *c. Photo by S. Dudin. Semipalatinsk region. 1899. (Kazahi 100 let nazad: istoriya v fotografiyah.* https://tengrinews.kz/fotoarchive/kazahi-100-let-nazad-istoriya-v-fotografiyah-1127/*.)*

The colour white is a symbol of purity, sacred heavenly bodies (Moon, Sun, Stars), and happiness and joy. The word "*Ak*" (white) was used to depict positive phenomena: happiness, good situation, support and felicity, as in the expressions "*ak bata*" (white blessing), "*ak tilek*" (white wish), "*ak zhol*" (white or augurious way). The color white is associated with all the stages of the wedding rites: White marriage, white scarf, white sugar, white salt, white blessing... It constitutes a national key symbol expressing a cultural priority given to purity over fertility in Kazakh traditional values. The white shawl covering the dish symbolized the purity and innocence of the union. It constituted one of the obligatory attributes of the wedding ritual.

Photo 7. a) *The "*кol ustatar*" (hand touch) custom after marriage. Archival number 2-104264 (Fund collection of the Central State Archive of Film and Photo Documents and Sound Recordings);* ***b)*** *The "*кol *ustatar" (hand touch). Artist Eraly Ospanuly.*

After the marriage ritual, the bride's sisters-in-law allowed the groom to hold the bride's hair through a shawl after which he received a gift called *held hair* (*shash sipatar*). Then the groom touched the girl's hand with the shawl for which he was offered another gift named *hand touch* (*kol ustatar*) (Photo 7).

The function of the shawl when holding the bride's hair and hands is to warn the groom to be polite before approaching the bride, and to remind him of the strong protective influence of the bride's "sisters-in-law institution".
In the historical novel "Abai", during Abai and Dilda's wedding, Dilda`s sisters-in-law wrapped Abai's hand in a silk scarf; Dilda's right hand was touched, and her hair was held through the scarf by Abai (Auezov 1942: 260).

İshmurat Ibragimov reports that the scarf used for this ritual was hung on a yurt curtain as a remembrance of the union of the newlyweds. The same author also wrote that during the wedding ceremony, silk, semi-silk and cotton shawls were placed around the hearth. It is easy to realize that the author is talking about various types of scarves (Ibragimov 1872: 137). N. Kalmakov notes that the attribute of the scarf at the wedding ceremony had a ritual significance in the wedding process (Kalmakov 1910: 221–228).

Silver

Among the obligatory attributes of the wedding ritual are silver rings and coins. Silver coins and silver rings were placed in the wedding water. Turning marriage water into silver water enhanced the dignity of the union. Silver water was considered very pure and useful for the body. The food of a woman wearing silver was considered clean. Written records and information show that silver rings and silver coins were shared by the participants of the wedding ceremony.

Milk

In the Mangystau region, warm milk was drunk instead of the marriage water. Milk drinking is linked to the desire of both members of the couples to have a prosperous and wealthy future. This rite of milk drinking was kept secret, even during the Soviet era (*AFM. Alkazhan Edilhan*).

Arrow

One important rite of the Kazakh wedding is *zherge sadak ogun shanshu* (piercing with an arrow), *neke suga sadak ogun batyru* (dipping an arrow in the wedding water), meaning the firmness of marriage ties (Lazarevskiy 1862)

In the song of "*Kam Burabekuly Bamsy Barik angimesinin bauany*" ("The story of Kam Burabekuly Bamsy Baryk") recorded in the book "Korkut Ata" it is said that a married man shoots an arrow and builds a "family house" where the arrow strikes the ground ("Korkut Ata" 1999: 148). And in another song of that epic "*Salor Kazan uinin shabulgani turaly angimenin bauany*" ("The story of the attack on the house of Salor Kazan") it is reported that when Kazan-bek came to his native land after a battle with the enemy, instead of the house there was an arrow left ("Korkut Ata" 1999: 138). The fact that the family house was built where the arrow hits the ground dates back to the Oghuz period. Similarly, in the 16th century folk legend Kyz Zhibek, a white wedding house for Kyz Zhibek and Tolegen was built where an arrow was shot ("Kyz Zhibek" zhyry, 2009; Photo 8). The arrow was used for building a house and kept inside it during the marriage ceremony connected with the ancestral cult. Therefore, the wedding house used for the ceremony, as the first home of the newlyweds, was the one built by the bride's father. Also, the sticking of the arrow in the ground is based on the strength and stability of the newly-formed family.

Photo 8. *The marriage ceremony "*Neke kiyu*" in the village of the bride's father and pricked bow for wedding ritual. Frames from the movie "Kyz Zhibek" (The film "Kyz Zhibek"* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mTEYdL5wkU*).*

Moreover, the use of a ritual arrow can be explained by fertility and apotropaic magic: the arrow represents masculine potency and protects newlyweds from harmful powers. Many researchers highlight this double aspect in the wedding rites of the Siberian and Central Asian peoples. Among Evenks, Khakassians, Mongols and Buryats, shooting an arrow during matchmaking rituals was widespread. For the first ones, an arrow held by the bride during the wedding ceremony would favor the birth of a child and for the latter, an arrow could even replace the presence of the groom during a wedding celebrated without his presence (Khangalov 1898: 6). The display of an arrow tied with ribbon coming from the bride and a bundle of horsehair from the groom among the Kazakhs has been considered as a protection of the couple and the conjugal power (Toleubaev 1991: 26).

Horse bristle

A. Alektorov described the ritual of dipping an arrow tied with a handful of bristles taken from the horse of both groom and bride into the wedding water. There is a saying among the Kazakh people: "*Aradan su otse de kyl otpeitin tatu*" ("Even if the water passes through the people, the bristle will not pass"). The dipping of an arrow tied with horse's bristles into the wedding water is a magic rite for the peace of the young couple. Attached horse bristles are connected to the belief in the couple's consent and their unity, which does not let a hair through. After the wedding, the newlyweds kept the arrow for good luck (Kislyakov 1969: 112).

Cult of the fire

This rite is connected to the cult of ancestors and fire, the symbol of the hearth's power. The latter cult is more ancient than the former, and initially it was connected to the cult of family gods and hearth patronesses. This is witnessed by the ritual words: "*Ot-ana, Mai-ana, jarylqa*", i.e., "*Bless and save, Mother-Fire, Mother-Fat*". Among many Kazakh people, the home hearth is symbolized by the image of *Mother-Fire*, *Mistress of Fire* or *Beldam of Fire*, to which sacrifices are offered (Grodekov 1889: 65; Altynsarin 1870: 14; Valikhanov 1985: 55; Photo 5).

3.5 Typical Kazakh marriages according to Muslim and ancestral laws.

This blending of Kazakh and Muslim codes is not only present during the wedding ritual but also throughout the conjugal life. Here, we present some basic customs of the Kazakh marital condition.

Marriage process

In the Kazah traditional laws, marriage differs from the Muslim *sharia* marriage. The former strictly observes the groom's right to choose the bride and his decision is taken into account. A bride can be chosen among any sensible girls, being a Muslim, innocent, able to bring good progeny. In some Muslim countries, this selection is often implemented by relatives and the groom may not even see his bride.

According to *sharia*, during the wedding, the groom provides his future wife with presents (*mahr*, *or kalym*, dower). Its size and cost are negotiated between the parties; before it is transferred to the bride's side, she is entitled to keep away the groom from any intercourse. As per the traditional law, the dowry (*zhasau*) is given by the girl's parents, and more precisely, by her father's clan. Girls from the age of 9–10 years old were engaged in embroidery, helping to create the dowry.

During the Kazakh wedding, the mullah did not ask about the groom's *mahr*, because the *kalym* and its size was negotiated at the matchmaking time by the groom's kin, and this *kalym* was to be spent on the girl's dowry. Therefore, the mullah only asked the girl's father: "*Has kalym been paid in full and are there obstacles to the wedding ceremony?*"

Conditions and number of wives

Sharia permits a man to take four wives. In case of the death of one of them, he may take a fifth or sixth wife. In the Koran it is stipulated: "... there is no sin in marrying two, three, even four women, you like. But if you cannot treat them likewise, then it is better to stay with one, and it is possible to live even with a slave woman. To be satisfied with one woman is the best way to protect yourself from overindulgence" (Sura Nisa: 3) (Koran Karim, 2002: 84).

It happened that Kazakh khans, beks and the rich in general did not follow *sharia*, taking, at their convenience, up to 9 and more wives. War slaves were considered their possessions. During the Kalmyk-Dzungar invasion (17th–18th centuries), victorious Kazakh warriors took Kalmyk girls to their house. One of them was Abylai Khan[7] who had 12 wives among which the Kalmyks were the most numerous.

The first wife of a rich Kazakh is entitled *baibishe* (*baıbishe* – the eldest wife), other wives were all called *tokal* (women following the first wife) (*Kazaktyn etnografiyalyk kategoriyalar, ugymdar men ataularynyn dastyrli zhyesi*, 2017: Tom 5: 397; Altynsarin 1870: 5). Their respective order is indicated: *an older tokal*, *a middle tokal*, *the youngest tokal*, *a young tokal.* The third wife (the middle one) was named *naksuyer (naqsúıer*); the youngest (the fourth) was named *akkoltyk* (*aqqoltyq*).

The tokal's property depended on her husband and his *baibishe*. Careful parents avoided giving their daughter as second or third wife to a man whose first wife was still alive. This was also because it entailed that her *kalyn mal* should be more expensive than that of the previous wives. Plural marriage was a common practice among rich families. Each wife enjoyed her own yurt and her own household. The practice of marrying many women was also widely practiced before Islam.

Divorce

According to *sharia*, a wife cannot make any decision without the approval of her husband. If a man has one wife, he spends one night out of four with her. If he has four wives, he spends every night with each of them in sequence. One wife's night cannot be given to another wife. If spouses are negligent in their duties, i.e. a wife does not obey her husband, or neglects her work in the household, then the husband is entitled to miss the rendezvous on the assigned day and can sleep separately. *Sharia* does not permit beating wives. If a husband does not implement his duties, the wife is entitled to demand their fulfilment. According to the regulations of the imam Agzam, disputes between couples are considered by two persons, one representing each side. If the reasons are serious, the judge (*kazi*) starts the divorce procedure according to the principle of *khul'*. By *sharia*, divorce requires its triple declaration by the husband uttering the word *talak* ("*talaq*"). On this point, the Koran stipulates: "A wife subject to *talak* shall wait for a husband during three menstrual cycles. If she believes in Allah and in doomsday, she shall not hide what is in her womb (pregnancy).

If the couple restores a mutual agreement, they can become husband and wife again" (Sura Bakara: 221) (*Koran Karim* 2002: 42). "A repeated *talak* allows for re-joining. If the problem persists, the custom requires a peaceful separation. If both sides became assured of their inability to live together following the laws of Allah, the husband shall keep the property paid for the wife" (Sura Bakara: 229) (Koran Karim, 2002: 43). According to the *Sharia*, if the husband declares *talak* three times, then the marriage is cancelled, and the woman can marry another man. If the latter also declares *talak* to her, and in the case where she makes peace with her previous husband, then, by Allah's laws, she will be approved for re-marriage (Sura Bakara: 230) (*Koran Karim* 2002: 44).

However, according to Kazakh customs, if the relations between spouses worsened, the aul elders *(aksaqal)* intervened, discussed the issue and tried to reconcile the couple in order to avoid divorcing, a rare case among Kazakhs (Katran 2020; AFM). Moreover, the divorce procedure was very complicated. Traditional Kazakh law did not accept a senseless divorce, which would increase the number of orphans and widows among living husbands and fathers. Traditional Kazakh law held that marriage could be broken in the following cases: if the groom testified to the loss of the bride's chastity because of the action of another man (in this case, the groom informed the bride's sisters-in-law asking them to talk to her father about his refusal from the bride); if a man was impotent; if a husband was lost for a period of seven years. In the last two cases, the wife could marry another man from the same family. The first case had extremely rare precedents among Kazakhs who believed in the principle of the "*40 houses' ban on a girl*" ("*qyzga qyryq uıden tiıı*") and their girls were under constant protection of their mothers and sisters-in-law.

Widowhood

According to *sharia*, a widow observes the *iddah* period lasting four months and ten days, after which she could marry again. Koran Karim says: "If among you someone dies, and the wife remains, that woman (according to customs) shall grieve during four months and ten days. Then, if she, keeping decency, starts remembering herself and thinks of her future, that is not your responsibility. If she is pregnant from her deceased husband, she shall wait till the birth" (Sura Bakara: 234) (*Koran Karim* 2002: 45).

The Kazakh traditional law concerning the remarriage of a widow did not conform to the *Sharia*. According to Kazakh customs, a widow must mourn for one year, up to the funeral commemoration of her husband, and after that, she

can only become the wife of her elder or younger brother-in-law (*amengerlik*). The law respects the widow's wish to avoid levirate and cannot force her. If a woman chooses a man of another clan, her children and dowry remain in the previous husband's family.

For Kazakhs, it was critical that a widow "remained within the clan, even if her husband passed away prematurely" in order that orphans didn't suffer from carelessness. Generally, widows followed the levirate regulations to remarry a husband's relative.

When a widow remarries, the above-mentioned premarital rituals were no longer performed (P. 1878: 9). In ancient times, if a man had many wives, all of them were married in the Islamic way, with the participation of the bride's father. However, the preliminary rituals with secret dating and games were not held during the pre-wedding ceremony *urun baru*.

Contemporary evolution and conservation of the Kazakh traditional wedding ritual

The Kazakh wedding ceremony was practiced until the establishment of Soviet rule. The Soviet-era policy banned large herds of private livestock and, simultaneously, the traditional marriage procedures were withdrawn from practice. Despite this power's ban on Islamic wedding canons, the traditional ceremony was secretly practiced in the Syrdarya-Aral region. In the early 20th century, some basic rules of the Kazakh wedding ritual were eliminated, for example, the occurrence of the wedding ceremony in the bride's father's house and the performance of the witnesses' song.

However, the holding of the wedding ceremony (*neke kiyu*) at the girl's house, and the invitation of a mullah by the girl's father are still preserved among the Chinese Kazakhs, Iranian Kazakhs and the Kazakhs in Turkey (AFM. *Kaliya Adilbek*. *Sydyhan Ulyshai*. *Saadet Pinar*).

The Kazakh from Turkey Kaliya Adilbek was married at the age of 15 by her parents. Before her parents and some relatives escaped from China chased after by the Chinese army, they organized the wedding rituals of five girls on the same day in order to unify their children. The Uyghur mullah Mohammed Turdykhan did not make the obligatory request of the dower (*mahr)* since the parents were in such troubled times. But the groom promised that he would keep the bride well-nourished for three days (AFM. Kaliya Adilbek). During the war or difficult times, at weddings mullahs would not require *mahr* and the bride's father did not ask *kalym*.

Today, in the Turkish Kazakh tradition, as in ancient times, the bride's father prepares the house for the guests and invites a mullah to consecrate the union at his home. The mullah writes down the amount of the bride's *mahr* and gives it to the bride's father as a marriage guarantee. Here, the traditional Kazakh marriage ritual system is tightly connected to the people's beliefs and convictions.

CONCLUSION

Ancestral customs and magic beliefs, like the veneration of ancestors, purity, firmness and fertility constitute the backbone of the Kazakh wedding ritual. The ancestors' cult is the most evident component in these religious-magical wedding rites. It can be seen in the blessing (*bata*) of the bride's father, in the hanging of an arrow near the wedding water and in the pouring of oil into the father-in-law's hearth, all representing the foundation of the household.

The magic role played by the arrow (protection), white colour and water (purity), salt, sugar and silver (cleanness) were fundamental elements of the wedding rituals. They belong to a rich inventory of pre-Islamic beliefs variously ascribed to animism, fetishism, shamanism, tengrianism, the cult of ancestors. Although the traditional Kazakh marriage was celebrated according to Islamic principles, it included many pre-Islamic elements.

These religious-magical cults were at the service of the marriage's main purpose, securing a successful continuation of the family line.

Today, the ancient rituals of the wedding ceremonies such as hanging an arrow, adding sugar and salt to the wedding water, placing silver rings, covering the water bowl with a scarf, wrapping the bride and groom's hands in a white shawl and touching the bride's hair with a scarf are no longer preserved among Kazakhs in Kazakhstan.

Our study identified the atheistic policy of the Soviet era as responsible for the alteration of the marriage process in Kazakhstan. The policy forbade the religious activity of the mullahs, the provision of the brideprice and the performance of the ritual of sending-off the bride. Moreover, circumstantial events, such as the large famines of the thirties under Soviet rule, reduced the ceremony to just a blessing.

Progressively, behaviours were altered, and it became common during the Soviet time for a girl to run away and marry the man she loved.

The organization of the wedding ceremony in the house of the bride's father, who first gives his blessings on the union according to the ancient Kazakh tradition, is still preserved among Kazakhs of Iran, Turkey and partly China.

However, some conservative areas of Kazakhstan like the Mangystau and the Syrdarya regions, where the Muslim marriages went on secretly during the Soviet time, still conserve the performance or the memory of some elements of the ancestral marriage rites. They preserved and still perform the "Wedding songs" (*neke zhyry*), "marriage speech" (*neke kiar soz*) or "witness words" (*kualik soz*) as a regional ethnographic folklore and ritual heritage. Today it is included in the "National list of the intangible cultural heritage of Kazakhstan" under the name "Marriage tradition", including all the elements of the betrothal and wedding ceremony.

The record and study of these ethnographic data are urgent prerequisites for the preservation of the Kazakh wedding rituals as a monument of the intangible cultural heritage of Kazakhstan.

NOTES

[1] *Kalyn mal* (*qalyń mal*) is the number of livestock presented by the groom's father to the bride's father as payment (*qalyńdyq* became *kalym*) for the girl. The given *kalym* of animals is used to create the bride's dowry, clothing, headdress (*saukele*). *Kalym* consists of several parts: 1) *bas zhaksy*, 2) *kara mal*, 3) *toi mal*, 4) "milk fee", and 5) "camel". The first includes 20 mares, 2) 21–25 mares, 3) 20–70 mares, 4) 1–7 camels as compensation to the bride's mother for having raised the daughter, 5) 2 camels to the bride's father. Notorious rich people gave a lot of livestock. The lyrical epic "Kyz-Zhibek" praises Tolegen's father for giving a *kalym* of 550 mares for Zhibek. The common people paid the dower according to their capacity.

[2] *Uryn baru* / *Uryn kelu* (uryn barý / uryn kelý) is the groom's first visit to the bride's village after the matchmaking. In olden times, a young man wishing to get acquainted with his bride arrives with friends at her village and stops in the outskirts in a temporary tent. The groom's friends go to see the bride's sisters-in-law (brother's wife and cousin's wife) to announce the groom's arrival and offer gifts for the good news. The bride's sisters-in-law pay a return visit to the groom's tent and agree on the time of the meeting with the bride. Often, a special yurt is erected for this meeting. Games allowing the groom to become familiar with his bride follow one after another with the participation of the sisters-in-law.

[3] *jenge*/*jengeler* are the sisters-in-law of the bride consisting generally of her brothers' wives (brother's wife and cousin's wife).

[4] One of the marriage certificates kept in the Khan Orda Museum-Reserve is presented as a marriage registration certificate for Yakub Khamidul and Bibifatima Gabdannasyrkyzy. The marriage was concluded by mullah Shahi-Ahmad Tajeddinuly on June 4, 1888, and the marriage certificate was issued on August 25 of that year. Ibngabas Gabdannasyruly and Gimadaddin Jalaladdinuly acted as witnesses. Such marriage certificates prove that in the traditional Kazakh society, the process of marriage from the public announcement of the mullah were gradually moving to the process of additional confirmation by "documents".

[5] *Zhasau* (*jasaý*) is the dowry given to the bride by her parents. The livestock received as *kalym* did not remain with the bride's father; it returned to the groom's house as household property along with accessories. Livestock was accepted as the *zhasau* fee. *Zhasau* included the yurt interior furniture, interior covers (felt, blankets, seat cushions), a silver saddle with accessories, girls' riding horses, pack camels, carpets, chests and caskets, fabrics, fur coats, coats and gowns, and dishware (Altynsarin 1870: 14–15). The verses in the "Kyz-Zhibek" epos narrate:

"Eighty camels were packed with the dowry
To accompany Kyz-Zhibek…
…Mother prepared the belongings to be carried by nine horses"
"Eighty camels were to carry golden chests...",

– specifying the fact that the bride's dowry was not less valuable than the dower. ("Kyz Zhibek" zhyry, 53 tom, 2009: 101).

[6] The anthropology of things, that is, the existence of various objects during the drinking of marriage water among the peoples of Central Asia is associated with the remnants of pre-Islamic beliefs. (Kislyakov 1969).

[7] *Abylay Khan* (1711–1781) was a Kazakh Khan, a great commander and statesman, the descendant of Jochi Khan (eldest son of Genghis Khan). He had 12 wives and 30 sons. His descendants were the last Kazakh khans Wali and Kenesary. Shokan Valikhanov (1835–1865), a famous scientist and ethnographer, was his fourth-generation descendant (Valikhan, 1 tom. 1998: 49–51). The Russian researcher Fedor Lazarevskii explains that wealthy Kazakhs marry more than four wives outside of the Islamic context, due to the high number of their livestock and the incapacity to manage such a rich household with only four women. In a 19th century study conducted in western Kazakhstan (Bukey Horde), it was recorded from local Kazakh informants that: "a man called Dastan in the Bokei Orda kept 15 wives, having 50 sons; Shabyl Kydyralin had 20 wives and 60 sons" (Lazarevskii 1862; Kazakh halkukun dasturleri men adet-guruptar, Tom 2. 2006: 158–159).

