

Migration of Song Genres: Two Typical Lithuanian Cases

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Song genres are reconsidered and migrate similarly, in general terms of adaptation to new contexts, and differently depending on the certain actor milieus. In the present article, these processes are illustrated applying two examples of changing Lithuanian tradition.

First, the song repertoire of Mištūnai village (south-eastern Lithuania) is analysed and the vernacular emic attribution of the songs to genres is collated to their attribution to the scientifically defined ‘actual’ genres. Thus, genres changing their assign or losing their strict application and dissipating, in contrast with the relatively ‘stubborn’ genres, are indicated. Musical and extramusical causes for such migrations/stability are discussed.

Second, song repertoires of the modern reconstructed Rasos (Midsummer) celebration that are popular, first of all, among the contemporary urban folk groups are discussed. These repertoires collect very different genres earlier not used for that occasion. They show significantly more courageous migrations, compared to the case of unbroken tradition in Mištūnai. Characteristic phenomena in the migrations resulting in composing of sort of ‘Rasos metagenre’ are discussed. Incidentally, sometimes the modern adaptations then make feedback to the original rural media and modify their sets of genres.

For a deeper acquaintance with the basics of Lithuanian songlore relevant for the subsequent discussion, the paper begins with a broad introduction into the general characteristics of Lithuanian traditional songs and their genres.

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Lithuanian traditional songs: General characteristics²

When describing the repertoire of Lithuanian folk songs, we primarily have in mind songs that were recorded decades ago and which were sung and fulfilled important functions in the natural peasant setting of everyday life up to about the middle of the 20th century. Songs were handed down from generation to generation, exchanged among villages, changed, and then augmented during these processes. As a result, many songs possess numerous textual and melodic variants. The largest archive of Lithuanian folklore (LLTI) alone contains around a half million collected songs.

The repertoire has survived quite well in the memory of older people throughout rural Lithuania. Only a few decades ago, many women of Dzūkija still knew a hundred songs; the most accomplished singers remembered as many as four hundred. The songs continue to be sung on special occasions, and they are recorded and documented during ethnographic fieldwork. In addition, Lithuania has a strong contemporary folklore movement. Rural folklore ensembles incorporate the songs of their environments into their repertoire and urban folklore groups include songs from different locations and sources.

Even though Lithuania is a small country, it is traditionally divided into four main ethnographic regions. These divisions are based on spoken dialects, traditions, and other cultural elements: Aukštaitija (east), Žemaitija (west), Dzūkija (southeast), and Suvalkija (southwest) (Fig. 1). Musical dialects approximately correspond to these ethnographic divisions.



Figure 1: Ethnographic regions of Lithuania. Design: Ambrazevičius.

From a linguistic point of view, all Lithuanian subdialects are grouped into two main dialects that are referred to as Aukštaitian (light palette in Fig. 1) and Žemaitian (dark palette), also known as Samogitian.

² Parts of the first, second, and fourth chapters are adapted from Ambrazevičius (1994) and Ambrazevičius, Budrys and Višnevskā (2015).

Besides the four major ethnographic regions, two subregions deserve special mention. Lithuania Minor is a small portion of Žemaitija and part of East Prussia (present day Königsberg/Kaliningrad district). This was part of Germany for several centuries as a former territory of Prussian tribes conquered by Crusaders, but inhabited mostly by Lietuvininkai, or Lithuanian-speaking Lutherans. Unfortunately, now we can only find traces of these songs and their carriers as they assimilated and vanished. The songs can only be reconstructed through collections from the 19th century. The region around Vilnius is specific for the Tutejszy (meaning the ‘local,’ ‘indigene’) minority rising mostly from a Lithuanian background and assimilated into Slavonic (Belarusian-Polish-Russian) ethnic groups over the past two centuries. Now they have acquired mostly a Polish identity. Their musical culture actually reflects their ethnic background. That is, it incorporates both loan-translations from Lithuanian and Slavonic influences.

Although all of the regions have their distinct musical characteristics, Dzūkija is traditionally considered to be the region boasting the richest wealth of songs in Lithuania, representing many genres and variations of melody types. This is probably because Dzūkija is economically the poorest region of Lithuania and here traditions survived the longest.

The texts of Lithuanian folk songs are mostly lyrical (but seldom epic) narratives in which monologues and dialogues intertwine. They are characteristic of metaphor symbolism; traces of mythological symbols are also quite pronounced. The characters that inhabit Lithuanian folk songs are simple and few in number: mother, girl, ploughman, reapers, and so forth. The time and location of the action is usually ambiguous, such as “in father’s manor” or “beyond deep seas, green forests and high mountains.” Several types of parallels are universally present in song texts. Many examples contain textual branches in which people are represented by nature: mother by the sun or a linden tree, father by the moon or an oak tree, and so forth.

Today, a wide variety of modes only exist in Dzūkija; in addition to the ‘simple’ major- and minor-type modes, these include noticeably ‘nontempered’ modes. Other regions mostly feature major-like modes.