AFM – THE AUTHOR'S FIELD MATERIALS. LIST OF INFORMANTS

Kosan Auesbaev. Born in 1931, Junior Zhuz, Tabın, Syrdarya, Terenozek.
Urimhan Ayazbaeva. Born in 1932, Junior Zhuz, Jakayım, City Aralsk.
Unathan Baetov. Born in 1938, Junior Zhuz, Karakesek, Aral region, Sazdy.
Edilhan Alkazhan. Born in 1942, Junior Zhuz, Adai, Mangystau region, Aktau.
Kaliya Adilbek. Born in 1935 in Tarbagatay. Middle Zhuz, kerei. Turkey, Istambul, Kazakh of Zeitunburni.
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THE WEDDING CEREMONY IN KAZAKH FOLKLORE: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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Abstract: The study aims to analyze the most significant area of family and household ritual folklore, which is regarded as a complex system of folklore studies, and to showcase the extent of research on these topics in national folklore. The relevance of the study consists in describing the ancient traditions and rituals of the Kazakh people, which have great importance for traditional Kazakh society, their spiritual development, the formation of personality in the community, and behavioral education. Wedding ceremonies were considered in conjunction with the history of various understandings, and an analysis of current problems of development and transformation, from ancient centuries to the present time, will be carried out. Experimental method was used during the study. As the results of the study of ritual customs held during weddings, the form of performance of rituals and related folklore samples and the level of their application and sensation were determined. It can be emphasized that Kazakhstan in the 21st century is faced with living conditions at the intersection of different cultures.

Keywords: tradition, phratry, ceremony, farewell song of the bride, ritual customs, family

INTRODUCTION

The Kazakh wedding ceremony is one of the most important branches of the complex system of family folklore. It contains not only the historical knowledge of an entire people, but also the essence of poetry and music, the meaning of family values, and the rich heritage of national psychology (Iskakova et al. 2022). Therefore, studying it scientifically presents a complex problem that requires differentiation. Since the last century, the wedding ceremony has begun to be studied as a socio-legal, socio-economic, and religious-magical act (Ibraev et al. 2017). Later, attention was drawn to the nature of the folk drama, reflecting the ratio of two families (Obayeva et al. 2020). The ancient goal of reuniting a man and a woman, which led to the emergence of endogamous and exogamic marriages from group marriages, has determined centuries-old traditions of human reflection on culture, responsibility for the continuation of generations, and the choice of a bride (Otar 2014). Gradually, over centuries, the complex system of the wedding ceremony was formed (Abilkhairova et al. 2014). Its structure, including its composition, specific customs, relative genre diversity in folklore, and figurative and artistic elements, developed over time (Stadnik 2024). Particular attention was paid to the roles and significance of each of the primitive wedding rites. Each rite was imbued with a singular semantic meaning, which was understood only within the cultural and emotional context of the ritual itself. The triumph and complex structure of the wedding ceremony of the Kazakh people from the 18th century has attracted the interest of researchers. Interesting information is presented in the diaries and collections of scientists-travelers visiting the first Kazakh steppe (Khazretali et al. 2018).

In an article entitled "On the forms of Kazakh folk poetry", the famous Kazakh folklorist Shokan Ualikhanov (1985) indicates the importance of the ceremony of bringing the bride, while Ibrai Altynsarin (2003) in his work "Essay on the theme of the Orenburg department of matchmaking traditions of Kazakhs, wedding and seeing off a girl", asserts that *Kyz uzatu*[1] and the bride's drive are rituals performed within more than one day, consisting of several stages; each stage is clearly formulated by rituals. The importance of the traditions of the Kazakh people up to seven ancestors was emphasized.

In his work "Words of Tradition", Akhmet Baitursynov (2003) gave a definition of such traditions as heat-heat[2], *betashar*[3], toybastar[4], marriage[5], and bata[6]. In the article entitled "Traditions and customs, poetry for Kyz uzatu", Mukhtar Auezov (2001) analyzed the customs of heat-heat, acquaintance-farewell, poetry, and betashar. And in the writings of Alkey Margulan (1985), the procedures for the ransom of the bride, the filing of the bride with cattle in the wedding ceremony, the preservation of a skillful rite, the will of the father, the theft of

the bride (secretly), the purification of the bride by fire, and *betashar* are discussed, and Malik Gabdullin (1958) considers the genre character in "Essays on customs". For the first time in monographs of family folklore, in the section "Rituals of Traditions", Bekmurat Uakhatov (1974) was the first to investigate family folklore at the level of a monograph and highlight the section "Songs Composed by Traditions" of his work "Kazakh Folk Songs" for general family traditional folklore and revealed all the features of this topic.

The main novelty of Kenzhekhan Matyzhanov's (2007) work was the consideration of family folklore in combination with traditions, customs, and concepts, which were performed according to the periods of a person's life before death. As a result, the general principles of rituals and customs included in the complex system of family rituals were determined; their characteristics were analyzed. However, a comprehensive understanding of the wedding ceremony itself has revealed several urgent problems that require restudy in accordance with the demands of contemporary folkloristic science. For example, it is necessary to consider the ethnographic, dramatic, and poetic aspects of the wedding ceremony. This includes analyzing the regional variations in the role of folklore in both traditional and modern wedding practices, as well as associated rituals. Additionally, a comparative approach should be taken to evaluate similarities and differences with the wedding traditions of other Turkic peoples and cultures worldwide. This is particularly important because understanding a wedding ceremony today presents a complex challenge – not only in the context of a single village or family but also in uncovering the broader, distinctive features of the ceremony within its cultural and historical framework. In this context, several studies in musicological science have been conducted (Yagi 2020). Furthermore, a significant concern is the identification of intricate interaction processes in the wedding ceremonies of various ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. This study aims to analyze the nature of contemporary tradition in various regions of Kazakhstan, highlighting the differences in the modern meaning and function of traditional concepts in modern weddings.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To understand the origins and development of the Kazakh wedding ceremony one must consider both Kazakh culture and human cognition. In general, Kazakh common customs are influenced by both general circumstances and regional peculiarities. The customs vary depending on the territorial specifics of their location and the historical conditions that have existed since the region's inception. At the same time, the peculiarities of the customs and traditions

of the diasporas inhabiting this region allowed the local residents not only to communicate with the traditional roots of those returning to the country, but also to integrate the specific characteristics of the environment they had lived in. The most urgent problem in modern folklore is identifying the problems faced by the Kazakh wedding tradition, while maintaining its semantic depth, spiritual and educational essence, as well as its advantages and disadvantages.

To analyze the nature of modern wedding ceremonies, research was conducted between 2018 and 2020 in the Almaty, Turkestan, and Atyrau regions. The study involved 75 informants, aged 16 to 70 years, representing different generations and perspectives on wedding traditions. The research combined direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and audio-visual documentation to assess the interplay between traditional customs and modern innovations in Kazakh wedding ceremonies. Informants were engaged in various ways:

1) *Participant observation*. Researchers attended wedding ceremonies, observing rituals such as *kyz uzatu*, *zhar-zhar*[7], *synsu*[8], and *betashar*. Special attention was given to the continuity and modification of traditions across different regions.

2) *Interviews with informants.* Conversations were conducted with wedding participants, guests, and family members. Some interviews took place during the wedding, while others were conducted separately to gather deeper insights into traditional customs, their meaning, and their evolution.

3) *Comparison of rituals across regions.* The study explored regional variations in wedding customs, focusing on whether traditional elements were preserved as a whole or performed as isolated rituals.

4) *Analysis of audio-visual materials.* Video recordings and audio documentation of wedding songs and performances were reviewed to examine how the meaning and performance of traditional songs varied across different weddings.

5) *Influence of social development on traditions.* The research also considered scholarly perspectives on how social and cultural changes have influenced modern wedding practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the context of the interaction of various wedding ceremonies, the task of typological similarity arises – to create a new family and sustain offspring. The groom takes this initiative, which the bride's final words reinforce, and continues from there. The action of the wedding plot develops and ends in one direction: wooing a bride and transferring her into a new status, thereby

securing new responsibilities in her husband's household. The events leading up to the beginning of the wedding ceremony system have largely retained their traditional character. In other words, the people hold a deep-rooted belief that the preparation for the wedding holds greater significance than the actual wedding ceremony itself. The people paid great attention to each of the wedding ceremonies. This is due to the belief that creating a family, integrating into society, raising a *shanyrak*[9], and building a yurt are the most important tasks in a person's life. First and foremost, the parents' dream is for their son to marry and start his own family, and for their daughter to marry successfully. Secondly, they want their daughter to demonstrate initiative in life and take responsibility for all her actions. Lastly, they want her to continue her family's legacy and contribute to the development of her tribe, people, and all societies (Matyzhanov 2007). During the wedding ceremony, they form their own complex system of actions and words, music, superstitions, and clothes.

Wedding folklore is characterized by the performance of well-known motifs, i.e., different songs. Most Turkic peoples perform the poem "Heat-heat" as part of the traditional rite of *Kyz Uzatu*. The main point is to comfort the girl and direct her to a new life. At first, the singers are divided into two groups and sing songs, but at the end, all the guests unite to wish the newlyweds happiness and prosperity in a new life. Alexander Veselovsky (1940) noted that in the most ancient era, when fever-heat is born, a characteristic feature of the pair's struggle in dialogue with both sides is the girl's defeat and recognition in life, and the predominance of the groom's side.

The content of "Heat-heat" has also changed. It now tends to be sung in groups and has completely changed the initial form. This poem sounds today at weddings (Kelmendi 2024). However, it no longer contains any of the previous content. Previously, the content of the song was tragic, but in modern conditions, it glorifies the celebration of the wedding and young happiness. In addition, the pronunciation of the poem has changed. The groom's side performs "Heat-heat" as a choir song for guests (Qasqabasov 2007). Even now, "Heat-heat" is not sung in a living voice as before but recorded in advance, so the meaning and importance of the custom are lost. The rites of "Heat-heat" and *synsu* characterize not only sadness and social inequality but also embody a deeper meaning. Their true and deep meaning lies in remembering the equality of life and death and appreciating the present – that is, life.

According to the traditional custom, the girl sang *synsu* and made a ceremonial farewell. For this, they prepare the girl in advance and send her according to all traditions. "A happy girl who joined her new family hid her joy, sang heat and heat and *synsu*, since the position of society is such. First, say goodbye to a happy childhood and youth. Secondly, a world that is entirely

unfamiliar, unpredictable, and full of strangers awaits. In this case, if the girl and her family do not cry, the bed is alien to all guests" (Matyzhanov 2007). But, despite the different names, Mukhtar Auezov (2001) refers to the poem "Farewell-acquaintance" in the context of Seungsu as a separate genre, while Saken Seifullin (1964) refers to it as "Synsyma". Bekmurat Uakhatov (1974), using this term, conducted research and dwelled on the essence of familiarization. The final part, which takes place on the eve of traditional synsu, differs from modern *synsu* in that it involves a separate ritual where the bride receives a ransom, the arrival of the groom, and the period until the wedding itself. A girl getting married visits all her relatives, acquaintances, and friends, saying goodbye to them and telling all her sadness and suffering. According to Alexei Levshin (1832), "in the Junior and Middle Zhuz[10], a bride bidding farewell to her family was ceremonially lifted onto a carpet, whereas in the Great Zhuz, she was required to walk on her own". During her farewell to her family, the bride not only recited her memorized poems but also included her own poems, expressing her feelings. If the initial farewells to the whole village were characterized by a uniform mood, on the wedding day, the girl's sadness and a profound understanding of her fate took center stage. This is because a married girl is no longer a young and carefree girl but already the mistress of a family. All her actions, clothing, and character must correspond to new traditions. On this occasion, the girl uses poetry to express her inner state and mood.

There were many people in front of the doors
I am leaving my house.
Despite my resistance
I'm getting married.

However, the girl's primary task is to bid farewell to her country and land. This is the girl's farewell to the skullcap (rather than the skullcap[11], *saukele*[12], *kimeshek*[13]), a farewell to home, homeland, childhood, and youth.

If you ask, there is a skullcap on the right side,
I have my will at home.

or

On the right side of the father was a skullcap,
I'm not free now.
Put a saukele on me
I am unhappy and in pain.

The tradition of altering a girl's headdress to reflect the unique traits of each country carries a universal significance. The character of the girl's headdress varies. For instance, when the Kazakhs dispatched a girl, they removed the skullcap and replaced it with the *saukele*. "Here is *taqiya*, *borik* – a symbol of girlish carelessness" (Sultangareeva 1986).

Consequently, the girl has developed her own essence of crying skullcaps (a symbolic farewell ritual in which a bride mourns the end of her childhood and maidenhood before marriage). After all, the headdress showed the social level of a woman. Therefore, a girl who is getting married will say goodbye to her youth and unwillingly put on a saukele on her head. That is, *syңsu* is a wedding ceremony that a girl participates in on the eve of leaving her village, where she bids farewell to her parents, relatives, childhood, country, and land. The home, the *shanyrak*, the threshold, the right side of the yurt, and the front door all hold significant meaning in the synsu ritual. The girl's life in her parental home is temporary. She is a guest in her house, and before leaving, the girl involuntarily says goodbye to every part of her home. "According to the Orenburg Kazakhs, the girls experienced instances when they tore out the front door due to their strong feelings for their home" (Zhakan 2014; Kartaeva et al. 2017).

My golden threshold
Silver is also my threshold.
I thought I would step over and leave
I'm a girl leaving you.

"The meaning of the concept *Kyzkonak* in all texts of *Synsu* is twofold. It represents a girl as a transitory figure – someone extended, outgoing, and temporary. More broadly, it reflects the universal notion of a "guest in life", emphasizing the impermanence of human existence. Therefore, the bride is equated with the deceased, who has the "right side" of the house after death. The deceased remains a "present" in his house for one night. The right side of the house is the connection point of the enclosed space (house) with the world. That is, both the girl and the deceased are representatives of other peoples" (Zhakan 2014; Mukhan et al. 2020).

The girl's mother, girlfriends, friends, and peers shared their personal thoughts and expressed their feelings and wishes for happiness. "According to ancient tradition, before the bride left, the entire village gathered to bid her farewell. The elders offered their blessings, while young women and daughters-in-law accompanied her on foot beyond the village. As the husband and bride adjusted to their new roles and prepared for parting with her family, they embraced, expressed their emotions, and wept. The assembled. group is visually

inspected until the procession moves forward. According to tradition, the girl and her husband are not supposed to take care of themselves after moving. On the way, familiar auls they meet congratulate them and wish them happiness" (Altynsarin 2003). At the same time, when it comes to the variety of modern ceremonies, the opinion of many scholars is reduced to a single thought. This also applies to wedding traditions. For example, the Karelian researcher Unelma Konkka (1974) commented that the songs of the *synsu* spoke of the fear of getting married. Marriage was compared to death: "wedding lamentations expressed the bride's feelings of parting with her family and home, with carefree life and youth, or, more precisely, lamentations made the bride deeply realize and experience this separation, separation forever". Apart from these reasons, they are the final motives associated with her existence:

After the rain there must be greenery,
The grass will probably replace the tulip.
Country-loss of its people,

Probably the most unfortunate girl is the one whose fate is predetermined from birth, reinforcing the idea of a girl's temporary place in life, as mentioned earlier. These ritual words express that the girl is leaving her home, leaving a foreign country, which makes her capable of a new life, adapting to a new life, and separating her father's house from herself.

According to female active function, the *synsu* and *joktau* are very close. One girl is able say what the other said, and they have similarities in terms of pronunciation. In appropriate verses, each girl expresses her confessions of hearts, dreams, and hopes in a unique way. At the same time, as in Islam, *joktau* is a genre that represents the degree of talent, the ability to think and feel. Today, the tradition of sending off a bride varies across different regions, with each area maintaining its own unique customs and practices. For example, only in the northern and central regions do men go to Kudalyk and try to attend the evening. Previously, the girl and her husband's relatives would leave in the morning. After all, a new day is a symbol of a new life. "Previously, the girl's move was called *Kyz kөmegi*, and her mother, with her adult daughter-in-law, sees her off with her younger brothers and sisters on horseback. The girl had to leave without turning back. According to all traditions and rituals, the newlyweds were brought to a new house, crossing the threshold with their right foot. According to all customs and traditions, the bride and groom are greeted by a *shashu* (a ritual scattering of sweets or coins). Then, a respected woman, known as *el kelini*, *zhurt kelini*, or *khalyktyk kelin*, steps forward to welcome the bride. Holding her by the right hand, she leads the new bride to the black

cauldron and recites a prayer for the deceased ancestors of the family, offering wishes for happiness, patience, and prosperity. After these rituals, the young bride is allowed into the house" (Argynbayev 1983).

The bride, entering the threshold with bent knees, greets all the guests after she is laid in a soft Tula next to the hearth. Ancient magical beliefs associate this ritual with symbolic transformation, linking it to the idea of acquiring qualities such as fertility, strength, and prosperity – attributes often ascribed to animals in traditional Kazakh culture. In addition, in the traditional worldview, a sheep's skin symbolizes growth. Its role in bridal customs has symbolized goodwill for many future generations. After that, the final *betashar* procedure coincides with the ancient concepts. Well-known ethnographer Halel Argynbaev expressed his opinion about this: "Young brides hide from their father, grandfather, and elder-younger brothers of the husband, without seeing them. Sometimes, the concealment obscures the entirety of life. According to this habit, one should consider a group that once experienced all peoples as proof of the struggle against marriage traditions" (Argynbayev 1983).

The research found that all Turkic peoples practice the *betashar* rite of the new bride. In addition, they strictly adhered to one rule during the *betashar* ceremony: revealing the bride's face only at the conclusion of the procedure. The bride did not reveal her face with bare hands. The man who exposes the daughter-in-law's face with reeds does so using a stick, a white or red rag, and then a *dombra*[14]. The scholar Kenzhekhan Matyzhanov, who studied the folklore of the family tradition, expressed his conviction about *betashar*. In other words, this ritual symbolizes the introduction of the younger "lower world" into the "middle world". The general procedure involves the simultaneous performance of functions such as preservation of cultural heritage (ensuring the continuity of traditions, language, and ancestral knowledge), social bonding, education, and moral guidance. Today, there is a fundamental shift in this profoundly meaningful procedure. Modern trends do not align with traditional customs. Additionally, the performance style is also special. Its activities are simplified and in line with the requirements of the time. For example, in the past, the *betashar* ceremony aimed to introduce a new environment and pave the way for young women embarking on a new life. The significance and meaning of the rituals take precedence, and the cognitive content gradually transforms into an artistic and aesthetic meaning, leading to an increase in educational activity. Depending on the listener's specifics, we can divide this into types: moral, educational activity, also aesthetic pleasure. This is evidenced by the performer. One of the procedures in the wedding ceremony is the "dead-alive" procedure. Ethnographers have formulated diverse opinions about this rite (Zhunisov 1994; Naurzbaeva et al. 2021).

The traditional custom of *Otau kөteru* involved participation from the entire village. The village raised the *shanyrak*, the circular crown of the yurt, to the top of the structure during this ceremony, symbolizing the establishment of a new family. As part of the tradition, the bride brought her dowry items into the house. A respected elder ceremonially raised the *shanyrak*, and the most esteemed woman of the village was the first to enter the house, anointing the fire with oil and blessing the threshold. A respected elder prepared the table (*dastarkhan*) and scattered sweets (shashu) to celebrate the occasion. A unique tradition that has persisted since ancient times involves the groom's relatives inviting young people to the "home demonstration" ceremony. The goal of this tradition is to help the young bride quickly adapt to her new environment, facilitating her assimilation into the family. Her upbringing, manners, and moral character are assessed during this period to determine how well she embodies the expected values of a respectful and well-raised bride. The bride's task is to bow to all relatives and the whole house. In order to assist financially, older and experienced mothers prepare a *shashu* for a new bride, a tradition known as *Өңir salu*. On the appointed day, the bride and groom arrive at the bride's house through a procedure known as *Esik ashar*. The bride will see the groom for the first time after the wedding on this day. He brings special gifts and undergoes various tests. However, this stage allows for more relaxed interaction compared to the initial wedding rituals.

The results of the experiment indicate that the integral structure of the traditional rite has been violated. According to the meaning, the preserved image, executed, is narrowed in place, time, and meaning of execution. For example, the emotional state of the girl during the singing was diminished. This may be because others performed the key elements of the ritual on her behalf, leaving the girl herself to play only a symbolic role with minimal emotional involvement in the situation. The significance of the songs performed is evident in this context. Among the informants, there were those who paid more attention to the songs performed during games rather than the wedding process or the spirit of patriotism (Seok et al. 2021). In addition, issues related to attraction – distribution and transmission of speech (toasts) – were raised. Additionally, we noted informants who held the belief that young people's future lives depend on the fulfillment of traditional rituals and that non-observance of these conditions is detrimental.

The essence of the traditional wedding and its associated procedures are controversial: they involve bidding farewell to a girl's life in her father's house and establishing a new, yet dependent, life in the groom's house, which includes an obligatory woman, a bride, and adaptation to the mother's life. The concept of family values has evolved, along with the social and personal responsibility of

women and men, leading to a reduction in the mandatory procedures. In modern weddings, elements such as wishes and congratulations, various games, and performances play an important role. These elements introduce a new feature to the ceremony, distinguishing it from its earlier, more dramatic nature, which was defined by traditional songs, moods, games, and the symbolic meaning of change. That is, the wedding has been turned into a fun theatrical game, and all those gathered became its direct players, direct participants. Previously, specific individuals were responsible for leading and organizing the wedding proceedings. However, weddings have now become more inclusive, with a renewed emphasis on collective participation. Today's weddings feature a variety of performances, dances, and exciting games, all in accordance with a specially developed program. In modern Kazakh weddings, extravagance and emphasis on entertainment can detract from the core traditions and meaningful content of the ceremony.

The duration of the modern custom was shorter than that of the previous ones, ending as soon as possible. Many beliefs and traditions are not made, and special attention is not paid to them. This does not correspond to the generally accepted understanding of how much each family has to do with traditions. Now, the parents of both parties meet in one place, such as a restaurant, to discuss, agree, and acquaint themselves with each other. The responsibility lies with the guy; the girl's side is responsible for *kudalyk*[15] and *sirga salu*[16]. The girl's house hosts these ceremonies. Also, while *uzatu*[17] was traditionally performed in the house, it is now in restaurants, thereby losing the significance of the farewell synsu associated with the house.

The transition from Western rites is reflected in the ceremonies of the modern wedding ritual, along with the circumstances that prevailed during the Soviet government. For example, during the bride's escort, a white cloth is laid out, rose leaves are scattered, flowers are thrown, cakes are cut for the parents and husbands, games are played, humorous songs are sung, and dances are performed. As a result, weddings are filled with an atmosphere of lively excitement and friendly competition – whether in seating arrangements, contests, or traditional games related to the bride. For example, the *betashar* ceremony was traditionally performed in the daytime before lunch. In most cases, this persists. Today, some restaurants stage *betashar* at night and in natural settings. The essence of *betashar* is also lost by the recitation of meaningless verses. In most cases, priority is given to the entertaining show character of the wedding, rather than the spiritual and educational.

Basically, the formation and development of Kazakh folklore began with the early identification and distribution of samples of oral literature. This is evidenced by the mythical stories and drawings on ancient Turkic inscriptions

(Pangereyev & Baltymova 2019). However, the continuity of tradition is changing or disappearing in our time.

CONCLUSIONS

In modern weddings, the meaning of only an interesting, joyful mood of human life prevails. The legitimacy of the understanding of the private family as the common joy of the whole people has been preserved. Many celebrations are rooted in tradition, where young people dress in national attire, greet guests, wait for candles and entertainment, and generally strive to uphold traditional values. They adhere to the modern demands of condensing, simplifying, and maintaining consistency across various religious genres. Many wedding traditions that were once obligatory and held deep symbolic meaning are now performed mainly as formalities, serving to uphold cultural etiquette rather than their original purpose. The execution of the Kazakh wedding ceremony is not uniform but consistent. Different areas within the same region perform the ceremony differently.

Kazakh folkloristic science faces great challenges. In the modern world, where different cultures intersect, the transformation of national traditions takes on new dimensions. This is particularly significant because family values remain a fundamental aspect of any society. In general, since the wedding is a significant event for a single family, it is important to consider the individual's requirements. But everyone believes that a wedding, being a home, is a precondition for the life of the younger generation, which will become the owner of the future society. Therefore, it is important to bring the wedding tradition to the forefront.

In conclusion, it can be emphasized that Kazakhstan is experiencing living conditions at the intersection of different cultures in the 21st century. We must be especially attentive to family values so that our traditional values do not lose their basic meaning and, during the period of various social transformations, retain their particularity without absorbing the precedents of globalization. Our ancestors, in their wisdom, shaped our entire culture and tradition. Based on this, our primary responsibility is to uphold the educational standards of our family and community.

NOTES

[1] *Kyz uzatu* (*қyz ұzat*u) is a traditional Kazakh pre-wedding ceremony that marks the formal farewell of a bride from her parental home before she is married. This ceremony is deeply rooted in Kazakh customs and signifies the symbolic transition of a daughter from her birth family to her new life in her husband's family.

[2] Heat-heat (*құttyқtau*) – This term refers to a traditional congratulatory or well-wishing practice. It is often associated with celebrations, particularly weddings and childbirth, where guests express their blessings and good wishes to the family.

[3] *Betashar* – This is a significant Kazakh wedding ritual, meaning "unveiling of the bride". Upon arriving at her husband's home, the bride, with her face covered, is introduced to her new family through verses sung by an elder or invited singer. At the end of the ceremony, the bride removes her veil, bows to her new relatives, and receives gifts or money as a blessing.

[4] *Toybastar* – This is a special concluding ritual of a celebration. The toybastar typically consists of a song or speech that formally closes an important event such as a wedding, birth celebration, or housewarming.

[5] Marriage (*үilenu toiy*) – In the Kazakh context, marriage is not just a legal union, but a complex cultural institution deeply intertwined with family traditions, rituals, and ancestral customs.

[6] *Bata – Bata* is a deeply respected Kazakh tradition of giving a blessing. It is typically performed by elders, religious figures, or esteemed community members on significant occasions such as weddings, childbirth, travel, or the start of a new endeavor.

[7] *Zhar-zhar* – A traditional Kazakh wedding song performed during pre-wedding ceremonies. It is an antiphonal (call-and-response) song where the groom's side praises the bride's future life in her new home, while the bride's side responds with expressions of longing for her parental home.

[8] *Synsu* (*syңsu*)– A deeply emotional farewell song sung by the bride before leaving her parental home. Synsu is a significant cultural tradition that highlights the emotional depth of the transition from maidenhood to married life.

[9] *Shanyrak* (*shaңyraқ*) – A central and symbolic element of the traditional Kazakh yurt, representing the circular wooden frame at the top of the structure. It holds deep cultural significance as a symbol of family, continuity, and ancestral heritage.

[10] Great Zhuz, Middle Zhuz, and Junior Zhuz – These refer to the three main tribal divisions (*zhuz*) of the Kazakh people, which historically structured their social and political organization. The Great Zhuz (*Ұly zhүz*) occupied the southeastern regions of modern Kazakhstan, the Middle Zhuz) (*Orta zhүz*) resided in the central and northeastern areas, and the Junior Zhuz (*Kishi zhүz*) was based in the western territories. These divisions played a role in governance, leadership, and cultural variations among the Kazakhs but were not separate ethnic groups.

[11] Skullcap (*taқiia*) – A small, round, and often richly embroidered cap traditionally worn by unmarried girls.

[12] *Saukele* (*səukele*) – An elaborate, tall, and richly adorned wedding headdress worn by brides during their wedding ceremony.

[13] *Kimeshek* – A traditional headscarf or hood worn by married women.

[14] The *dombra* (*dombyra*) is a traditional Kazakh stringed musical instrument, similar to a long-necked lute. It has two strings and is typically played by plucking, producing a distinctive, resonant sound.

[15] *Kudalyk* (*құдалық*) – The matchmaking and betrothal ceremony, where the groom's family formally visits the bride's family to propose marriage and negotiate wedding arrangements.

[16] *Sirga salu* (*сырға салу*) – A traditional engagement ritual in which the groom's family presents gold or silver earrings (*sirga*) to the bride, symbolizing that she is now promised to marry.

[17] *Uzatu* (*ұзату*) – The bride's farewell ceremony, where she leaves her parental home to join her husband's family.

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THE RITE OF PASSAGE AMONG KARAITE[1] TURKS: BIRTH

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Abstract: The word Karaim is derived from the Aramaic-Hebrew kara meaning to read with the plural suffix im. In Hebrew, קראים karaim means "those who read the scriptures". Over time, Karaite became the name of a Turkish tribe. Historical data indicates that the Karaites, descendants of the Khazar state, adhered to the Karai sect of Judaism, which recognized only the Torah. Consequently, due to their adoption of a distinct belief system, it is natural for the Karaites to exhibit differences in the rituals and customs associated with the "childbirth" phase, an important transitional period in human life. As is well known, the rituals performed during the transition period are designed to determine the new status of the newborn, to offer blessings, and to protect against perceived dangers and harmful influences that are believed to be particularly potent during this period. These practices constitute the fundamental elements of the cultural memory codes of the Karaite Turks. This study aims to explore and analyze both the basic beliefs of the Karaites regarding birth, which are rooted in Turkish culture, and the rituals that have been influenced by Jewish beliefs. By collecting information from individuals interviewed during field research (Karaite Turks residing in Lithuania and Crimea), the study seeks to determine whether there are any similarities between their customs, traditions, beliefs and practices and those observed in the present day and whether these ceremonies continue.

Keywords: Karaite Turks, Karaite faith, transition period, birth ritual, newborn, pregnancy, motherhood

INTRODUCTION

The Karai sect and the Karaite Turks are topics on which there is enough subject matter for several researchers. Due to their inclination to privacy and their isolated lifestyles, there is not adequate information on the origin of the Karaite Turks, their reason for choosing Karaism, or simply the way they carry out their rituals. In this study, we aim to find answers to some of these questions according to the information we have gathered and analyzed. Firstly, the basic birth-themed beliefs of the Karaites in Crimea and Lithuania, originating from Turks, and their rituals blended with Judaism, were analyzed together. During the analysis, the differences that originated from contact with different geography and cultures drew attention, as well as the similarities between the birth transition period practices of the Karaites (Atmaca 2023: 174–184; Atmaca et al. 2023: 1–2). Field research using observation and interview techniques was carried out when gathering this information with three people residing in Trakai, Lithuania, whom we consider as sources and assigned identification numbers such as 1, 2, and 3 in the main text. Whether there are similarities between customs, beliefs, traditions and contemporary practices and whether these rituals still endure were established based on the information given by the three people who were interviewed during the field research. Occurrences/situations were examined in their natural flow, and notes were taken throughout. Lastly, the works of Yuriy Aleksandroviç Polkanov, Crimea Scientific Council President, were considered particularly fundamental for the data obtained from the Crimean Karaite Turks (Atmaca et al. 2023: 1–2).

Birth, which holds a distinct place as a transitional ritual across various societies, is similarly revered among the Karaite Turks. Therefore, the primary focus of this study is to investigate the customs and cultural changes coming into the world among the Karaite Turks residing in Lithuania and Crimea, both before, during, and after the childbirth process.

BIRTH RITUALS AMONG KARAITE TURKS

Birth, a significant transition milestone in human life, signifies a “beginning”. It is a means of perpetuating human existence on Earth and an act of defiance against mortality. Birth gives the status of motherhood to women and father-

hood to men (actually, it changes the status of all the members of the family – grandparents, uncles, etc). It not only increases respect for women but also solidifies their position within the family, extended kin and society. Fathers, in turn, gain confidence in the future and elevate their standing among friends and relatives by "having a son" (Örnek 1966: 55–56). Since birth, as a biological event, is culturally interpreted variously across societies, a multitude of customs, beliefs, and magical practices are observed during birth (Ibid.). In this context, for the Karaites, birth is considered as a way for the Karaite Turkish lineage to gain strength, accompanied by the enactment of numerous customs and beliefs. It is seen that the Karaite Turks are directly influenced by the Karaite sect during this transitional phase. This is because of what is stated in Genesis 1: 28. The following statements in the section point out the importance of marriage status and having children on earth. "He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and every living creature on the earth" (The Holy Bible, New International Version, n.d., Genesis 1: 28).

RITUALS BEFORE CHILDBIRTH

Within the Lithuanian Karaite community, women who face infertility issues visit the kenesa, the Karaites' place of worship, and recite repentance prayers from the Psalms, a book of prayers and wisdom found in the Ketuvim section of the Hebrew Bible (SP 1). This information given by the informant reminds us that in Muslim Turkish Traditions, a woman who cannot become pregnant visits holy places such as tombs, religious shrines, etc. In the Dede Korkut Tales, we can find the origin of the understanding of being able to have children through repentance (SP 1). Since being childless is not considered to be a good thing among Oghuz Turks, Dirse Khan asks his wife to beg God and repent of her sins. This is because there is a belief that both God and society will disgrace those who have no children (Ergin 2018: 78–81). Apart from praying to find a cure for childlessness, Turkish culture employs various other methods such as organizing a toy[2], feeding the hungry, equipping the houses of poor families, freeing debtors from their debts, and visiting holy places (Gönen 2005: 107). At the end of the studies (Ögel 2020: 309) conducted on the beliefs related to the cult of ancestors, when tözler[3] and kurgan graves are considered, it is determined that death is not perceived as extinction in ancient Turkic beliefs and that people believe that there is a life that continues after death. The practices mentioned in literary texts such as "placing koumiss[4] in the grave for the dead to drink and meat for the dead to eat[5]" are reflections of this phenomenon (Ibid.: 310).

The origin of the tradition of visiting cemeteries is therefore related to the cult of ancestors, that is, the respect shown to ancestors (Çoruhlu 2012: 59). Additionally, if feasible, Lithuanian Karaite make pilgrimages to the *Balta Tiymez* (literal meaning: cutting trees are not allowed) cemetery located in the Kirk-Yer region of Bahçesaray, Crimea. At the entrance and exit of the cemetery, they kneel and pray in hopes of conceiving children. Out of reverence, they refrain from touching the trees in the cemetery. This cemetery's forest, named Balta Tiymez (Dubinski 2005: 49) is known for its oaks, which the Karaites consider to be ancestral roots symbolizing immortality. Each family within the cemetery has its own oak tree, and it is believed that the drying up or destruction of this tree signifies the decline of the family and the Karai lineage (Ibid.: 50, SP 1).

As in general with Turkic tribes, among the Karaites the value of women in families experiencing infertility is not diminished, and women are not blamed for their inability to have children. Women have a special place in the Karaite Turks sect (SP 1). The importance of women is mentioned in Genesis, one of the five parts of the Torah, as follows: "God created mankind in his own image... male and female he created them" (Genesis 1: 26–27). A second passage states that "God took one of the man's ribs and then made a woman from the rib and brought her to the man" (Genesis 2: 21–22). The passage continues: "She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man; and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2: 23–24; The Holy Bible, New International Version, n.d.). Consequently, according to the Torah, man and woman together constitute a whole. And this is a greater and more valuable entity than their individual parts.

In families with many children, the youngest offspring are often entrusted to childless Karaite Turks relatives or families within the community who are recognized as legal parents, with all rights and responsibilities, to ensure the continuation of the lineage (SP 1).

According to the traditional structure in Anatolia, it is the youngest child who is the owner of the house. Moreover, the youngest male child is the one who maintains order in the family house. In Anatolian fairy tales, it is seen that the winner and the one who eventually takes the place of the father is invariably the youngest son, but here it is noteworthy that the youngest son is given to be adopted. However, according to Jewish tradition, the older child is blessed because he or she opens the uterine canal (the way leading to the womb) for the first time: "Reserve for Me all the first-born, whatsoever (openeth the womb) among the Children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine" (Exodus 13: 2; The Holy Bible, New International Version, n.d.). Here the opening of the uterine canal is particularly important because the same sacredness does not apply to births by caesarean section. The difference is in how caesarean births are regarded. The hearth (fire) is the symbol of the continuity of the home and

family life and is considered masculine in Turkish traditions. The title of the prince of the hearth, Od-Tegin, is used for the youngest male children in Turkish culture (Çoruhlu 2012: 53). There is a tradition of adoption among the Turks, and according to ancient beliefs, *cedd-i âlâ* (the old ancestors) do not allow a non-blood foreigner to be introduced in the family. It is possible to see some traces of the tradition of adoption, which is an old practice in Turkish culture, in the Manas Epic. Almanbet, the son of Kalmyk Khan, is adopted by Manas' father and mother (İnan 2020: 310).

For the Sephardic Jews, prenatal preparations have a religious significance, and the expectant mother organizes a special ceremony at home at the end of the fifth and seventh month of pregnancy. At the party, the baby's clothes are prepared, and this is called "kortadura de fashadura" among Sephardic Jews. During this ritual, some kinds of implementations and practices are employed, such as throwing sugar, rice, and money with the wish that the baby will be healthy, happy and fertile (Güre 2015: 30). The objects (sugar, money and rice) are handed over to the mother or grandmother, or they are thrown at the baby. The throwing of these items takes place with the intention of wishing the baby and mother health, prosperity, and happiness. Sugar is thrown to symbolize sweetness and a happy life for the child; rice is tossed for fertility and abundance, and money is thrown to bring wealth and good fortune.

RITUALS DURING CHILDBIRTH

Within the Karaite Turks community, the birth of a child is regarded as a source of pride and blessings for the Karaite Turkish nation. The arrival of a child, who represents the future of the nation, the inheritor of ancestral possessions, and the continuance of the lineage, is met with special joy.

The Karaite Turks adhere to various taboos, prohibitions and restrictions aimed primarily at safeguarding the well-being of pregnant women and their unborn children. For example, among the Crimean Karaite Turks, pregnancy is only disclosed to close relatives due to concerns about potential harm to the expectant mother and the baby (Suleymanov 2012: 110). The expectant mother takes precautions to avoid any behaviors that may negatively impact her baby from the moment of conception. According to a prevailing belief among the Crimean Karaite Turks, a pregnant woman should not pass over a rope, tie, or under a tree branch. If she accidentally does so, she recites several pages of prayers from the Psalms as an act of repentance (SP 1). Alternatively, she may utter the following prayer: *Aziź Tieńri, chajyfsunhej,* meaning "may Almighty God have mercy" and *kudraty kiplik sunhej*, meaning "may His ten mighty

powers grant strength" and *tiuź išliargia konušturhej*, meaning "may He lead to righteous deeds" (Firkovicius 1998: 194).

It is a natural and universal feeling for women to act with the motive of protecting their offspring, whether born or not yet born, due to their maternal characteristics. With the influence of cultures and beliefs, this motive brought protection from invisible harmful beings (demonic beings), and it also brought along some taboos and avoidance. In Altai Shamanism, Erlik is among the harmful beings and in shaman prayers he is portrayed as whipping black snakes. According to Yakut beliefs, the first kam was a Black Shaman who, because of his arrogance, did not recognize the greatest god of the Yakuts. This shaman, whose body consisted of numerous snakes, had extraordinary power (Çoruhlu 2012: 184). In Turkish mythology, snakes are the guards of Erlik's palace (İnan 2020: 407). In the traditional folk imagination, there is a connection between the rope and the snake through association, since the ropes in shamanic costumes symbolize snakes.

Among the Crimean Karaite Turks, childbirth typically occurs at home, with the assistance of a traditional midwife from the community or an experienced woman who has undergone multiple childbirths. Given that Karaite Turks families were traditionally large (families with 8–10 children were common), there were usually enough helpers available (SP 2). In contrast, among the Lithuanian Karaite Turks, only the midwife is informed about the impending childbirth, as it is believed that if others are informed, the expectant mother will suffer greatly. Until the late 19th century and early 20th century, even the presence of a male doctor during childbirth was inconceivable, and it was firmly stated that only a woman should attend to the delivery (SP 1).

RITUALS AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Although gift-giving is not of great importance among the Karaites, they do not visit the home of a newborn child empty-handed, and various cultural practices are observed. According to an old Karaite folk tradition, the child is traditionally presented with raw chicken eggs as gifts. The meaning of this gift is explained in different ways by the Karaites. The egg is considered a symbol of the continuous chain of life and rebirth, represented by the sequence of "animate-inanimate-animate" (Karakaş 2021: 46; SP 1). Among the Crimean Karaite Turks, the newborn child is given the egg white of a blessed raw chicken egg as a life-giving elixir, and the baby's head is bathed with egg yolk. Among Lithuanian Karaite Turks, the baby's head is washed with egg yolk mixed with saltwater (SP 1).

During the head washing ritual with egg yolk, it is customary to express wishes for the child to have a clean, round, white and healthy life, symbolizing the characteristics of an egg (Polkanov 1995: 72; Altınkaynak 2006: 79).

The use of the egg as a symbol of "productivity" and "regeneration" in all rituals performed to achieve certain goals in Turkish folk culture can be considered a modern-day application of archaic elements. Yakut Turks believe that good shamans will be brought to earth by an eagle. According to this belief, an eagle that swallows the soul of the child who will become a shaman comes to the forest and lays an egg on the branch of a red pine, beech or hornbeam tree, and a child is born from this egg (Karakaş 2021: 33). In a myth narrated by Kashgarli Mahmud, according to the belief of the Turks, when a kerkes bird gets old, it lays two eggs and sits on them. A dog named Barak hatches from one of these eggs. Another baby hatches from the second egg, but Kashgarli Mahmud does not mention what it is (Ögel 2010: 191). The egg represents the soil with its yolk, the fertility of the soil with its white, the water and the fire, which is the symbol of health and well-being due to its red colour, and reproduction and fertility taken as a whole (Koca 2012: 123). In many societies, the egg can be seen as taking part in rituals and ritual practices. The egg is a sign of creation, a symbol of the birth of the universe (cosmogony). It is mentioned that the perception of time in the Jewish religion differs from other religions. "The reference point of time is cosmology" (Kalın 2005: 17). Based on the desire for eternal life or the belief in immortality, the egg, which symbolizes a cyclical eternal life, comes forth as a reflection of this belief in folk practices. According to Anatolian Turkish traditions, drinking raw eggs for forty days to cure childlessness is one of the healing methods in folk medicine (Tanrıkulu 2017: 24–25).

Various postnatal practices are also observed after the birth of a child. One such practice is the hiding of the placenta. The placenta is regarded as an integral part of the child, and certain rituals are performed under the belief that it will influence the child (Örnek 2000: 142–143). The Karaites tied the cut umbilical cord of the baby with a string and then dried and stored it. In the Crimean Karaites, the mother would hide the dried navel and the bundle of hair from the first shave in a leather or cloth pouch and always carry it with her. According to this knowledge, the first shave would probably occur in the family house within the first few months after birth. It was believed that in this way the child would be protected from evil. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the practice of carrying the bundle of hair in a locket was also observed (Altınkaynak 2006: 79). The mysterious symbolization of the practices related to the umbilical cord and hair for protection from evil and a good life is also seen in the birth rituals of the Karaites (Koçak 2021: 315).