Individualised solo performance, monophony (heterophony), polyphony, and homophony were characteristic of various Lithuanian singing dialects. Nowadays, homophony is the prevailing style in different Lithuanian regions. Usually, one singer performs the leading part while the rest of a group adds the lower ‘background’ part, thereby making dyads of thirds, fourths, or fifths with the leading part, according to the functional harmony. Both ‘high’ and ‘low’ male singing is common. This means that, in the case of a mixed (male and female) ensemble, male singers add either an interval of a third (fourth, fifth...) or tenth (eleventh, twelfth...) below the leading female voice.

Genres of Lithuanian traditional songs

One can draw a rough boundary between ‘functional’ and ‘subject-type’ Lithuanian folk song genres. The diversity of Lithuanian song genres connected to specific moments or actions include predominantly work, the calendar cycle, wedding, christening, (partly) children’s, feasting, and war-historical songs. Other songs did not have any ritualistic or tradition-specific function; they were sung at any time. Those songs are thematically classified into mostly newer youth songs, love songs, and songs of family life that are not connected to family celebrations (Tab. 1). The list of Lithuanian song genres and the attribution of songs to genres display the genre classification used in scientific circulation based mostly on the LLDK³ catalogue. The classification of the functional genres set by researchers more or less corresponds to the original emic classification and function. The thematic classification of the non-functional genres has no roots in the emic system.

Work songs	Herding (shepherd’s, night herding), ploughing, haymaking, rye, wheat, and oat harvesting, flax and buckwheat pulling, hemp gathering, milling, spinning, weaving, laundering, fishing, hunting, berry picking and mushroom gathering
Mythological songs	
Calendar cycle songs	Advent, Christmas, New Year, Shrovetide, Lent, Easter (swinging songs, <i>lavalimai</i>), Feast of St. George, Whitsunday-crop visiting, Feast of St. John, Feast of St. Peter
Wedding songs	Looking-round, matchmaking, betrothal and engagement, wedding eve, bridegroom’s parting feast, bride’s farewell, bridegroom’s welcoming, bride’s forewarning, leaving for wedding ceremony, welcoming back from wedding ceremony, recapturing the feasting table, recapturing the garden, guest mocking, gift-giving, giving the dowry away, leaving for the bridegroom’s home, welcoming the daughter-in-law, seeing the newlyweds to bed and waking-up, bride’s head-dressing and dinner party, newlyweds’ visit to the bride’s parents
Christening songs	
Youth songs	
Love songs	
Family songs	Orphan, fate of a daughter-in-law
Children’s songs	Lullabies, bounces and wiggles, wildlife, formulaic, teasing
Songs of nature and wildlife	
Imitations	Bird and other imitations
Didactic songs	
Humoristic songs	
Ditties	
Carousal songs	

³ LLDK – *Lietuvių liaudies dainų katalogas* (Catalogue of Lithuanian Folk Songs) – the catalogue of textual types of Lithuanian folk songs. It was developed by staff of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore in Vilnius.

Dance and play songs	
Wartime-historical songs	13 th –19 th centuries: struggles against Crusaders, Swedes, or Tatars; seven-year war, Napoleonic wars, uprisings; 20 th century: war between Russia and Japan, WW1, volunteer army, partisan (against Soviet occupation), exile
Emigrant songs	
Ballads	
Romances	
Songs of literary origin	
Laments	Wedding, funeral
Songs of wake	

Table 1: Lithuanian folk song genres.⁴

Wedding songs were the most popular type throughout Lithuania; several of them have as many as one thousand recorded variants. This is because weddings were major celebrations in the rural community. The cycle of wedding customs was long and quite complicated. Different songs accompany different moments of the cycle. They can be grouped into the greatest variety of lyric songs, but they also include humorous-satirical, drinking and banqueting songs, as well as wedding laments (there are also laments at funerals).

Calendar cycle songs were performed during Advent, Christmas, Shrovetide, around Easter, Whitsunday, St. John’s Day, and other celebrations. They use characteristic, unique vocables, pagan symbolisms and archaic melodic elements specific to each occasion. Even when associated with Christian celebrations, they have only occasional, supplemental Christian themes. These features confirm that these songs belong to the oldest layer of Lithuanian songlore.

With few exceptions, the only surviving calendar cycle songs are found in Dzūkija. Southern Dzūkija is exceptional in the number of Advent and Christmas songs. Many Shrovetide, St. George’s Day and swinging songs arose from a small area of eastern Dzūkija. The calendar cycle actually starts with Advent and ends with the Feast of St. George. Some points in the rest period of year also had specific songlore, such as seasonal work songs, yet these songs were not assigned to certain calendar celebrations.

The variety of work songs can be simply grouped into field- and house-labour songs. They also belong to the oldest layer of songlore, although there are newer work songs as well. The older songs have a direct relation to the work process, its different stages, and its rituals. These qualities are not as characteristic of the newer songs, which are also more lyrical.