While the ritual of salting the baby after birth is a common practice in traditional births in Anatolian folklore, the fact that today's births take place in a hospital environment has eliminated the salting ritual. These rituals, which were performed with the belief that the baby would not smell sweat in the future and that its skin would be healthy and strong, were not seen in our study area (Karaite Turks residing in Lithuania and Crimea) (SP 1).

BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES AMONG THE KARAITES

In Judaism, it is required for a mother to breastfeed her children for twenty-four months (Koçak 2021: 319). Karaite scholar Bünyamin en-Nihavendi states that the weaning age of the child is three (Arslantaş 2011: 400). Unlike En-Nihavendi's view, Karaite Turks state that if the woman is healthy after birth, she should breastfeed the baby until seven to eight months of age. It is a custom among Karaite Turks to separate the baby from its mother's breast after the specified time (Koçak 2021: 319, SP 1).

Within the Karaite Turks community, a Karaite woman with abundant breast milk may breastfeed children from other religions and act as a wet nurse (SP 1). These wet nurses care for these children as if they were their own and raise them alongside their children (Sarach et al. 2007: 160–161). In fact, according to the legends of the Crimean Karaite Turks, they have many sisters from the Giray dynasty, which ruled in Crimea (Polkanov & Polkanova 2005: 106)[6]. In this context, milk siblings are not allowed to marry because they are considered relatives.

MEASURES TO PROTECT MOTHER AND CHILD

According to the book of Leviticus, "Say to the Israelites: A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over" (The Holy Bible, New International Version, n.d., Leviticus 12: 2, 4). Likewise, "if she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding" (Ibid., Leviticus 12: 5). Among the Crimean Karaite Turks, there are cultural practices that protect the mother and child during the first 40 days after birth: they are restricted from traveling long distances, going on visits to someone

else's house or being exposed to strangers during this period. It is also religiously forbidden for a woman who gave birth to go to a kenesa, or cemetery or touch sacred things. The duration of this prohibition is 33 days if the woman gives birth to a boy and 60 days if she gives birth to a girl. In Lithuanian Karaite Turks' customs, this period is 40 days for mothers of boys (SP 1).

According to Turkish folk beliefs, the mother and her baby may be vulnerable and weak because they are in a transitional phase. During this period, the mother and her baby, who are vulnerable, are protected for 40 days in order to protect them from evils such as *albastı* (puerperal fever) / black eye and evil eye. According to Anatolian folk beliefs, the grave of a puerperant woman stays open for 40 days.

Among the Karaites of Israelite origin, the period for a woman to conclude her puerperium is marked by the naming of the child. Once this time arrives, the woman undergoes a ritual bath in a basin where her husband pours three buckets of water over her from head to toe, while uttering the words "be clean" each time; after this cleansing bath, the woman is considered purified (Arslantaş 2011: 396; Koçak 2021: 315). On the other hand, Karaites of Turkish origin consider a woman clean six weeks after giving birth to a boy and twelve weeks after giving birth to a girl (Firkovicius 1993: 50). Until this purification period elapses, the woman refrains from attending kenesa services and engaging in mundane activities. Once the prescribed period concludes, the woman prays to a hazan (religious man)[7] after performing the appropriate washing and purification rituals, signifying her state of purification (Koçak 2021: 315).

Here, water, a symbol of nature, holds significance as it represents both physical and spiritual cleansing and renewal, akin to its vitalizing properties. Purification with water always has the same effect: everything dissolves in water. Every 'form' breaks down, everything created loses its existence (Eliade 1959: 2015).

The vulnerability of both mother and baby during the transition of childbirth has given rise to the development of traditional protective practices among the Karaite Turks. These post-birth rituals are performed to ensure the health and well-being of the mother and child and to secure the child's longevity, happiness and future peace of mind. As a result, special protection is afforded to the young mother and her child during the initial 40 days after birth, a period which is also supported by the directives of the Karaite sect. Within the Karaite Turk community, these 40 days are considered the most critical and sensitive phase for the new mother and her newborn child (SP 1). Like practices observed in Anatolia, Karaite Turks adhere to specific customs during this period. The Anatolian belief of not leaving the woman who has just given birth alone for 40 days, in fear of an evil entity known as *alkızı*, *alkarısı* or *albası*, which is

thought to cause puerperal fever, resonates with some aspects of the Karaite traditions. Red-colored objects related to the spirit of '*Al*' are attached to the room, bed or clothes of the puerperant and the child to take precautions against *Alkarısı/Albastı*. Among the Karaites, the mother and child are restricted from traveling long distances, going on visits or being exposed to strangers during the first 40 days after birth. Although the Karaites do not practice the tradition of using a red-colored cloth, (SP 3), they protect the child from evil spirits by tying a red cloth or rope to the cradle where the baby lies (SP 1). In Turkish culture, the belief regarding alkarısı is a belief seen throughout the entire Turkic world. According to Abdülkadir Inan, the connection between the spirit *al* and the colour *al* (red) goes back to the ancient beliefs of the Turks in the god of fire and the guardian spirit (İnan 2020: 265). *Albastı* (puerperal fever) is an evil spirit that follows young girls and horses if the necessary measures are not taken, especially women who have just given birth. According to the belief, it feeds by eating the lungs of newborn children. For this reason, in Anatolia, a puerperant woman is never left alone, and objects believed to be protective (the Holy Quran, broom, iron rod, onion, a piece of wolf skin, harmal seeds, etc.) are placed in the room where the puerperant woman is. The puerperant woman ties a red cheesecloth, crown (head band), and ribbon on her head and red gifts are presented to the puerperant woman; food and drink containers are covered by red fabrics. According to Turkish culture, the colour red is the symbol of power and protection (Şimşek 2017: 106). Practices related to the colour red are carried out with the belief of protecting the puerperant woman from *albastı* / black eye and the evil eye. In Anatolia, similar practices are also followed for the bride. The veil on the bride's head is red, and both her head and face are covered, because the bride should be protected against evil spirits and the evil eye during this period.

It is also religiously forbidden for a woman who has given birth to go to a kenesa and cemetery (SP 2). Alternatively, the father may personally recite these psalms, facing the Wailing Wall (Western Wall), for the first 40 days after birth (SP 2; SP 3). These practices are believed to provide protection against malevolent entities, such as jinn, giants, evil spirits and diseases, safeguarding the mother and newborn from various forms of evil and misfortune.

In Karaites, a significant ritual surrounds the first outing of the newborn child from the house. This event is entrusted to the most respected members of the congregation (SP 1). The rationale behind this choice lies in the belief that the child will have a long life, hold a prominent position in age and seniority, and possess exceptional talents, as do the respected individuals who conduct the first outing (Sarach et al. 2007: 162).

THE CRADLE AMONG KARAITE TURKS

During the initial months of a newborn's life among the Karaite Turks, the infant is often placed in a cradle. The primary purpose of the cradle is to soothe and lull the baby to sleep, facilitating relaxation and comforting during transitions. The cradle is made of wood, and some parts are fixed only with wooden nails; iron nails are never used in the construction of the cradle, due to the belief that they are used in the construction of coffins, which evokes associations with death (SP 1). It is deemed unsuitable for the cradle to rest directly on the floor, as the floor has traditionally been regarded as a boundary between the mortal world and the realm of the departed. Therefore, suspending the cradle was considered a protective ritual, with the belief that elevating the child above the ground heightens the level of protection (SP 2). Additionally, in the past, Karai houses were relatively small, and hanging the cradle from the ceiling served to save space and efficiently use rising heat (SP 1; SP 3). Thus, cradles are commonly suspended from the ceiling, occasionally fixed to arched supports, and rarely placed on the floor. The cradle's base features a small, slightly sloping round hole through which a mattress with a hole in the center is placed beneath the child, and a deep clay pot is inserted under, ensuring that the infant remains clean and dry. The baby's legs are swaddled in cloth to maintain a straight position. The child is securely fastened within the cradle using special cradle tie (*beşik-bav*) bandages, which are often intricately embroidered with gold or colored silk (Isakovich 1893: 11–12). When breastfeeding the baby, a specially designed cover with a side opening is utilized, allowing the baby to be nourished without being removed from the cradle (Polkanov 1994: 24).

In Karai culture, the act of placing the baby in the cradle for the first time is considered highly significant. To mark this occasion, the Karaites arrange a ceremony known as the "cradle ceremony" (*beşik-toy*). According to tradition, the cradle is gifted by the eldest woman in the family. The ceremony is attended exclusively by women, who partake in a communal meal before the momentous act. The eldest and most esteemed wise woman among the gathering then places the baby in the cradle, accompanied by recitations of prayers from the Psalms (SP 1).

Karaites hold deep-rooted folk beliefs regarding the cradle and assign divine attributes to this symbolic item. For example, there is a strict prohibition against rocking an empty cradle, as it is seen as an omen signifying the likelihood of the child falling ill or facing a premature demise (SP 1). Cradles hold generational significance, passing down through ancestors and embodying the essence of ancestral heritage. Using a cradle in which brothers, fathers, grandfathers, and even great-grandfathers have grown up is considered auspicious for the child's

future life. In this context, a Karaite folklore legend called Cradle-Mountain ("Beşik-Tav") exemplifies the profound cultural significance attributed to the cradle[8].

The cradle is one of the most important material and cultural elements shaped around the baby. Except for the baby's sleep, the cradle is the baby's world, and it is a place in the world after the mother's womb where the baby should be made to feel comfortable and safe. And for this reason, the baby is entrusted to the tree, which is known to be sacred, that is, the cradle made of wood. It is thought that this understanding of sacredness is at the root of the taboos and abstinence related to the cradle in Turkish folk beliefs.

It is known that the tree is sacred in Turkish culture. However, the examples given show that the sacred bond between mother and baby includes the cradle made from the sacred tree.

CELEBRATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE BIRTH OF A BOY CHILD AND THE CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

The prayers extend hopes for the boys "to have long lives, to obey their elders, and to become righteous sons who will witness the joys of raising their own children and grandchildren"; for girls "to be beautiful, to be devoted to their home and as wives, to raise good children and bring a valuable generation" (Firkovicius 1993: 50–53; Koçak 2021: 316). Hazan prays for a son as follows:

Uvul kaysı tuvdu ortımız, "the son born among us", *bolhey uzun künlü cımatımızda,* "may he be long-lived in our community", *Cuvat (response): Bolhey uzun künlü cımatımızda* "may he be long-lived in our community", *Biyi dunyaların xayıfsunhey,* "may the Lord of the worlds have mercy", *alhış sözlärimiz kabul bolhey,* "may our words of praise be accepted", *biz-dė yetişkėybiz yaxşısına* ,"may we also have your goodness" (Firkovicius 1993: 50–53).

Members of the Karaite sect show the necessary care in performing circumcision rituals. Judaism, as a divine religion, includes circumcision as a religious duty. Circumcision, or Brit Mila, is performed according to the principles set out in the Jewish holy book, the Torah, specifically Genesis 17: 9–12:

> *Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old*

> *must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner-those who are not your offspring"* (The Holy Bible, New International Version, n.d.).

Among Lithuanian Karaites, the circumcision ceremony is conducted within the confines of the home. The ceremony is attended by relatives, friends, neighbors, the hazan (religious leader), the community leader, and the circumciser. Similarly to other transitional events, the involvement of individuals from different religions or sects in the ceremony is not regarded favorably. Typically, the ceremony is presided over by a hazan or a specialized circumciser. The identity of the person performing the circumcision is not of utmost significance, as long as it occurs on the 8th day as prescribed by tradition. However, in remote and small Karaite villages, there may be challenges in ensuring the timely arrival of a hazan and a circumciser, and sometimes, out of necessity, a Crimean Tatar mullah is invited to perform the circumcision on time. Such cases occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (SP 1).

Among the Crimean Karaites, the parents chosen for the circumcision ceremony are bestowed the honorary titles of "honorary father" (*sayğılı adam*) and "honorary mother" (*sayğılı hatın*) (SP 2). By prior arrangement, these esteemed individuals are invited to the ceremony. The guests gather in a designated room, much as in a wedding feast. The circumcision takes place in an adjacent room. The "honorary mother" hands the child to the "honorary father" on a pillow and waits at the entrance of the room where the ceremony unfolds. The "honorary father" takes a seat with the child on the pillow. Inside the room, the hazan recites a prayer commencing with the words *oğlum doğdu, byanç bizge* – "a son was born, this is a joy for us". The circumciser performs the procedure along with the necessary hygiene procedures. Once completed, the child is brought out of the circumcision room by the "honorary father" and returned to the care of the "honorary mother". Subsequently, she delivers the child to the biological mother (Sarach et al. 2007: 159).

At the invitation of the boy's father, guests are seated at the table. The hazan assumes a prominent position at the head of the table, and the festivities last for several hours. Initially, the men take their seats, followed by the women. The guests indulge in a meal consisting of cooked lamb, ak-halva, Karaite wine, and Karai grape vodka. During the event, guests offer gifts for the child, along with monetary contributions intended for later distribution to the needy. Young girls are excluded from participating in the circumcision ceremony and entertainment (SP 1).

CELEBRATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE BIRTH OF A GIRL CHILD

On the occasion of the birth of a girl child, the Karaites celebrate the event approximately two weeks after her birth, often on a Saturday. The celebration closely resembles that of a boy's birth, including the guests, beverages served, thanksgiving meals, and overall festivities. After the child's father visits the kenasa, the guests are invited to the house for the celebration. Initially, the men sit at the table, led by a hazan. During this meal, they express their good wishes for the girl's future, fortune, luck, and blessings. The hazan offers a prayer for the girl child:

> *Kügürçün kibik tügäl bolhey körkündä, "may she be perfect like a dove with her beauty," bu kız kaysı tuvdu abaylı kişiyi üvündä, "this girl born in the house of a worthy person," Alhışlanhey küçlü Tėnrinin alnında, "may she be blessed in the presence of the powerful god"* (Firkovicius 1993: 50–53).

CONCLUSION

Karaite Turks, who accept Karaism in the sense of "those who read/know the holy scripture", which is considered a sect of Judaism, have adopted their own understanding of religion within Judaism and Karaism, which accepts the Torah as the holy book and rejects the Talmud. In this respect, Talmudists had a different understanding from the Jews. On the stage of history, Karaite Turks have a place in the history of the Torah – the Hebrew holy book – and the Prophet Muhammad. They have a special place in Judaism with their belief in Moses, and in Turkish religious and cultural history with their Turkish origin. As in other Muslim and Christian Turkish communities, traditional Turkish religious beliefs and customs continued to exist among the Karaites (Arık 2005: 49).

The Karaite Turks adhere strictly to the Torah as well as incorporating various birth rituals that reflect Turkish culture and tradition. The birth of a baby holds significance among the Karaite Turks, as it brings a new member into the family, strengthens their cultural identity, and ensures the continuation of their lineage, family and nation. Consequently, it is the responsibility of all relatives and neighbors to provide special care, support and protection to the expectant Karaite mother during the prenatal, birthing, and postnatal periods.

In both Crimea and Lithuania, Karaite Turks have developed numerous beliefs and practices related to postnatal care for the mother and baby. These

practices are predominantly traditional and focus on healing and recovery. Although modernization has led to certain changes in ceremonial activities within birth rituals, some traditions have persisted. For example, enduring practices include blessing an egg as a birth gift for the newborn, preserving the placenta and umbilical cord after birth, and performing a naming ceremony for the infant. The foods consumed, treats offered, and garments worn during these rituals provide valuable insights into the daily lives of the Karaite Turks. These religious practices, deeply rooted in the beliefs, customs and culture of the Karaite Turkish people, have been passed down through generations and continue to evolve with time. Through our compilation of texts from the Karaite Turks, we have observed that some traditional practices, accumulated over the years, have endured, while others have begun to fade away. For example, traditions such as the situation where the young children of a family with many children are given to childless relatives/families of Karaite origin for the continuation of the generation; the Karaite mother not telling anyone except her closest relatives of the first months of her pregnancy; the newborn child being taken out of the house by the most respected people of the community first have not been continued.

SOURCE PERSONS

SP 1: Szymon Juchniewicz, 85, university graduate, retired, date and place of interview: May 15th, 2013 – July 12th, 2013, Lithuania/Trakai

SP 2: Dr. Markus Lavrinovicius, 80, university graduate, technical sciences, hazan (became the spiritual leader of the Lithuanian Karaites on July 10th, 2010), date and place of interview: May 15th, 2011, Lithuania/Trakai

SP 3: Diana Lavrinovicius, 33, university graduate, English teacher, date and place of interview: May 20th, 2013, Lithuania/Trakai

NOTES

[1] In the article, the word Karai refers to the Karaim sect, a sect of Judaism. The Karaites living in Lithuania use the word "Karaite" for both their sect and themselves. In the Turkish language, two vowels at the end of a word do not occur side by side. For this reason, /i/ > /y/ was converted into Turkish: Karai > Karay.

[2] The etymology and preliminary application of the term "toy" remain inadequately elucidated. Initially, this term was employed in the context of "state assembly, council, assembly" as a linguistic derivation from the religious observance referred to as "toy". Nevertheless, it progressively transformed to denote "feast, banquet, festive meal,

wedding" and analogous contexts. In the various written forms and dialects of Turkish, particularly in the variant spoken in Turkey, the term "toy" is prevalently utilized to signify "wedding, festival, feast". Conversely, in Azerbaijani Turkish, "toy" encompasses interpretations such as a "wedding ceremony, celebration, joyous gathering". In Turkmen, the term "toy" designates a grand feast, celebration, or event characterized by opulent festivities conducted in honor of an individual or entity. In Kyrgyz, the designation "toy" pertains to a feast, celebration, wedding banquet, or festival. In Kazakh, the term "toy" conveys interpretations such as festival, feast, banquet, or wedding. In New Uyghur, the word "toy" means "wedding", while in Sakha (Yakut), "toy" signifies meanings such as feast, banquet, celebration, or wedding ceremony. In Altai, the term "toy" denotes meanings such as festival, wedding, or wedding feast. In Karaim, the term "toy" is used to mean "wedding" or "feast", while in Uzbek, it signifies "entertainment" or "festivity" (Kartal et al., 2024: 15). There are three main rituals that take place during the life stages of an individual: birth ceremony (toy), marriage ceremony (toy) and death ceremony (toy).

[3] In the ancient Turkish belief system, this term is used to express respect or holiness to ancestor spirits, nature spirits (mountain, tree, animal, etc.). *Tös* means spirit. They are divided into pure, benevolent guardian spirits (*Aruu Tös*) and malevolent, dark, evil spirits (*Kara Tös*). Evil spirits (*Kara Tös*) are damaging. Evil Spirits (*Kara Tös*) are associated with negative connotations such as evil, darkness, disaster, disease. People try to drive away Evil Spirits (*Kara Tös*) with the help of protective rituals. *Aruu Tös*, also known as the benevolent spirits, are the kind of spiritual beings that were believed to bring goodness in the sense of fertility, health, and beauty and, of course, to shield people from evil. According to Altai Shamanic belief, these spirits exist in three places: underground, above ground and in the sky (Anohin 2006: 3–15).

[4] *Koumiss/kumis*: fermented mare's milk. The Central Asian peoples have long used this fermented beverage, which is prepared from mare's milk. Considered the drink of the ancestors, koumiss is especially served to guests and drunk on special occasions.

[5] There are many rituals related to the cult of ancestors in Turkish folk beliefs. They are done for the repose of the spirits of the deceased, out of respect for ancestors and to relieve anxiety about being harmed by spirits. Death is believed to be a part of life and a transition to life in the other world. This perspective sees death not as an end but as a new beginning. The devotion to the spirits of the ancestors is embodied in the rituals performed for the deceased.

[6] In the past, there was a strict religious rule among the Karaites regarding marriages with people of other religions (Suleymanov 2012: 117). In later times, due to the small population, marriages with representatives of other Turkic tribes (Tatars, Nogays, etc.) belonging to different religions were permitted. However, these Turkic tribes were required to accept the Karaite sect. According to Polkanov, one of the Crimean Karaite Turks, the Karaite community became more closed in the 16th century. Marriages were made only within this community or between Karaite representatives living in different countries (Polkanov 1994: 23). Since a woman and a man were considered the same and one body in marriage, a woman's brother and her husband were considered full brothers, not like brothers-in-law. Therefore, marriages between relatives of the same degree were also prohibited (Suleymanov 2012: 116, KK 1; Atmaca, 2023: 178).

[7] Religious man.

[8] In ancient times, the Karaites maintained a spiritual connection with the holy city of Jerusalem. They continue to include the prayer, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right-hand wither!" in their religious practices. However, for an extended period, the Karaites were unable to visit their holy land. Following the collapse of the Khazar

Khanate, Crimea fell under the control of bandit groups, and pirates were raiding ships in the Black Sea. The risky roads leading to the holy city also became impassable due to violent attacks by Arab Bedouins. Until the 11th century, no one from Crimea dared to embark on this challenging journey. Only forty locals, led by the aged Prince Musa, bravely set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. His soul had yearned to visit the holy places for many years, and he finally decided to undertake the pilgrimage. At the end of an arduous journey, Prince Musa fulfilled his lifelong dream as he visited the ruins of Jerusalem, wept at the tombs of the patriarchs, poured out his troubles in front of the altar of Kenesa, and prayed for the people of Crimea in these sacred places. And having achieved the greatest fulfillment of his life, he began to prepare to return home. Before departing, a cleric from Jerusalem visited the prince. When the cleric saw a cradle made of Lebanese cedar among Haji Musa's belongings, he thought, "How can he carry a cradle on such a long journey?" Haji Musa read his guest's thoughts and calmly said, "I am bringing him a gift so that my grandson will be as famous as the cedar of Lebanon". Touched by these words, the cleric looked up to the sky and wished that the 'savior of the world' who would bring happiness, and goodness would be born in this cradle. But the old prince was unable to deliver his gift to his grandson. In 1002, Moses died on his way to Alexandria, on his way to visit the Karaites of Egypt. His cradle was brought from Jerusalem to the Kırk Yer by his wife and sons-in-law, who had accompanied the old prince on his travels through the lands. They gave Haji Musa's gift to his only son, Yakov, who took over the principality in his father's absence. Yakov, in turn, gave the cradle to his grandson, who was born during the pilgrimage of his grandfather Haji Musa. Since then, the cradle has been passed down from generation to generation as a family blessing of the first Karaite pilgrim. The descendants of Haji Moses have always been respected residents of the Kırk Yer. One of them, Isaac, received the title "Quencher of Thirst" for his wisdom. His son Ovadia was also awarded this title for his good deeds. Isaac's grandson Ilyagu, a descendant of Haji Musa, also became famous. At the head of the guard of the Kırk Yer, he fought bravely against the Genoese besieging the castle and died a hero on a Saturday afternoon in 1261 after driving the enemies back from the city walls. On his tombstone, the Karaites carved the inscription "He was a solid wall for his people both inside and outside the fortress". The Karaites remembered the name of Ilyagu, the prince of the Kırk Yer. They have many legends about this name. People still believe that Ilyagu received his extraordinary courage, wisdom, and strength from the cradle of Haji Musa, in which he grew up. On the night of the prince's death, the cradle was passed by divine forces to the next mountain and disappeared into the depths of the mountain. Since then, this two-humped mountain that protects the prince's cradle bears the name "Cradle Mountain". A Karaite legend says that "just as the Mount Olivet near Jerusalem will open and give the Ark of the Covenant hidden by the prophet Jeremiah, so the Cradle Mountain will open and the cradle of Haji Moses will rise from it and descend to the place where the voice of the newborn Savior of the World will be heard for the first time" (Polkanov 1995: 14–15; Zherdieva 2022: 20–22).

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INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE FOLK MUSIC CULTURE INTO MUSIC EDUCATION AT MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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Abstract: The integration of traditional Chinese folk music into music education at middle schools not only can improve learning effectiveness, but also raise awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage. The primary goal of this study is to examine the effectiveness of developed academic programs in integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture and to establish what impact the developed curriculum has on the awareness of national values among students. The study was conducted among 410 students (n = 13.1) from four middle schools in China. The study relied on a developed academic program, with assessment of academic achievements in music and two online surveys. Experimental groups B performed 13.7% better than the control groups, suggesting that the developed academic program is effective in the context of music learning. Also, after a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, Group B performed better compared to its performance in January. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China's cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one's country (an increase of 20.7%). This study has practical value and is important for further research because it confirms the effectiveness of the integration of the developed academic program for increasing awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among middle school students.

Keywords: learning, middle school, music, musical culture, music education

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese folk music has unique features that are completely different from the musical cultures of other countries, both in the ways music is performed and in the way it is notated (Dong 2015), and it is the style of Chinese music that underlies its subjectivity (Hoene 2017). Since the early twentieth century, with the importation of Western music and the beginning of its era of dominance, Chinese music has been on the verge of losing its own national identity as Western cultural values became the dominant standard, while folk motifs started losing their popularity (Ho & Law 2012). However, in the context of globalization, and especially cultural interaction and integration, the development of traditional Chinese music these days has unprecedented chances and opportunities for its popularization among the local population, because traditional Chinese music has the national code of many generations of China (Li 2015). Available studies suggest that recently great importance has been attached to the innovation and reform of traditional musical culture (Adams 2013), and the need to support the development of traditional Chinese musical culture pursuant to the rapid advancement of cultural integration in a global context has been confirmed (Bai & Li 2017). It is believed that this will contribute to the advocacy and dissemination of traditional Chinese cultural capital in the country, which is especially relevant for the younger generation.

The introduction and promotion of Asian culture is becoming a trend in all countries (Zhang 2018). The problem of preserving and promoting the cultural, and particularly musical, heritage of China has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers around the world (Chen 2016; Clothey et al. 2016; Williams et al. 2020). Traditional Chinese music strongly reflects the cultural, intellectual, and artistic level of the nation. Consequently, the development and popularization options for Chinese music are widely sought-after and significant (Weng 2016). It is believed that fostering attachment to national culture among individuals and providing guidance to improve skills in revitalizing traditional national music might bring resources and inspiration to create musical compositions that contain unique national features that can be enjoyed by audiences around the world (Li 2015).

Traditional Chinese music has undergone a long historical evolution and has its own sound. If the aesthetic value of music is lost, there will be no point in its existence. Therefore, the need to practice performing and to entrench traditional pillars of Chinese culture arises (Zhou 2019). Being an important part of the musical heritage, traditional music, aside from taking on the legacy task of developing students' musical literacy, has implications for promoting national culture and cultural capital (Shi 2021).

Culture and creativity play an important role in every country (Bai & Li 2017). Audio content, visual content, music, literature, live performances, and other forms of cultural expression connect people and society (Dong 2015). The rich cultural heritage of China is recognized around the world: it improves lives, promotes values and strengthens mutual understanding. Involvement in creative and cultural activities can have a significant impact on schooling, contributing to overall well-being and reinforcing a sense of community (Eurostat 2022). Furthermore, available studies confirm that cultural traditions need to be instilled from an early age. As children get older, traditional features and values should be integrated into school education to an even greater extent, since children in their middle age begin to develop their understanding of national values and their commitment to tradition (Ho & Law 2020). On top of that, sound coordination of folk song resources and formal learning practices can be the key to effective instruction that motivates all participants in music education (Yang & Welch 2016).

Keeping in mind the need to popularize and promote traditional Chinese folk music culture (e.g., of the country's rich heritage) in academic programs, this article addresses the issues of developing a program to integrate traditional Chinese music into academic programs offered by middle schools. This article is an original study of the effect such integration has on national values in the context of increased patriotism and cultural awareness in a country. Evaluation of cultural knowledge in China and the level of relevant interest among students is important, because it can:

- improve the quality of music education in middle schools;
- popularize Chinese culture;
- improve knowledge about the people and culture in general.

This article has practical implications and may be relied upon in further research because it can contribute to the integration of traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education at middle schools as a way to promote the ideas of national values in China, which include:

- patriotism;
- sense of nationhood;
- the principles of the rule of law, democracy, equality, social justice and fairness.

The study of Chinese folk music can be seen as a way to develop the younger generation's national identity, which is extremely important for implementation of academic programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School education should include a range of academic program-based knowledge that might contain specific cultural and national values, such as language, ethnicity, race, cultural history and traditions, that are viewed as shared beliefs about what is good, absolute, and desirable in society. Chinese culture draws particularly on Confucian values concerning the cultivation of virtue and harmonious relationships. An important aspect of culture is that it brings together the shared knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals that guide human activity (Ho & Law 2020). By emphasizing the nation's development, cultural values in education fully meet the government's interests. Schools play an important role in legitimizing specific forms of knowledge, and dominant cultural capital is legitimized through the choice of specific beliefs and skills (Clothey et al. 2016).

Being a measure of the nation's power, an academic program is a major contributor to preserving national and cultural values (Ho & Law 2020). Teachers bring cultural capital to classrooms when they teach traditional folk music, as the goal of this process is to introduce students to the values and heritage of the entire society. Music education in China promotes awareness of national identity and national culture through traditional Chinese music. In patriotic education, national sentiments refer to emotional attachment, while national consciousness comes from shared traditions, values, and cultures of the past (Ho & Law 2020). Values refer to beliefs or ideas shared by members of the same community, the same culture, and the same nation. The concept of national values refers to morality and standards of what is good and what is bad, what is desirable or undesirable. Values have a great influence on human behavior and attitudes, and they serve as general guidelines for human behavior in all situations. The introduction of traditional Chinese music is a sign of how nationhood has begun to manifest itself in varying degrees in school music education. The concept of patriotism in music education has serious implications for the entire learning process (Lee 2014). There is a serious pedagogical issue in contemporary Chinese music education, as government policy expects that pieces of China's cultural and musical heritage will be incorporated into music programs, both in middle schools and higher education institutions (Yang & Welch 2016). Nevertheless, the teaching approaches applied in the programs have been heavily influenced by the formal study of Western and Chinese classical music, while Chinese folk music is largely described by the oral tradition (Yang & Welch 2016).

The existing system of academic programs in music designed from the perspective of Western and Chinese classical music may be less effective than the system that focuses on the study of authentic folk songs (Yang & Welch 2014).

This may be due to the fact that it is traditional folk music that is filled with the country's various special features that are extremely important for understanding China's musical culture. Recent evolution of cutting-edge technologies resulted in:

- upgraded approaches to music education;
- progress toward the industry's improvement and standardization;
- expected growth of integrated traditional Chinese folk music in middle schools (Zhang 2020).

So-called musical typicality is actually a national tradition of China's entire musical culture (Adams 2013). Chinese music is a unique system with its own national features, including musical notation, which is completely different from the music of other countries and peoples. The 5-note and equal temperament system is a typical musical feature that distinguishes Chinese national music. Such a valuable national heritage must receive the attention it deserves. Therefore, the national heritage of traditional Chinese folk music should be integrated into the existing education system. The preservation and development of the Chinese cultural capital can be the unbreakable foundation of any artistic creative process these days (Liu et al. 2016).

Folk song is the most common music genre in traditional Chinese culture (China Culture 2022). There are dozens of styles of folk music in China. Ethnic folk music, which includes Tibetan, Uyghur and Dong folk music, is popular along with Han folk music (China Culture 2022). Han folk music is the music of the people living in the countryside. Han Chinese have several languages and many dialects, as well as many regional styles of folk music (Jiang 2021). Instruments are divided into types depending on the materials of which they are made. They include bowed and plucked strings, woodwinds, as well as tuned and untuned percussion instruments (GCSE 2022). Gongs are also a part of Han folk music. Traditional Chinese folk music is described by several regional styles (Jiang 2021). The earliest known authentic Chinese folk music dates back to the twelfth century, when Chinese folk flute solos were written to tell the traditions and tales of various communities and regions (Music-Folk 2021). Guangdong music from the Guangzhou region, also known as Cantonese music, is a more recent popular form of Chinese folk music.

China has a unique perspective on the importance of music in the historical insight, without considering it an art form meant for entertainment, because traditional music is a receptacle of cultural and historical heritage, a way to preserve and convey heritage to future generations. Although traditional folk music forms exist in their own right and have been influenced by Western music

to a certain extent, Chinese folk music today still retains much of its former classical style (Music-Folk 2021).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This paper was motivated primarily by the desire to obtain new experimental data on the effects of integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education at middle schools on students' understanding of their country's national values, as the findings might influence the introduction of such practices into traditional music programs. This may result in improved national identity development and disseminate the cultural heritage of China. On top of that, such events can be a response to the challenges posed by the loss of the younger generation's interest in traditional values and the dominance of Western music that Chinese society faces today. The primary goal of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using the developed academic program to evaluate the possibility of integrating traditional Chinese folk music culture into music education in middle schools in China. This paper also discusses the impact the developed academic program in traditional Chinese folk music had on the awareness of national values among students, compared with the control group, which took a regular music course, without an in-depth study of traditional folk music. The following research objectives were formulated before commencement of the research:

1. Analyze the effectiveness of the developed academic program in music by comparing the two groups: control Group A (music classes were conducted according to the educational institution's academic program); and experimental Group B (the developed program was used). Identify the impact of regular classes and classes including traditional Chinese folk music on the learning achievements.
2. Measure the impact of the developed program on the awareness of national values and the role of China's cultural heritage by comparing the findings of the survey among students, which was conducted before the study and after its completion.

METHODS AND SOURCES

An academic program, which was developed specially for this study, consisted of group workshops, viewing master classes in China's traditional folk music instruments, group activities, and improvisations. The teaching approach focused on revitalizing students, their self-expression, raising cultural and historical awareness, informing students about the cultural background and the special components of folk music. The authors developed all of the program's classes, trying to provide children with a wide variety of folk compositions. Attention was paid to the historical context of each episode of the academic program, its overall historical value, cultural and other features, artistic techniques, which are used in traditional Chinese folk music and constitute China's cultural heritage and treasure. All activities were prepared and planned by the music teacher for their own group based on professional expertise that enabled the students to study various pieces of folk music. Speakers and special musical instruments were used to add direct interaction with the instruments. Six types of Chinese folk music were included into the developed academic program assuming that one module is studied per month:

1. Tian'ge: Field songs. A typical form of performance is to be accompanied by gongs, drums, suona and other instruments. This module included trial lessons in these instruments. Gongs, drums, suonas, and plucked zithers (guzhengs) were set up during the classes. Students were told about the history of their creation and could try to play the instruments. The children also listened to Tian'ge songs that described rural lifestyles, local flavor, and work in the fields. In addition, traditional Chinese folk compositions were used, with a historical insight into the creation thereof. Tian'ge music is characterized by a large structure and many interconnected melodies, to the accompaniment of which the folk epic poetry was performed by children. Such compositions as Jiashan Field Song and Rice Seedling were used. The module addressed cultivating a sense of solidarity with nature and country, an understanding of its cultural value and musical diversity.
2. Shan'ge: Mountain songs. This type of traditional Chinese music is smooth and melodic, describing the beauty of nature as well as human courage and bravery. The music has free rhythms, a wide range, and a sublime melody. Children listened to music through the audio system and sang heroic epic poetry. Attention was also paid to the history of these

pieces. The following compositions were used in this module: Xinrianue and Mountaineer's Song

3. Xiaodiao: Little Tunes. This type of traditional Chinese music describes nature and love for one's native land, fostering patriotism, pride, and human dignity. The music is known for its fixed melody and lyrics, orderly structure and pleasant tunes. Children were offered to perform the songs collectively and solo, and in class they were given texts that were analyzed in detail from a literary perspective, after which they performed the songs. The following compositions were used: Jasmine Melody and Meng Jiang's Melody.
4. Historical storytelling songs. This type of traditional Chinese music includes heroic epic poetry, folk music and tales in the form of folk songs. This module was extremely important, pursuant to the goals of the developed program. The compositions focused on cultivating a sense of love, loyalty, devotion to one's country and the opportunity to experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with one's country. Attention was also paid to compositions devoted to the rule of law and equality, the principles of impartiality and justice. Patriotic poems were performed to the accompaniment of traditional music from this module. The following compositions were used: Brother Mavu and Sister Gadu, Erip and Senam, Gesar.
5. Haozi: Work songs. The musical forms of these pieces have strong melodic motifs. This type of traditional Chinese music includes the glorification of the working class, ideas of human dignity and noble labor for the country's prosperity, which evoke a sense of pride and gratitude. The module's profound purpose was to allow children to realize that the character is the country's citizen, who must follow virtuous moral and ethical principles such as honesty, consistency and diligence. Lyrics about the working class were sung to the tunes glorifying honest labor. The following compositions were used: Gong and Drum Song, Bull Pen Songs, Voyage to the South Sea, and Rice Grinding.
6. Bu're: Dance songs. This type of traditional Chinese music describes a variety of fun and national identity aspects; the music is characterized by strong rhythms. The module was designed to support ideas about the national value of traditional Chinese music, which has its own identity and uniqueness. Dance songs are mostly performed during festivals, celebrations, or gatherings, and they are fast paced. The groups performed

the compositions, parsing the value and melody of the compositions. The following pieces were used: Lantern Song and Flower Drum Melody.

Furthermore, to determine the impact of the developed program on the awareness of China's national values and cultural heritage, an online survey was conducted among students. The questionnaire included ten questions that were designed to map the national values and cultural heritage as fully as possible.

DATA ANALYSIS

The factor analysis validation framework was used to control the data of this study. Fisher's exact test (p) was used to test the collected data to infer whether there was a significant difference between the two groups. The resulting data were considered satisfactory according to the benchmarks. When using Fisher's test, the adequacy and validity of the resulting data were ensured.

PARTICIPANTS

Students from the following four middle schools in Beijing (China) participated in the study, which ran from January to June during the 2020–2021 academic year: Beijing Chongwenmen, Beijing Yuyuantan, Beijing Tongwen, Beijing Dongzhimen. The developed program was to be implemented in the music course within six months. Each student received a verbal invitation to participate in the study through an announcement made in a music class. After students demonstrated interest in the study, written permissions to participate were sought and obtained from the parents (or guardians) of 412 children. Following the results, the sample included 410 respondents. Two participants could not complete the study, and their responses are not represented in the sample. Table 1 provides more details about the number of participants from each institution.

Table 1. *Quantity of study participants from each institution.*

Educational institution	Quantity		%
Beijing Chongwenmen Middle School	103		25.1
	Group A	53	
	Group B	50	
Beijing Yuyuantan Middle School	101		24.6
	Group A	51	
	Group B	50	
Beijing Tongwen Middle School	106		25.9
	Group A	56	
	Group B	50	
Beijing Dongzhimen Middle School	100		24.4
	Group A	56	
	Group B	50	
Gender			
Boys	189		46.1
Girls	221		53.9
Age			
12 years	104		25.4
13 years	137		33.4
14 years	169		41.2
Total students	410		100

Total number of respondents: 410 persons. Students ranged in age from 12 to 14 years, with an average age of 13.1 years. The participants were chosen voluntarily. Group B was set up based on the student's willingness to receive additional classes while using the developed program. The rest of the students, with their consent, were assigned to control group A. In Group B, there were 10 students per teacher. This means that 20 teachers participated and gave grades.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Eight groups were set up, two at each institution. The study was conducted over a six-month period. All students attended standard music classes according to the curriculum. Group B was additionally engaged in an elaborate program and in-depth study of traditional Chinese folk music. Its members had three extra 45 minute classes per week, which is 12 classes per month. At the end of the study, teachers at each school made monitoring and assessment by groups according to a common academic program. Scores were given based on a 100-point scale using the five-tier system: 100–90 = excellent, 89–80 = good, 79–70 = mediocre, 69–60 = satisfactory, below 60 = unsatisfactory. The assessment criteria were as follows:

- work in the classroom;
- independent study;
- modular control;
- teamwork;
- examination.

Furthermore, an online survey was conducted among students to assess the impact of the developed program on their awareness of China's national values and cultural heritage. The first survey was conducted at schools' computer labs before the beginning of the study (January 2021). The children were given 20 minutes to answer. The second survey had the same content but was conducted at the end of the study (June 2021). All questionnaires were filled out by the respondents completely; there were no irrelevant answers. The data input form contained ten questions to assess the effectiveness of the developed program to influence the awareness of national values and cultural heritage. Respondents were asked to specify how much they agreed with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where: 1 = strongly agree (SA); 2 = agree (A); 3 = neutral (N); 4 = disagree (D); 5 = strongly disagree (SD).

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted in four middle schools in China. Therefore, its findings cannot reflect the impact of the developed program on the awareness of national values throughout the country. Study participants were randomly selected, and their overall performance in the music course was not taken into account when dividing them into groups. Although the assessment criteria were uniform across the study, the persons who conducted the assessment varied from institution to institution.

ETHICAL ISSUES

This study was professionally designed, appropriately implemented, and approved by the leadership of all participating institutions and the parents or guardians of all minor participants. Written approvals were obtained. Guarantees of anonymity and security of personal data were provided. Prior to commencement of the study, a research protocol was developed. The protocol was followed by all participants and administrators. Involvement in the study was carefully coordinated with all participants, their parents and instructors. The institutional review boards of all four middle schools also provided their approvals.

RESULTS

The following paragraphs present the results for each research question. Since research question No. 1 set a goal to analyze the effectiveness of using the developed academic program in music classes, comparing the two groups, it is essential to consider the results of the evaluation. Table 2 shows the averaged end-of-study performance of middle school students in music classes according to the selected assessment criteria, for specific small groups (June 2021). All p-values are below 0.05, which is the threshold. Therefore, the differences between the indicators are significant.

Table 2. *Scores earned by students in the four middle schools according to selected assessment criteria, depending on the small group.*

Evaluation criteria	School								Mean
	Beijing Chongwen-men		Beijing Yuyuantan		Beijing Tongwen		Beijing Dongzhimen		
	Scores on a 100-point scale								
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	
1. Work in the class-room	70	78	68	81	67	78	66	77	73.1
2. Independent study	66	82	70	78	66	80	65	80	73.4
3. Modular assessment	72	80	67	80	67	79	70	79	74.3
4. Team-work	68	82	65	81	71	76	67	80	73.8
5. Final exam	71	79	74	77	71	81	71	80	75.5
Mean	69.4	80.2	68.8	79.4	68.4	78.8	67.8	79.6	X
p-value	0.039	0.018	0.032	0.019	0.027	0.02	0.034	0.019	X

The lowest scores were earned by small group A students who received traditional music instruction without the traditional Chinese music curriculum in all educational institutions: 69.4, 68.8, 68.4 and 67.8, with the mean value being 68.6. In contrast, small groups B at each institution performed better. Students from small groups B, who also used the developed academic program, earned the following scores: 80.2, 79.4, 78.8, and 79.6, with the mean value being 79.5, which is 13.7% higher compared to the control group. These data suggest the effectiveness of the developed curriculum in the context of music education at schools. Such results can be explained by the fact that the children intensively learned new music genres and compositions of traditional folk music, which made learning more effective.

The second objective of this study was to determine the program's impact on increased awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage by comparing the findings of the online survey that was conducted among students in both groups before the initiation of the study and after its completion. Table 3 presents the survey's findings regarding the initial level of awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among students as of January 2021.

Table 3. *Survey findings on the awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage (as of January 2021), %.*

Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1. I believe that China's cultural heritage constitutes the national treasure	9.1	9.6	14.5	16.9	30.9	28.1	40.3	41.9	6.1	2.6
2. I am convinced that the Chinese culture is authentic, and studying it in school is essential	10.4	11.6	12.6	10.7	60.8	59.6	11.9	9.8	4.3	8.3
3. I feel love, loyalty and devotion to my country	11.3	10.9	23.5	29.5	39.6	41.9	18.7	20.7	2.4	1.5
4. I experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with my country	8.6	9.8	21.3	20.9	44.3	42.1	21.3	24.3	2.1	5.3
5. I am aware that the rule of law prevails in my country	15.6	14.9	32.6	31.8	51.9	48.6	1.3	1.8	1.1	0.4
6. I believe that all citizens of my country enjoy the direct and equitable opportunity to contribute to its government	9.3	10.5	24.6	23.8	52.6	49.7	12.9	12.7	2.1	1.8
7. I believe that human dignity is something my nation should stand for	14.9	11.9	24.3	22.6	54.3	50.7	9.7	10.9	0.4	0.3

8. In my opinion, my country adheres to the principles of impartiality and justice	8.6	7.1	20.5	19.6	53.7	52.9	14.9	19.6	1.8	1.3
9. I see myself as a citizen of my country with specific rights enshrined in laws	9.7	9.3	24.9	23.8	59.2	60.9	5.2	5.7	0.6	0.7
10. I think that, being a citizen of my country, I should follow virtuous moral and ethical principles, such as honesty, consistency, diligence	9.7	12.9	23.6	24.8	51.6	52.3	11.6	11.4	0.9	1.2
MEAN	10.7	10.9	22.2	22.4	49.9	48.7	14.8	15.9	2.2	2.3

The data suggest that the respondents in both groups have similar awareness of national values and cultural heritage: the mean values demonstrate homogeneity in distribution. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the rule of law (No. 5), human dignity (No. 7) and patriotism (No. 4). The least support (i.e., "strongly disagree" answers) was given to the statements arguing that cultural heritage is the national treasure, and that culture should be a part of the school curriculum (No. 1 and No. 2). "Neutral" answers were the most frequent among middle school students (49.9% and 48.7% for groups A and B, respectively). These data suggest that a neutral and indifferent attitude toward such serious things as national values and the cultural heritage of their country is rather dominant among adolescents.

Table 4 describes the survey findings on the resulting awareness of national values and cultural heritage among students as of June 2021. The presented average data suggest that the performance of control group A was not subject to changes. Awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage remained at the same level. The neutral attitudes even increased, making it clear that the majority is indifferent.

Table 4. *Survey findings on the awareness of national values and the importance of the cultural heritage of China (as of June 2021), %.*

Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1. I believe that China's cultural heritage constitutes the national treasure	11.4	31.8	12.8	43.5	57.6	19.6	12.9	4.8	5.3	0.3
2. I am convinced that the Chinese culture is authentic, and studying it in school is essential	8.9	29.8	14.9	41.6	36.8	18.1	36.4	8.7	3.9	0.9
3. I feel love, loyalty and devotion to my country	12.4	31.6	26.6	39.4	42.9	22.6	12.2	7.4	1.4	3.5
4. I experience a state of solidarity, shared values and aspirations with my country	8.4	15.9	22.9	29.8	42.7	43.8	21.2	8.3	2.4	4.6
5. I am aware that the rule of law prevails in my country	15.8	29.6	32.9	38.9	51.5	27.6	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.2
6. I believe that all citizens of my country enjoy the direct and equitable opportunity to contribute to its government	9.7	23.2	23.2	31.4	54.1	36.8	10.6	6.2	3.9	0.9
7. I believe that human dignity is something my nation should stand for	15.7	29.7	25.2	38.9	54.3	20.6	9.7	5.3	0.4	0.2
8. In my opinion, my country adheres to the principles of impartiality and justice	9.7	29.7	21.4	32.6	52.8	29.8	14.1	7.3	1.5	1.1

9. I see myself as a citizen of my country with specific rights enshrined in laws	10.3	28.1	25.8	31.2	58.1	35.8	5.2	4.7	0.2	0.6
10. I think that, being a citizen of my country, I should follow virtuous moral and ethical principles, such as honesty, consistency, diligence	9.9	23.8	22.8	31.2	53.7	36.7	10.6	9.8	0.4	1.1
MEAN	11.2	27.3	22.9	35.9	50.5	29.1	13.4	6.4	2.1	1.3

After a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, group B demonstrated rather unsteady performance compared to its performance in January. The mean scores on "strongly agree" and "agree" answers increased from 10.9% and 22.4% to 27.3% and 35.9%, respectively. "Neutral" answers fell from 48.7% to 29.1%, while the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" answers fell from 15.9% and 2.3% to 6.4% and 1.3%, respectively. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China's cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one's country (an increase of 20.7%). Furthermore, statements about human dignity and equality, the rule of law, human rights, ethical principles and democracy have grown in importance. The lowest score on the "strongly agree" answer was received by the statement about the sense of nationhood, suggesting that in this category the developed practices were not effective (No. 4). These data suggested the effectiveness of the developed academic program in raising awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage among middle school students.

DISCUSSION

These days, the general public has abandoned traditional music and believes that traditional music does not follow the trends because it is untimely and old-fashioned (Chen 2016). Such a negative opinion has implications for the

perception of traditional music and continues to influence many people's attitudes toward it (Shi 2021). In fact, traditional values, being lost with evolution, make people resist traditional, entrenched things with a heavy cultural legacy (Ibid.). However, traditional music constitutes the wealth and treasure of every nation and should be studied as part of music education at schools (Yang & Welch 2014). Such an idea was reinforced by the findings of this study.

Because of globalization, traditional folk music loses its cultural connotation over time and becomes a tool for generating profit, creating new interpretations thereof and changing the traditional folk music with cutting-edge technology. To a certain extent, however, this makes traditional music popular with the younger Internet users (Shi 2021). As case studies of music education in Finnish institutions of higher education suggest, folk traditions are not inherently incompatible with formal education in reviving folk music and can be incorporated into music education in middle schools (Ramnarine 2003). Studying folk music at educational institutions has been reported as an effective way to address cultural inclusion in society, as validated by research conducted in Australia (Southcott & Joseph 2010). One of the studies compares and discusses teaching methods that confirm the high effectiveness of contemporary teaching programs. Aside from recognized approaches, such methods also integrate folk music and epic poetry of each country, as relevant studies promote feelings of patriotism (Entwistle 2009). These findings directly validate the data (which were also obtained in the current study) on the developed program's effectiveness not only in the music learning context, but also in raising awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage.

Other research suggests the need to integrate traditional music into the learning process. For example, Yang and Welch (2016) compare two different approaches to teaching relying on folk songs, providing examples of teaching approaches that have been used in the observed context of folk culture and music school. The research findings revealed musical components and teaching strategies in the study of traditional folk music, suggesting the inclusion of folk music in the program in order to provide visionary diversity in the system of music education, challenging the monocultural ideology within the existing formal music practices based on colleges and middle schools. These findings resonate with this paper's suggestions to introduce traditional folk songs and music into music education.

Some writings focused on introducing popular music in music education at middle schools as part of adolescents' cultural patterns amidst the changing cultural and social trends of contemporary China (Hoene 2017). The survey conducted among students aged 12–17 years revealed the extent to which Chinese youth prefer different styles of popular music in their daily lives. However,

traditional folk songs do not enjoy any popularity, and such a fact validates this paper's suggestions to integrate traditional Chinese folk music into the education sector. This is due to the fact that globalization leads to a loss of understanding of folk music's national importance among the younger generation.

Exploring major issues in music education from the perspective of music teachers, Ho and Law (2020) highlighted the contradictions and dilemmas that music cultures face in reproducing knowledge and cultures in the respective music programs when it comes to engineering cultural and national values in music education at middle schools. The findings of this study pertaining to Taiwan and Hong Kong suggested two different ways of delineating and defining political culture as applied to music education and also shed light on understanding national and cultural education in music classes at middle schools outside of Chinese communities and East Asia (Ho & Law 2020). Although the study focuses on the controversy observed between the inclusion of patriotic songs in schools' music programs and the teachers' attitudes toward this issue, the authors confirm that traditional folk music can provide an enabling environment for national and cultural development of music education at middle schools, which is confirmed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The lowest final scores (68.6 on average) were obtained by small group A, with traditional music instruction without the developed program. In contrast, small group B performed better by 13.7% than the control group. These data suggest the effectiveness of the developed academic program in music education at schools. The findings of the January 2021 survey on the initial awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage suggested that a neutral and indifferent attitude toward such serious things as national values and cultural heritage dominates among adolescents. Findings of the second survey (held at the end of the study) made it clear that awareness of national values and the importance of cultural heritage among control group A students remained at the same level. The neutral attitudes even increased, making it clear that the majority is indifferent. After a six-month exposure to the training program that involved learning traditional Chinese folk music, group B demonstrated rather unsteady performance compared to its performance in January. "Strongly agree" answers were given to statements that referred to the understanding that China's cultural heritage constitutes the treasure of the entire nation (an increase of 22.2%), and to patriotism, which manifested itself as a feeling of love for one's country (an increase of 20.7%). Furthermore, statements about

human dignity and equality, the rule of law, human rights, ethical principles and democracy have grown in importance. These data suggested the effectiveness of the developed academic program in raising awareness of national values and the importance of China's cultural heritage among middle school students. The practical significance of the obtained results lies in the possibility of using the developed methodology for the analysis of the traditional folklore of China and other countries, the specifics of the implementation of the study of folklore music in music educational institutions of various types. The curriculum proposed in the study can be used in music education, based on which to analyze the impact not only on achievements in learning music, but also on the awareness of national values among students. The prospects for further research are that such academic programs in music, history and culture can be the focus of future studies, with the prospect of their inclusion in school curricula. It is important to explore other ways of integrating traditional Chinese folk music into the education sector. The study of folk music of different countries in the aspect of multiculturalism is promising.

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CHINESE NATIONAL MOTIFS IN THE FOLK SONG *MO LI HUA*: INFLUENCE ON MODERN CHINESE MUSIC

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Abstract: The traditional music of China is well-known outside the country. Because of how they are written, Chinese folk songs can be interpreted in a variety of genres, which contributes to the popularization of Chinese traditional music. This study aims to investigate Chinese national motifs in the folk song *Mo Li Hua* and determine its significance to modern Chinese music. Through comparison, the study identified the following four characteristics of the song: anti-romantic moods, the melodic motion of leaps, expressiveness of musical intonation, and connectedness of melody and lyrics. Using the coefficient of intensive properties, the study revealed that expressiveness of musical intonation (0.92) was of the greatest significance for the transmission and preservation of national cultural traditions. In the Shapiro-Wilk test, the melodic motion of leaps (0.831) and anti-romantic moods (0.795) were found to be of the greatest importance for modern music-writing. Comparing the two famous interpretations of *Mo Li Hua*, the study found that the second version (0.937) was more valuable as a source of inspiration for composers, mostly because it told a bigger story. The practical significance of the work lies in the possibility of using research results to enhance the Chinese-style modern folk music writing process. Future research may focus on other elements of folk music, determine characteristics that different music compositions share, and investigate the role of those common characteristics in the contemporary music-making process.

Keywords: folk music, leapy melody, musical form, shades of music, tonal dynamics

INTRODUCTION

Folk music is a type of music culture that conveys folk traditions (Liu et al. 2021). It has philosophical and political foundations that expand cultural consciousness (Yang 2021). The distinctive features of folk music are the naturalness and brightness of the sounds and a sincere expression of emotions, which opens a broad avenue for Chinese culture (Liu 2018). The sense of harmony in Chinese folk music is a product of various artistic manifestations realized by drawing together moderate melodies, the sense of consciousness and musical aesthetics (Tang 2021). Melody is one of the main elements of folk music characterized by harmony and played with a wide variety of timbres and dynamics (Rui 2022). The pictorial elements of sound in Chinese folk music vary by region and depict natural scenes (Yao 2020). The sound itself is characterized by lightness, flexibility, and colorful dynamics. Many features of folk music attained a second life in contemporary music (Wan 2022).

The elements of folk music have been used in modern Chinese music since the beginning of the 21st century (Ber 2019). This facilitates the production of diverse compositions and helps to preserve the 'soul' of the nation (Lin & Liu 2021). With a modern spin added to the folk songs, the melodies acquire more texture, and the timbre range expands, allowing for originality in the pieces. A new singing aesthetic is in the making that may be of interest to the younger generation and people fascinated by folk motifs (Gao 2021). The combination of modern and folk styles generates a new model of narration and updates the genre. Rooted in folklore, contemporary music preserves that distinct tonality that folk music has (Papakostas et al. 2018). The said combination is conducive to contemplation and admiration. The connection between modern and folk music manifests itself in the preservation of the vocal line, artistry, sound production features, and the message of the song (Selva-Ruiz & Fénix-Pina 2021). When incorporating folk music into mainstream music, composers should follow the laws of folk music creation. The crucial components of melodic interpretation are gestures, sound quality and dynamics, melodic movement, and lyrics (van Langendonck et al. 2020). The sound of modern music should be harmonious, and the melody must be clear to create a sense of space and enhance aesthetic experience (Ber 2019). To preserve the features of folk music in contemporary music pieces, one must consider not only the technical side of the problem (note combination), but also the timbre and the relationship between aesthetics and philosophy (Rui 2022).

Musicians can achieve a harmonious combination of folk and modern styles by looking upon folklore as a source of inspiration. One of the famous folk songs is *Mo Li Hua*. Not only is it popular in the Jiangnan region, but it also

has various interpretations outside China (D'Evelyn 2018). It was adapted by Kenny J. Anton Arensky for his concerto, and Puccini incorporated this melody into the score of Turandot (Jaago 2018; Nie 2021). *Mo Li Hua* gained popularity in the world because of its fine texture, polyphonic diversity and tonic modal structure; in addition, the song provides room for improvisation (Wilson 2016).

Literature review

Particle swarm optimization (PSO) makes the Chinese folk music composition more effective (Zheng et al. 2017). The algorithm is designed to find the best solutions for melodic composition. It is based on a multi-melodic space constructed for the traditional pentatonic music creation. By making it easier to create gentle melodies, PSO facilitates the preservation of cultural traditions in music. The analysis of folk pieces should involve pattern discovery. By a rigid definition, music pattern sequences represent the pairs of pitch differences and duration ratio (D'Evelyn 2018). By comparing these patterns, musicians can determine the recurring melodic sequences that affect the expressiveness of the piece. The attention should be directed to open and closed patterns (Ren 2016). To analyze folk music, musicians must be creative, but the conventional music education (learning by books, without technology) fails to unlock the full creative potential of music students. Researchers suggest solving this problem by combining traditional pedagogies with the conservatory model of learning (Yang & Welch 2016). This way students learning folk music will be able to investigate the technical aspects of music and then apply their knowledge in a practical context (Yang & Welch 2016).

Vocal art is a means of conveying the artistic and emotional content of a musical work through voice, sounds, words and intonation. Folk singers can reach an aesthetic vocal performance by using integrated methods, such that combine innovative and conventional methodologies (Liu & Zhou 2021). The choice of a voice building technique will affect the purity of the performance. Chinese singing competitions heavily rely on the folk genre. There is evidence of folk singers becoming famous after representing performance traditions of a particular region on a national stage (Gibbs 2018). The interaction with those traditions also helps singers to improve vocally and develop their own style of singing. Since the 20th century, Chinese music has been intersecting with the Western traditions, and this interaction resulted in the emergence of more complex thinking and composing techniques. Modern songs under the influence of national folklore preserve the aesthetics, melodic intonations, rhythm and notation of the original (Gibbs 2018). One example of medieval music

manifested in contemporary culture is "The Rains of Castamere", a song written specifically for the Game of Thrones. When writing this song, musicians had to generate a musical piece that is pleasant to the ear. To create a harmonious sound, they were forced to reconstruct medieval music to make it sound modern while maintaining the elements of folk culture (Cuenca 2020).

It is impossible to imagine modern folk music without a developed folk art industry and innovation. To master folk music, musicians must be culturally capable and sensitive; otherwise, they will not be able to identify the elements of traditional music and blend them together (Żammit 2021). Traditional folk songs are constructed around patriotism, homesickness, affection, friendship, and love. These themes can also be narrated in contemporary Chinese folk songs to evoke a broad range of strong emotions. Modern Chinese folk songs tend to convey a variety of artistic emotions through melody, rhythm, tonality and aesthetic experience (Li 2022). The change of music genre should be justified artistically or economically. To blend modern and folk music, one should focus on sonic similarities between the two genres. When writing Chinese music, the emphasis should be on the polyphonic music writing technique, assuming the movement from counterpoint to free style and from simple texture to complex melodic line. The emphasis on Western traditional polyphonic music helps to preserve the modal features of Chinese music (Yang et al. 2015). To sum up, the literature suggests that folk music has a direct influence on contemporary music, but to make them blend well, one must work on the expressiveness of the piece, its melodic intonation, and rhythm.

Problem statement

Modern Chinese music and folk culture are closely related, with the latter being a source of cultural traditions, philosophy, religious motifs, and historical inspirations. Supported by folk art, modern Chinese music stands out with the presence of polyphonic texture, variations of rhythm, the combined use of various instruments and graded dynamics.

The present study aims to investigate the Chinese national motifs in the folk song *Mo Li Hua* and its influence on modern Chinese music. The objectives of the study are (1) to identify the distinguishing characteristics of *Mo Li Hua* which are typical of Chinese folk music; (2) to determine the possibilities of using the distinctive features of Chinese folk music in modern music; and (3) to estimate the significance the two famous versions of this song have from the perspective of modern music-making.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

Not only did this study analyze the song *Mo Li Hua* to determine its distinctive characteristics, but their correspondence to the general folk traditions was also established. For this, the comparison method was used. The study focuses specifically on *Mo Li Hua* because it is one of the most popular folk compositions in China and abroad. The significance of this composition in Chinese folk music was evaluated using the coefficient of intensive properties (Weliver 2012), as shown below:

$$I = \frac{g}{M} , \qquad (1)$$

where: g is a conditional variable representing the extent to which a particular indicator and general tendencies in Chinese folk music are matched; M represents an ideal level of significance (i.e., the desired extent to which a particular indicator and general tendencies in Chinese folk music are matched). The characteristic of the song was considered as significant if it had appearance in a sufficient number of Chinese folk songs.

The distinctive features of the traditional melody named *Mo Li Hua* were the anti-romantic mood, the melodic motion of leaps, expressiveness of musical intonation, and connectedness of melody and lyrics (they convey the same intended emotion). The next step was to determine if those features were feasible in modern musical compositions. These four indicators were evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test (Weliver 2012). The formula is:

$$W = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i x_{(i)})^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i - \bar{x})^2} , \qquad (2)$$

where: $x_{(i)}$ denotes the value of the i-th indicator; $\bar{x}$ is the sample mean; and a_i is the coefficient of statistical order.

The final step was to compare the two versions of *Mo Li Hua* to determine whether this song could serve as a reference in modern music-making. The comparison is based on the Shapiro-Wilk test (Everett 2021). The formula is:

$$k_s = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (p_i - p_{cp})^{1/2}}{n-1} , \qquad (3)$$

where: n is the number of indicators; p_i is the relative value of the i-th indicator; p_m denotes the arithmetic mean.

A correlation coefficient (k_s) of 0.9–1.0 signified a very high correlation, 0.7–0.9 high, 0.5–0.7 moderate, 0.3–0.5 low and 0.0–0.3 a negligible correlation between variables (Everett 2021).

Statistical processing

Data analysis was done in Microsoft Excel, which facilitated arithmetic operations by supporting the application of mathematical formulas. Microsoft Excel was used to process and sort the numerical results by creating charts.

Ethical issues

The study does not involve human subjects; hence, ethical approval was not required. However, the present study considered value indicators, which necessitated the researchers to be honest, impartial, and present consistent and accurate data. The authors confirm that the information presented in the current paper is unique and that it was not borrowed from previous research (National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology 2024).

Limitations

The focus of the present study lies exclusively on *Mo Li Hua* and other Chinese folk songs are ignored. Even so, the work details the features of that musical composition and their significance for both the preservation of folk traditions and modern music-making.

RESULTS

Written in the 18th century, the Chinese folk song *Mo Li Hua* is considered to be the second Chinese national anthem. Using the coefficient of intensive properties, this study identified the main characteristics of *Mo Li Hua* and their relationship to those of Chinese folk music. The results are presented in Figure 1.

The anti-romantic mood of the song is associated with the richness of eastern cultural ethnicity and its dramatic tradition. The scene it portrays allows musicians to use bright tone 'color' and play the melody in the impressionist style. The rich colorful imagery determines the genre diversity, which can range from epic to lyrical and even ironic. As seen from Figure 1, the anti-romantic mood of the song is the least significant characteristic it has, likely because folk music compositions tend to convey a variety of moods. The significance score of this indicator is 0.71.

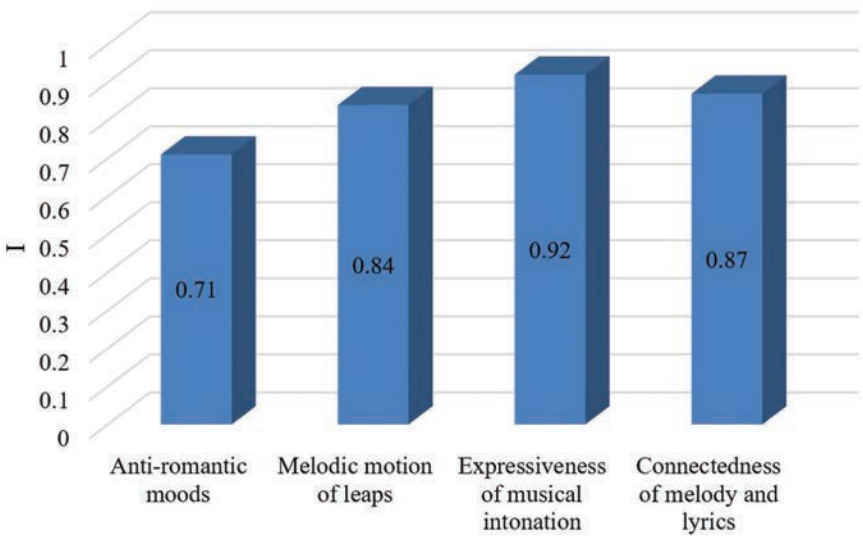

Figure 1. *Four distinctive features of* Mo Li Hua *and their levels of significance as building blocks in Chinese folk music.*

The song has a leapy melody (Figure 2) characterized by rhythmic variety and high registers. It moves from short to long musical phrases that affect the metrical structure. A smooth melodic shape predicts the emotional and melodic movement within the piece where the melody moves from high to low sounds. The melodic motion of leaps ranked third in terms of significance among the main folk music characteristics, with the significance score of 0.84.

Musical images can be embodied in the song by using unique intonations specific to a particular musical culture and accompanied by timbre, rhythm and melody. Phonetics and intonation are elements of musical culture that convey musical traditions. For instance, using intonation, singers can preserve the five-fret structure of the song, its distinctive flavor. Of all the characteristics investigated here, the expressiveness of musical intonation through which musical images are embodied holds the most significance in preserving and presenting folk traditions. The significance score of this indicator is 0.92. The connectedness of melody and lyrics is also related to phonetics. This characteristic appears to be important, with the significance score of 0.87, because Chinese folk music is all about harmony and naturalness of sound. To achieve this connectedness, one must lengthen the syllables while following the music.

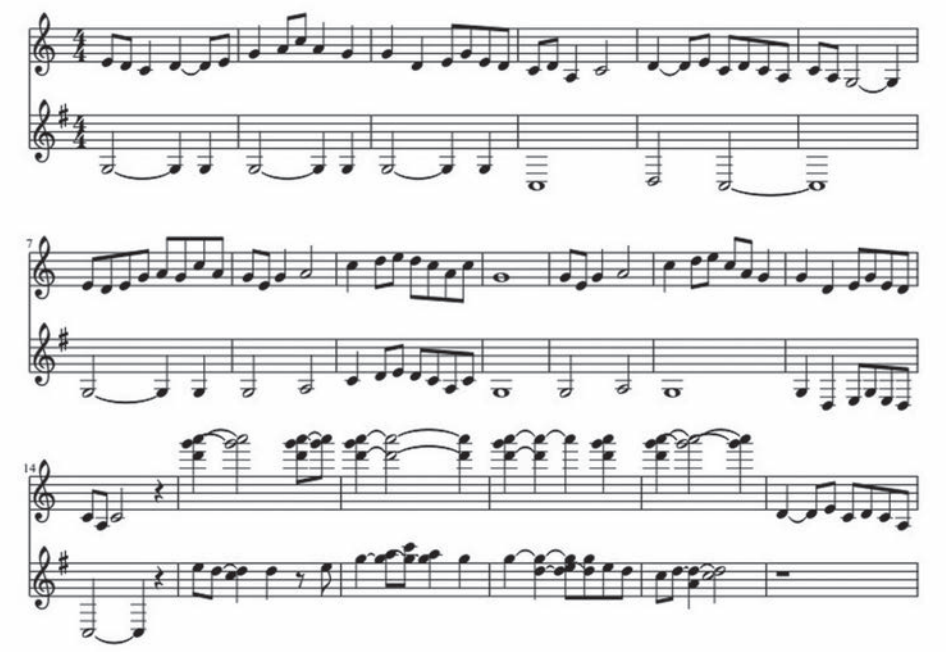

Figure 2. *Chinese folk song* Mo Li Hua*, music notation.*

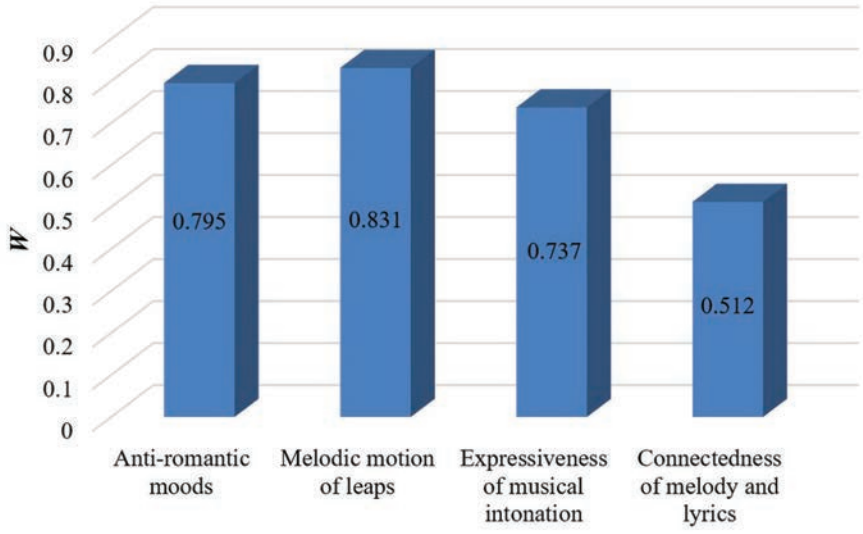

Figure 3. *Four distinctive features of* Mo Li Hua *and their levels of significance for modern music-making.*

The next step was to select those characteristics of *Mo Li Hua* that can be applied to modern music pieces. Figure 3 shows how significant these characteristics are when it comes to modern music-making.

As seen from Figure 3, it is crucial to incorporate a leapy melody into modern music compositions. Because melody combines all means of musical expressiveness, including melodic intervals, rhythm, tonality, structural motifs and phrases, it is no surprise that it has a high level of significance. The large leaps in melody (wave-like, horizontal, etc.) increase the expressiveness of the piece by enlarging the melodic range. Expression in the song, in turn, affects how the listeners feel while listening to it. The presence of recurring sounds in the piece uplifts one's emotional state.

Creating anti-romantic moods in contemporary music also seems important, for they are conducive to climactic scenes. The mood embedded in the passage defines the rhythmic movement and intonation – elements that shape the perception of emotion in the piece.

The expressiveness of musical intonation is the third most significant characteristic that one should bring to modern melodies. It defines the ratio of ascending and descending intervals, which manifests itself in a varying melodic pattern. The intonation affects the harmonious inclusion of repetitions in the composition incorporated as the rhythmic motifs change.

From the perspective of music-making, the connectedness of melody and lyrics holds the least significance, for they can convey different emotions or be connected in a manner that breaks the rules of Chinese music-making. To make the song sound harmonious, musicians can incorporate dynamic and articulatory motifs with different timbre colors. Expressiveness can be achieved by featuring rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic contrasts.

There are two main interpretations of the folk song *Mo Li Hua* which have different lyrics and melody (Table 1). The second version seems to be of greater significance in modern music-making (0.937), for it is rich in elements of expressivity and repetitions and has a complete storyline. Focusing on these components while composing will enable musicians to use a wide range of musical elements and combine the varying musical forms (rhythm, tempo, pitch, etc.).

Table 1. *Comparison between two popular versions of the Chinese folk song* Mo Li Hua.

Version 1	W-statistic	Version 2	W-statistic	Correlation coefficient
Literal translation		Literal translation		
What a beautiful jasmine flower! What a beautiful jasmine flower! Fragrant and full of branches It's sweet, white, and boastful Let me pick you up Give it to someone else Jasmine flower, oh Jasmine flower	0.711	What a jasmine flower! Of all the fragrant flowers and grasses in the garden, there is none as fragrant as it. I want to pluck one and wear it, but the gardener would scold me. What a jasmine flower! When jasmine blooms, not even snow is whiter. I want to pluck one and wear it But I'm afraid those around me would mock me. What a jasmine flower! Of all the blooms in the garden, none compares to it. I want to pluck one and wear it But I'm afraid it wouldn't bud next year.	0.937	0.82

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that expressiveness of musical intonation (0.92) was of the greatest significance for the transmission and preservation of national cultural traditions. In the Shapiro-Wilk test, the melodic motion of leaps (0.831) and anti-romantic moods (0.795) were found to be of the greatest importance for modern music-writing. Comparing the two famous interpretations of *Mo Li Hua*, the study found that the second version (0.937) was more valuable as a source of inspiration for composers, mostly because it told a bigger story.

An important component of Chinese music tradition is the tone-melody matching. Chaozhou songs were reported to have a high degree of correspondence between tone and melody (Zhang & Cross 2021), but the extent to which these two elements are matched in the folk and contemporary interpretations is not the same. Contemporary music should preserve the relationship between tone and melody in the effort to protect folk traditions and convey aesthetic experience. In Chaozhou songs, the tones vary from high-pitched to low-pitched; single tones can be changed by playing with pitch directions of the melodic notes (Zhang & Cross 2021). The Chinese folk melodies share certain features with Korean folk music – both put the relationship between humans and nature at the forefront in their narratives. Folk music is a vehicle for transmitting thoughts and behaviors from one generation to another. In Korea, folk songs ensure the mission of showing human creativity and capturing historical transformations. The distinctive feature of Korean folk music is the use of high-pitched notes that last a considerable amount of time (Yoon 2021). In Western music, an important element is the counterpoint, which influences the survival of folk music. Some researchers believe that it can be incorporated into Chinese folk melodies using FolkDuet, an app that generates countermelodies while maintaining the Chinese folk melodic style (Jiang et al. 2020). The present study suggests that the most imperative component of Chinese folk music is the expressiveness of musical intonation because it is tied to timbre, rhythm, and melody.

Chinese folk songs come in various regional musical styles, each with unique temporal characteristics of the melody structure that affect musical aesthetics (Li et al. 2019). An example is the hua'er folk songs, which serve as the expression of multi-functional and regional traditions. Hua'er lyrics are constructed in the creative communicative process through social interactions, which can be seen from the way people sing these songs. To be more specific, hua'er songs are sung in the form of antiphonal dialogue. The artistic expression of these songs reflects the soul of local communities (Tuohy 2018). Chinese folk songs may be considered as national and dialect literature. The current state of the Chinese music culture, however, is such that folk songs undergo the process of

revival, with a modern take. Contemporary musicians simply take inspiration from the folkloristic and dialect aspects of folk narratives. Modern compositions tend to be polyphonic and thus rich is sound. Different styles of singing also affect the interpretation of the song. Note that vocalization is characterized by acoustic and musical parameters, which require additional tuning (Shao 2016). The presented study did not examine the acoustic aspect, but it was found that different versions of the musical composition have different effects on music perception.

Scholars suggest that gender and social status can influence the aesthetics of singer's performance. Not to mention that singers have different types of vocal timbre and articulation used, and their vocal ranges are not the same, making every performance sound unique. The accuracy of a sung melody depends on the vocal apparatus of the singer and on their ability to use their voice (Shuwen 2018). A modern remix of a folk song requires a singer to breathe properly and have good vocal resonance. The repertoire thus must correspond to the vocal capabilities of the singer. When bringing the modern composition to life, performers must consider the historical and contemporary aspects embedded within the piece. The incorporation of folkloristic elements in the song makes a flowy and leapy melody that encourages singers to expand their voice range to hit higher pitches (Jiayin 2019). The distinctive features of folk music are rhythm and inherent symbolism, which affect emotional experience. The relationship between tone and melody affects the singing speed and contrast. The way listeners perceive a folk song also depends on the singer's charisma and audience. The national style of singing also emerges as a result of soft and smooth singing, regardless of the pitch (Stenberg 2020). The analysis of previous research made it possible to determine that Chinese traditional music, regardless of its genre (folk or pop), should have brightness, expressiveness, accurate interpretation and soft music patterns at its core. The present study focused on a specific music piece (*Mo Li Hua*) and determined its significance for both modern and folk music.

CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, this study determined the significance of the folk song *Mo Li Hua* for the preservation of national traditions. According to the results, the expressiveness of musical intonation (0.92) is the most significant characteristic of the song, as it portrays the national identity. The second most important characteristic is the connectedness of melody and lyrics (0.87), which contributes to natural

sounding. Other characteristics include the melodic motion of leaps (0.84) and anti-romantic artistic mood (0.71).

Secondly, the study established the possibility of using the above characteristics to write modern music. The leapy melody (0.831) and anti-romantic moods (0.795) appear to be the most valuable characteristics in this regard, for they are responsible for the variation in intervals, rhythm, tonality, and sound. The connectedness of melody and lyrics is of the least importance, as it implies adherence to academicism and prevents musicians from breaking the rules of music writing.

Comparing the two famous interpretations of *Mo Li Hua*, the study found that the first version of the song is shorter and less specific storywise than the second one. Therefore, the second version with its deeper story is a better foundation for creating modern music.

The practical significance of the study lies in the suggestion that folk songs can be incorporated into the curriculum as a basis for writing modern-style songs. Future research may focus on other elements of folk music, determine characteristics that different music compositions share, and investigate the role of those common characteristics in the contemporary music-making process.

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PRACTICAL VIEWPOINTS

SOME ASPECTS OF FOOD SECURITY/ INSECURITY OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION

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Abstract: Based on the analysis of the problems of food security/insecurity, the article proposes some statistical and sociological indicators which, in our opinion, can be a model for studying such phenomena in countries with transition economies. These criteria can be: 1) affordability of food – the share of expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the total consumer structure of the household; 2) the part of the population that is most food-deprived; this is eloquently evidenced by the lack of financial opportunities for some social groups to purchase the most necessary food products; 3) the difference between the affordable and desired daily ration of an average person. Such criteria are simple, reliable in measurement and easily comparable, providing illustrative material for studies like these, in particular comparative ones. The presented model is most applicable in countries with transition economies due to the relevance of certain socio-economic processes there. Against this background, some of the obstacles associated with food security/insecurity in Ukraine are revealed. Among them, firstly, the relatively low economic availability of food compared to the EU countries; secondly, a certain part of the respondents who have financial problems with the purchase of the most necessary food products; thirdly, some difference between the daily diet and the most desirable foods for consumption, such as fruits, fish, seafood. Despite certain difficulties that are present and have their own specifics in almost every country, Ukraine has recorded a positive trend towards a decrease in the share of household spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages from 64.2 % in 1999 to 46.4 % in the year 2021.
Keywords: food security, food poverty, food products, countries with transition economies, developed countries, global food security index, share of household consumer spending

INTRODUCTION

The process of institutionalization of the concept of food security began during the Second World War, with the aim of solving the problems of hunger and malnutrition at the international level in the neediest countries and regions of the planet. In the process of its development, it has undergone a certain evolution. Even at the present stage, the criteria for food security, both in universal measuring schemes and at the national level, are constantly being refined and differentiated in connection with new challenges. The concept itself has evolved from its original meaning, relating to the food security of entire countries and regions, to a more polyphonic understanding, one of the variants of which takes the form of an emphasis on the purchasing power of the household, especially in countries with transition economies. In this regard, the most relevant are indicators related to economic, material, and financial issues in the life of an average family and, consequently, to the ability of its members to eat well and lead a healthy lifestyle, as well as to have favorable opportunities for multifaceted self-realization.

One of the aspects of the present problem of interest to us, in the scientific literature, is denoted by the terms, food poverty and food insecurity, which are often used interchangeably. Food poverty is a complex phenomenon influenced by many different factors. The most systemic aspect concerns the availability of food and drink, their caloric content, as well as their quality, quantity, and access to them, which can significantly affect the level and quality of life in households. It should be emphasized that, first and foremost, this phenomenon is the result of the socio-economic, geographical and social contexts in which people live (O'Connor & Farag & Baines 2016). The main purpose of this article is to identify the most relevant indicators for the analysis of food poverty in countries with transition economies, and, based on the results of empirical sociological research, to identify typical socio-economic problems of food security/insecurity at the regional level in Ukraine.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

In the English-language scientific literature, the study of food issues in 2021 took place in the following areas: the impact of food consumption on human health; food production and its impact on the environment; various regions and nations. Also, food security problems were analyzed according to such dimensions as supply and demand for food, pricing policy, international trade, and the evolution of the concept of food security (Savary et al. 2022).

In Ukraine, mostly economists suggest, among others, singling out the following indicators of the country's food security: first, the availability of high-quality and safe food products; second, the energy value of a person's diet – in 2020 this is 2,691 kcal per person per day, while in EU countries this indicator is set within 3,400–3,500 kcal.; a certain ratio in the diet of animal and vegetable products, i.e. a person should receive 55.0 % of the daily requirement of kilocalories from food of animal origin; third, the economic affordability of food; fourthly, the stability of the food market and the level of its independence; fifthly the development of the agro-food sector; sixthly, natural resource potential and efficiency of its use, etc. (Rumyk 2013; 2020). Nevertheless, today, against this background, the most universal approach for assessing the food security of a country is the Global Food Security Index, which has been successfully used in comparative studies.

It is logical that at the present stage food security is reduced, in particular in countries with transition economies, and that it is evaluated through the prism of the level of consumption and purchasing power of households, their material and financial capabilities. The variety of indicators, both objective and subjective, somewhat complicates, schematizes and sometimes leads away from the essence of the phenomenon, from what should be given priority. To avoid this, it will be interesting to look at food security/insecurity in Ukraine, including at the regional level, with the help of several relevant statistical and sociological indicators. In our opinion, these should be: 1) economic affordability of food products – the share of expenditures on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the total consumer structure of the household; 2) the proportion of the most deprived population in terms of food, which can be eloquently indicated by the lack of financial opportunities for some social groups to purchase the most necessary food products; 3) the difference between the available and desired daily diet of an average person. These criteria are simple, reliable in measurement and easily comparable, providing valid illustrative material for comparative studies of the socio-economic dimension of food security/insecurity in countries with transition economies.

METHODOLOGY

For this work, some parts of the material of the sociological research "Features of the gastronomic culture of modern Ukrainian society (on the example of the great city – the Dnipro)" were used. Its preparation and implementation were carried out directly by the author of the article. The research was focused on the study of the culinary, social and economic order of the gastronomic culture of the

city. The goal was to identify the characteristic features of the eating practices of citizens. The empirical study was conducted from December 1 to December 31, 2021. For the study, the sample population was formed in compliance with the relevant quotas, using the random selection method at the last stage. The sample – 400 respondents – is representative of the adult population of the city. Quotas were used to select respondents by age and gender in accordance with the author's own calculations, while accounting for the available statistical indicators for the city. The age categories of respondents were divided as follows: in the age range 18–29 years – 16% were interviewed; 30–39 years – 16%; 40–49 – 20%; 50–59 years – 21%; 60 years or more – 27%. In general, 45% of respondents in the sample were men and 55% women.

The survey was conducted by the method of question and response. Specifically, a selective personal questionnaire was chosen, which allowed, in a relatively short period of time, to obtain an assessment of certain aspects of food security and modern gastronomic culture at the regional level, while accounting for indicators of mass consciousness that are important for the researcher.

ANALYSIS

Obviously, people live the way they eat. Food security is a situation in which all people have physical and economic access to sufficient and safe food to lead an active and healthy life. The absence of such opportunities is commonly referred to as food poverty. In the modern world, food issues are beginning to acquire paramount, vital importance, which is due to both objective and subjective factors. Among them are epidemics, wars, droughts, inflation, corporate selfishness and, as a result, migration flows, socio-economic and political problems etc. Such processes are particularly relevant in developing countries and countries with transition economies. This is expressed in the fact that the majority of the population there, in comparison with developed countries, spends a significant part of their financial resources on food (The World Bank. Food Security Update 2022).

On the one hand, in developed countries nutrition issues are primarily related to economic conditions, social contradictions, climate change and, as a result, gasoline prices. All this affects the ability of supermarkets and supply chains to provide the population with food at the same or increasing prices. Also, against the background of the functioning of the food system, the conversation is about the balance between the economic value of goods, their environmental safety, the health of consumers and their rights (Lang 2020). Moreover, in high-income countries there is unlimited access to high-calorie foods, so problems

overeating some categories of foods, such as meat, fish, products containing a lot of sugar – can lead to obesity in adulthood and later to diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Such diseases significantly contribute to the increase in the mortality rate (Headey & Alderman 2019). Of course, in general terms, all the countries of the rich world can boast of food security, although they have not completely solved the problem of hunger. For some social groups such problems are a consequence of financial restrictions and material deprivation. In this regard, food banks (Australia, Brazil, France, Great Britain, USA) are one of the tools to combat such negative phenomena. In some countries, these banks receive government funding. The first banks of this kind appeared in the United States at the end of the 1960s, spreading in the beginning of the 1980s to Canada, and in the mid-1980s to France. Today institutionalization is taking place in most European countries (Riches 2016). Also, such organizations at the supranational level contribute to the fight against malnutrition and hunger on a global scale through appropriate assistance, primarily to developing countries.

On the other hand, in countries with transition economies, material and financial difficulties for a some social groups hinder achieving a balanced, wholesome diet; sometimes difficulties in accessing high-calorie foods such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products, eggs, meat, and fish, can lead to a delay in mental and physical development, the spread of various diseases, loss of strength, short stature, and lack of important micro- and macro-elements in the human body. All this negatively affects health and increases mortality at an early age (Headey & Alderman 2019).

THE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY INDEX AND THE SHARE OF CONSUMER EXPENDITURES ON FOOD PRODUCTS AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

One of the systemic indicators, particularly of food security and the quality of life of the whole society, is The Global Food Security Index. The index is a dynamic model consisting of 58 indicators that characterize such phenomena in modern countries. The overall goal of studies like these is to rank countries according to their level of food vulnerability (security) at least through four dimensions: affordability; availability; quality and safety; natural resources and resilience (Global Food Security Index. Methodology 2021). In 2021, according to the presented index, Ukraine ranked 58th out of 113 countries. The most affordable food according to one of the criteria of the presented index, which reflects the prices and the relevance of the purchasing power of the population, is in

Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Great Britain and Sweden. Ukraine takes 58th place in accordance with this criterion. In line with the criterion of the quality and safety of food, in relation to the leading places – Canada, USA, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Ukraine ranks 55th (Global Food Security Index. Rankings and trends 2021).

Because the nature of food security in developing countries and countries with transition economies mainly depends on the socio-economic, that is, financial conditions, it is advisable to detail the presented problems with the help of specific statistical indicators that speak about the expenditure on food products in the overall structure of household consumption. It is obvious that with an increase in the share of expenditures on food products, the household is faced with a complication in economic accessibility to the organization of good nutrition.

On a global scale, it is, of course, natural that the poorer the country, the more of their income members of society spend on food, and the more confidently we can talk about the actual problems of food poverty. In rich countries, the opposite trend is observed. Eloquent statistics are offered by Eurostat. Thus, in 2019, households in the EU spent more than 956 billion euros (equivalent to 6.8% of the GDP of the European Union) on food and non-alcoholic beverages. This represents 13.0% of total consumer spending. Households in Romania spent about a quarter of total consumer spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages (26.0%); in Lithuania 20.2% and Estonia 19.3%. In contrast, the share of spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages was less than 10% in three countries of the European Union: Ireland (8.6%), Luxembourg (8.9%) and Austria (9.7%) (Eurostat. Your key to European statistics 2020). The situation is also heterogeneous within individual countries. For example, in the UK, households with the lowest incomes spent a larger share of their budget on food and drink in 2021, around twice as much as the tenth of households with the highest incomes (20.4% versus 11.1%) (Karjalainen & Levell 2021).

In 2021, according to a sample survey of household living conditions, which is conducted on an ongoing basis by the Main Department of Statistics in the Dnipropetrovsk region, the total consumer spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the region was 40.3% (The Main Department of Statistics in the Dnipropetrovsk region 2022) and in Ukraine as a whole, 46.4% (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2022). This indicator designates the economic accessibility of food products; its limiting criterion is 60.0% (Methodology for determining the main indicators of food security, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "Some issues of food security" 2007). However, as we can see, in reality this indicator exceeds the corresponding one in EU countries by

1.5 to 4 times. In our opinion, this shows some difficulties with the organization of a full-fledged diet. At the same time, it should be noted that in Ukraine there has been a positive trend in the decrease in the share of household consumer spending on food products and non-alcoholic beverages from 64.2% in 1999 to 46.4% in the fourth quarter of 2021 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2022).

DETAILING THE PROBLEMS OF FOOD SECURITY AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Against the background of the presented data, based on the well-known expression, "think globally – act locally", it is interesting to turn to some indicators of food security at the level of a particular city. Today, 2/3 of the total population of Ukraine lives in the cities. These indicators are directly related to the socio-economic situation in the past and at the present stage.

Specifically, in the winter of 2021 the author of this article conducted a survey, "Features of the gastronomic culture of modern Ukrainian society (on the example of the great city – the Dnipro)". One of the questionnaire indicators was: "What dishes, drinks and desserts, in your opinion, belong to the national Ukrainian cuisine?" We obtained quite interesting results. Thus, 70.2% of respondents named borsch in their answers; 38.9% – lard; 23.5% – vareniki or stuffed boiled dough; 10.1% – dumplings or boiled dough; 8.0% – bread; 7.7% – pies; 4.2% – stewed fruit; 3.6% – donuts; 3.5% – fresh soup; 3.4% – kutia; 2.8% of respondents gave other answers; 2.7% – not interested; 3.0% – didn't answer (Table 1).

Table 1. *"What dishes, drinks and deserts, in your opinion, belong to the national Ukrainian cuisine?" (name no more than two dishes).*

No.	The name of the dish, drinks and desserts	%
1.	Borsch	70.2
2.	Lard	38.9
3.	Vareniki or stuffed boiled dough	23.5
4.	Dumplings or boiled dough	10.1
5.	Bread	8.0
6.	Pies	7.7
7.	Stewed fruit	4.2
8.	Donuts	3.6
9.	Fresh soup	3.5

10.	Kutia	3.4
11.	Other	2.8
12.	Not interested	2.7
13.	Didn't answer	3.0

It should be noted that almost no one named desserts, fish and meat dishes, which, in our opinion, is an indicator of the poor quality of life in the past [Table 1]. In general, the above answers may indicate that respondents lack information about Ukrainian gastronomical culture i.e., in their minds it has acquired stereotypical clichés. Such dishes, rather, find their place in culinary practices due to the great inertia of any culture, in contrast to the desired gastronomic education, which would give additional impulses to the revival of Ukrainian gastronomic culture and civic identity.

In general, socio-economic barriers and financial difficulties, primarily in the form of low solvency of the population, still stand in the way of solving the problems of food security and the full development of the gastronomic culture of Ukrainian society. This is evidenced by the respondents' answers to the following question in our study (Table 2):

Table 2. *"Are you able to buy the most necessary products?"*

No.		%
1.	Not enough money	20.6
2.	It's hard to tell if it's enough or not	22.3
3.	Enough	55.1
4.	Not interested	1.2
5.	Didn't answer	0.8

As you can see, in 2021 almost every fifth respondent says that he or she does not have enough money for the most necessary food products. Mostly they are representatives of the elderly. The data for this indicator is almost identical to similar research that we conducted nine months ago. These results are also confirmed by a larger study. In accordance with the sociological monitoring of

the Ukrainian society, conducted by the specialists of the Institute of Sociology (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine), in 2020 about a third (27.7%) of the respondents answered that they do not have the opportunity to buy the most necessary products. However, compared to 1998, this figure has significantly decreased (Table 3) (Parashchevin 2020: 493).

Table 3. *"Are you able to buy the most necessary products?"*

	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018	2020
Not enough money	60.6	49.6	35.7	32.4	26.6	25.1	27.7
It's hard to tell if it's enough or not	18.2	17.5	19.4	17.8	21.4	19.0	24.1
Enough	19.4	29.6	42.3	47.3	50.0	53.2	44.1
Not interested	1.0	2.7	2.0	2.3	1.8	2.7	3.7
Didn't answer	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4

Obviously, a more systematic study, using sociological methods, of the nutritional conditions of various social groups, both at the national and regional levels, can contribute not only to an adequate assessment of their quality of life, but also to the process of developing a program for effectively overcoming relevant problems at the state level.

In this regard, in our analysis we tried to identify the difference between the desired foods and those that the respondents consume on a daily basis. Thus, the main food commodity that people usually prefer is meat; 60.2% would like to see it on their own table every day. Vegetables in this list were given 50.6% of respondents' answers; fish – 48.7%; fruits – 41.7%. Less necessary, according to respondents, are confectionery – 23.7%; cereals – 22.3%; and seafood – 20.7%. If we compare the food products that the respondents would like to consume and those that the respondents consume daily, we will get the following results. The data differ significantly between the desire to consume fruits (41.7%) and the daily availability of such an opportunity (30.0%). The same unfavorable situation is with fish and seafood: the difference between desire and opportunity is more than fifteen percentage points, respectively fish 48.7% and 30.1%, and

seafood 20.7% and 5.5%. Only 22.3% noted that they would give preference to cereals in the process of everyday nutrition, but actually 41.9% of the total number of respondents consume them almost daily. In addition, 74.6% include bread in their diet every day; 50.2% – soups (Tables 4, 5). In the process of selecting food products, respondents most often pay attention to health benefits (59.0%), taste (57.6%); a large number of respondents also pay attention to the price (37.3%). At the same time, 9.5% are interested in the prestige of the food they buy, in other words, that the product be fashionable, popular, branded, or expensive (Table 6). Thus, during their respective purchases the respondents take into account the benefit for their own health, which indicates the importance for consumers of issues related to the quality of food products. Therefore, including on this basis, it is also absolutely correct to assess this criterion as one of the important ones in the framework of the formation of an effective food security policy.

Table 4. *"What food products would you like to consume daily?" (choose up to five options).*

No.	Name of food products	%
1.	Meat	60.2
2.	Vegetables	50.6
3.	Fish	48.7
4.	Fruit	41.7
5.	Dairy products	31.8
6.	Eggs	28.0
7.	Confectionery	23.7
8.	Cereals	22.3
9.	Seafood	20.7
10.	Bread	15.1
11.	Soups	12.8
12.	Not interested	2.9
13.	Didn't answer	0.5

Table 5. *"What food products do you have the opportunity to consume daily?" (choose up to five options).*

No.	Name of food products	%
1.	Meat	54.2
2.	Vegetables	47.2

3.	Fish	30.1
4.	Fruit	30.0
5.	Dairy products	25.1
6.	Eggs	24.7
7.	Confectionery	25.8
8.	Cereals	41.9
9.	Seafood	5.5
10.	Bread	74.6
11.	Soups	50.2
12.	Not interested	3.3
13.	Didn't answer	0.4

Table 6. *"What is the first thing you pay attention to when choosing food?" (choose up to two options).*

No.		%
1.	Benefits for health	59.0
2.	Taste qualities	57.6
3.	Price	37.3
4.	Product prestige	9.5
5.	Not interested	2.9
6.	Didn't answer	0.7

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DISCUSSION

Notwithstanding some specifics, it should be agreed that the share of consumer spending on food products in the household budget is one of the eloquent indicators of both food security and the quality of life of society. About half of consumer spending on food products by households in Ukraine – compared with the countries of the European Union, where they spend from a quarter to one tenth – speaks of some problems with economic access to food. Obviously, in Ukrainian society, people spend a lot on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the overall structure of their consumer spending, not because they eat a lot, but because they have relatively low incomes. Specifically, in 2021, based on the annual representative sociological research "Ukrainian Society: Monitoring

Social Changes" of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, about a quarter of respondents noted a lack of money to purchase the most necessary food products. The data obtained also correlate with the data from the author's sociological study, "Features of the gastronomic culture of modern Ukrainian society (on the example of the great city – the Dnipro. December 2021)". At the same time, for the residents of Dnipro, there is some difference between the desire and the ability to consume such high-calorie and health-important foods as fruits, fish and seafood daily.

Further research should be devoted to finding an effective solution to the identified problems, which are exacerbated during wartime, with the help of organizing an appropriate policy based on detailed sociological monitoring of the population's processes of nutrition, improving the efficiency of food banks and relevant social programs, as well as solving the problems of internally displaced persons, the population's labor poverty and other needy social groups. Regardless of certain obstacles that are present and have their own specifics in almost every country, positive trends have been recorded in Ukraine regarding a decrease in the share of household spending on food from 64.2% in 1999 to 46.4% in 2021, and also a decrease in the number of respondents who experience serious financial difficulties in purchasing the most necessary food products from 60.6% in 1998 to 27.7% in 2020.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

IRINA SEDAKOVA 70

Irina Sedakova has a long history of cooperation with Estonian folkloristics. As a member of the international collegium of the journal Folklore: EJF she has graciously extended her advice; she has been the guest editor of several special issues, and she has also been a member of the external board of the Estonian Foklore and Cultural History Centre for Excellence (2000–2007).

Irina Sedakova is an outstanding linguist, researcher of folklore and customs and Balkanist, who has authored over 450 publications in Russian, Bulgarian and English. These include many monographs, edited collections and articles, but also reviews, translations from Bulgarian and English, textbooks, etc. Her doctoral dissertation (1984) examined "Lexica and symbolism of Bulgarian Christmas and New Year rituals". The monograph "Balkan motifs in the language and culture of the Bulgarians" (2007) became a bestseller in its native language, and in 2013 a translation into Bulgarian was published. The book provides a thorough ethnolinguistic overview of the complex formations of Bulgarian folk religion, such as customs surrounding birth, motherhood and the first period of human life from the perspective of fate. Sedakova's research examines the semantics of cultural traditions and concepts such as fate, life, path, old age, beginnings, poverty-wealth, lightness-heaviness, soft-hard, etc; kinship terminology, the folk calendar and folk demonology, the value system of folk culture, folk religion and the cult of saints, the ethnography of language, and the language and poetics of folklore.

In 2008, at the instigation and under the leadership of I. Sedakova, the Balcanica centre was created, which gathers and coordinates research on Slavic and Balkan languages and cultures in various centres throughout the world. Since 2017 she has directed the typology and comparative linguistics department in the Slavic Studies Institute in Moscow, and in 2021 she was appointed editor-in-chief of the Institute's journal, Slavic Studies.

Inna Sedakova conducts a significant amount of scientific and organisational work. From 1993 onward she has organised annual international conferences entitled "Balkan readings" and the roundtables of the Balcanica linguistic-cultural research centre (over 25 of these have taken place). Since 2004 Irina has directed an international interdisciplinary working group (SIEF working group of the Ritual Year) in the framework of which 14 conferences have been organised in various European cities. The working group coordinates the research in its area globally.

Irina Sedakova on her jubilee with her grandchildren. Photo from personal archive. 2025.

Irina Sedakova has edited over forty published thematic collections and materials and abstracts of conferences and roundtables. She is a member of the editorial board of several Russian and foreign journals and a member of the International Association of Ethnologists and Folklorists (SIEF); she has participated in many congresses, conferences and symposia. She has lectured at Moscow State University, Exeter University (United Kingdom), Bulgaria, Japan, Estonia, Belgium and the USA.

For her outstanding contributions to instruction in the Bulgarian language, Irina Aleksandrovna has been awarded the gold pin of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; in 2024 she was awarded the title of "Meritorious Worker in Science and Advanced Technology of the Russian Federation".

Irina Sedakova is not only a fine researcher and scholar, but a wise, gracious and helpful colleague; a true friend, to whom we send our heartfelt congratulations.

Editorial board of the journal Folklore:EJF

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NORDIC AND BALTIC DIGITAL HUMANITIES CONFERENCE "DIGITAL DREAMS AND PRACTICES", MARCH 3–7, 2025, IN TARTU

Conferences of the Nordic and Baltic Digital Humanities organization (DHNB) focus on research, education and communication in the interdisciplinary field of digital humanities in the Nordic and Baltic regions and beyond. The series of yearly conferences that began in 2016 has a history of bringing together academics, researchers, students and professionals with an interest in applying digital methods to research relevant to the humanities, social sciences and arts. With the special theme of DHNB2025, 'Digital Dreams and Practices', the organizers aimed to delve into the synergy between dreams in digital humanities and their practical applications, seeking to maximize value for both academia and society at large.

1. Integrating traditional humanities and computation. DHNB has long been committed to the importance of both domain expertise and methodological precision in research excellence. Digital humanities begin with explorations of data with a humanities lens, but the strongest impact is achieved when solid computational methods are applied to questions important to established fields with long research traditions. Contributions that were theory-driven, question-focused, and that advanced open cases of interest in the humanities and related fields were expected.

2. Coming down from the 'Ivory Tower'. Digital humanities research is highly relevant to the modern world, extending from practical uses of data in the humanities to offering perspectives on societal issues. This requires deliberate efforts to step outside academic discourse and actively engage with non-academic entities, including state institutions, NGOs and private companies. Here, contributions that emphasize and develop the societal relevance of digital humanities and actively cultivate collaborations between academic researchers and non-academic organizations were invited, with particular interest in papers that showcased these partnerships, highlighting the tangible outcomes and lessons learned from such collaborations. By emphasizing practical applications and societal impact, the conference aimed to showcase research whose value extends beyond academic circles.

3. Artificial Intelligence and the humanities. In recent years, Artificial Intelligence has become a household topic with increased power of large language models, user-friendly accessibility in apps like ChatGPT and profound societal impact, raising concerns about data privacy, fair use of data and the future of jobs. AI has increasingly shown the capacity to assist in or even automate tasks that have previously relied on human creativity. This encompasses a wide spectrum, from the generation

> of visual art and the creation of research reports to conducting qualitative readings of texts. We especially invite contributions that deal with aspects of AI in practice. Papers exploring the interplay between digital humanities and emerging Artificial Intelligence, including introducing innovative use cases, discussing ethical frameworks, or examining societal implications were called for.

Each of the highlighted thematic foci were opened up and scrutinized by keynote speakers: Maciej Eder, professor at the brand-new Center for Digital Text Scholarship at the University of Tartu; Andrea Kocsis from the University of Edinburgh; and Meelis Kull, the head of the Estonian Centre of Excellence in AI, from the University of Tartu. The links to the recordings of plenary speeches can be found on the conference homepage https://dhnb.eu/conferences/dhnb2025/keynote-speakers/.

The organization of the conference was initiated by the team of the Estonian Literary Museum (Mari Väina, Kadri Vider, Liisi Laineste, Olha Petrovych) that since 2013 has substantially contributed to the organization of the yearly Estonian DH conferences series. The conference took place at the Estonian National Museum (with the local team of Agnes Aljas, Pille Runnel, Piibe Nõmm), which added a stronger accent of GLAM section developments to the conference, as well as offering great facilities and cultural environments for the guests. The other institutions contributing to the organization in one way or another were Tallinn University (Andres Karjus), the University of Tartu (Joshua Wilbur and Liina Lindström), the Institute of Estonian Language (Martin Eessalu) and the Estonian Society for Digital Humanities. The conference was supported by projects funded by Estonian Enterprise and the Estonian Cultural Endowment, as well as by the organizing institutions.

The presentations included four panels (1,5 hour thematic sessions with discussion), 26 long presentations, 50 short presentations, and 36 poster presentations. All the submissions were carefully reviewed by 133 reviewers. The rich pre-conference programme included a new strand of the DHNB doctoral consortium, and 14 workshops/tutorials, some of them in the form of thematic mini-conferences, others as practical hands-on learning laboratories. The conference gathered 230 registrants from Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Denmark, Norway and 16 other countries, the furthest away being Japan.

DHNB decided to acknowledge the authors of the best papers in three categories. On the basis of the submission review scores and presentations the prize of best paper was awarded to:

- Maria Skeppstedt, Magnus Ahltorp, Gijs Aangenend, and Ylva Söderfeldt for their paper "Further developing the Word Rain text visualisation technique in a digital history project" in the category of long papers;
- Antti Kanner and Veronika Laippala for their paper "Exploring modal syntax across the written–spoken language continuum" in the category of short papers;

- Veronika Laippala, Petri Paju, Valtteri Skantsi, and Hannu Salmi for their paper "Imagined Homelands: Analyzing the Finnish-language Press in North America 1876–1923 with Artificial Intelligence" in the category of posters.

19 papers were published in the DHNB2025 Conference Proceedings in the DHNB Publications series: https://journals.uio.no/dhnbpub/issue/view/DHNB2025 and there will soon follow a call for papers for the post-proceedings.

Three pre-conference workshops were also connected to the field of folklore. (1) "Tradition Archives Meet Digital Humanities II" was configured by Sanita Reinsone together with colleagues from tradition archives in Nordic and Baltic countries to facilitate the exchange of insights, identify challenges and promote innovative practices while mapping the current landscape of developments in this field. (2) Mark Mets led the workshop "Explorations of the dynamics of cultural phenomena in text corpora" together with colleagues from the Estonian Literary Museum and Katrine F. Baunvig from Aarhus University. The workshop gathered researchers sharing their methodological discoveries in tracing how cultural phenomena emerge, distribute, spread, and transform within a society in a series of academic presentations and mini-hands-on-tutorials. (3) Edward Gray from DARIAH-EU invited the representatives of DHNB countries to co-organize a seminar "How to Structure and Organize a National Digital Humanities Research Infrastructure: Realizing the Digital Dreams of Tomorrow", where the question of what is necessary to build an effective national research infrastructure for the digital humanities community was discussed. At the same time, the seminar gave an overview of what is going on in the field in DHNB countries. The Estonian new roadmap object Estonian Research and Cultural Data Infrastructure that is about to launch this year was introduced by Mari Väina.

The digital presence of large folklore collections in the region and the ever-growing body of documents from online environments and publications clearly call for large-scale analyses, where computational power and social environments can be of help in gathering and processing the material. Thus it is no wonder that initiatives from folklore studies have been in the forefront in developing digital humanities in several DHNB countries. The whole conference encompassed as many as 19 submissions related to the keyword folklore, ranging from discussions on archival work-flows and management of digital archives to the AI-based analysis of violence in fairy-tales, and applying quantitative methods in multinational humour data. The wide scale of folklore-related presentations at the conference highlighted advancements in digital folkloristics.

The organizers hope that the conference sparked many relevant discussions, updated participants on the latest developments and trends in the field of DH within the region, offered inspiration for further research and provided seeds for future collaboration. DHNB, with its conferences and publications, has established itself as a reputable

platform for knowledge exchange, bringing together researchers from this interdisciplinary field and fostering research in many ways.

DHNB2026 will be organized by the Center for Digital Textual Heritage and Center for Humanities Computing at Aarhus University. I wish good luck and strength ("Jõudu!" in Estonian) to the main organizers, Kristoffer Nielbo and Katrine F. Baunvig.

Mari Väina

http://www.folklore.ee/folklore

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On the cover: Photo of kobzars (S. Pasyuga, I. Kuchuhura-Kucherenko, P. Hashchenko, H. Kozhushko) near the Katerynoslav Historical Museum at the beginning of the 20th century. Scientific archive of D. I. Yavornytskyi Dnipro National Historical Museum, Ф-5389.

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