⁴ The tables and the musical transcriptions are by the author of the article (if no reference is provided).

Most of the rye-harvesting songs are examples of archaic musical thinking; they probably make up the nucleus of work song repertoire. Similar in terms of function (type of work performed by women) and musical qualities were oat-harvesting and buckwheat-pulling songs. The majority of these songs are found in Dzūkija.

Haymaking (hay mowing and raking) songs come from different regions of Lithuania, yet men's *valiavimai* (containing the vocable 'valio') are characteristic of Aukštaitija and Žemaitija. Home-labor (spinning, weaving, etc.) songs have no distinct melodic traits and are found in various ethnographic regions.

In the context of Lithuanian songlore, some of the wartime-historical songs are exceptional in terms of the unambiguousness of the events and persons depicted. Some of the songs are march-like. However, most of them are lyric or epic and sorrowful, singing about the death of a brother or a son in a battle.

Popular throughout all of Lithuania were children's songs, feast songs, and songs dealing with themes of youth, love, and family. In general, as already mentioned, song genres varied among the various song types and ethnic regions; the same could be said about singing techniques.

The Mištūnai case: Unbroken tradition. The fieldwork

The first case considered in this paper is the Mištūnai song repertoire. Mištūnai village (Šalčininkai District, Pabarė eldership) is situated in Dzūkija (see Fig. 1). As previously mentioned, this is the region that boasts the richest wealth of songs in Lithuania, and Mištūnai is a typical Dzūkian village that still supports alive singing tradition.

Actually, a majority of the folk songs have lost their former meaning and active role in everyday life. However, they have been quite well preserved and still live in the memory of the older generation of Mištūnai as remembrances from the singers' youth. Some songs still remain in the active repertoire used mostly at village gatherings. Mištūnai singers (mostly women; Fig. 2) also, encouraged by folklorists, gave a number of concerts, both at local events and in Vilnius – at the National Song Festival, International folklore festivals *Baltica* and *Skamba skamba kankliai*.



Figure 2: Mištūnai singers at a folklore festival “Skamba skamba kankliai” in Vilnius, 1990s.
Photograph: Ambrazevičius (1999b).

In 1992–94, the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre organised long-term fieldwork in Mištūnai.⁵ In terms of time span, it was in fact a synchronic project. This type of fieldwork was common in Lithuanian practice, known as a “depth project” (Goldstein 1964, 71) or “general sampling of a community’s musical culture” (Nettl 1964, 66). Besides other kinds of folklore and ethnographic material, over 300 songs were recorded. In addition, some 100 songs were recorded repeatedly from the same informants, including recordings at concerts and in a record studio. Twenty of these songs appeared in an audiocassette (Ambrazevičius 1999b).

Obviously, the statistics of repertoire depends very much on the techniques of documenting. The following principles of interviewing and analysis were applied:

- All informants encountered during the research were recorded;
- Variants of songs repeating in the individual repertoires were recorded;
- Variants of songs recorded repeatedly from the same informants were not considered in the analysis;
- Methods of natural and induced recall⁶ were applied during the fieldwork;
- Alphabetic lists of songs⁷ were not applied at the fieldwork;
- Two main limitations: children’s songs were recorded only occasionally (as other projects dealt with them); also newer romance type songs were recorded incidentally.

⁵ The author of this paper participated in the fieldwork.

⁶ By natural recall, we mean the simple technique without prompting and guiding the informant, i.e., letting him or her recall as much as (s)he naturally remembers. By induced recall, we mean application of guiding the informant through functional or thematic cycles and sets. For instance, the informants are asked what songs were performed at different points of the yearly calendar cycle, the wedding cycle; what songs refer to various trees, herbs, animals, cosmological objects, etc., or include various characteristic refrains.

⁷ Sometimes we apply alphabetic lists of songs for fieldwork interviews. They are composed based on the songs recorded earlier in the examined location or nearby.

Genres: the general statistics

Fig. 3 shows the genre distribution of the recorded songs. The blue and red columns, in sum, denote the overall numbers of items of the corresponding genres, i.e., including the repeating textual types presented by different singers. The blue columns alone show the numbers of textual types, i.e., excluding their repetitions.

Laments, children's songs, contaminations, and newer songs are separated from the main set. For various reasons, these songs are not considered in the subsequent analysis. Inter-genre contaminations and miscellaneous song fragments are particularly individual and incidental (nevertheless, the intra-genre contaminations are included in the total number of the genre variants). For similar reasons, the statistics of the newer songs, ditties, and humoristic songs is excluded from the subsequent analysis as well. Additionally, application of induced recall results in the topics and functions characteristic of a more archaic layer of songlore, thus in the relatively lesser number of the recorded newer songs. In other words, the real 'weight' of romance-type songs for instance should be larger than appears in Fig. 3. The same holds for children's songs recorded incidentally, as mentioned above.

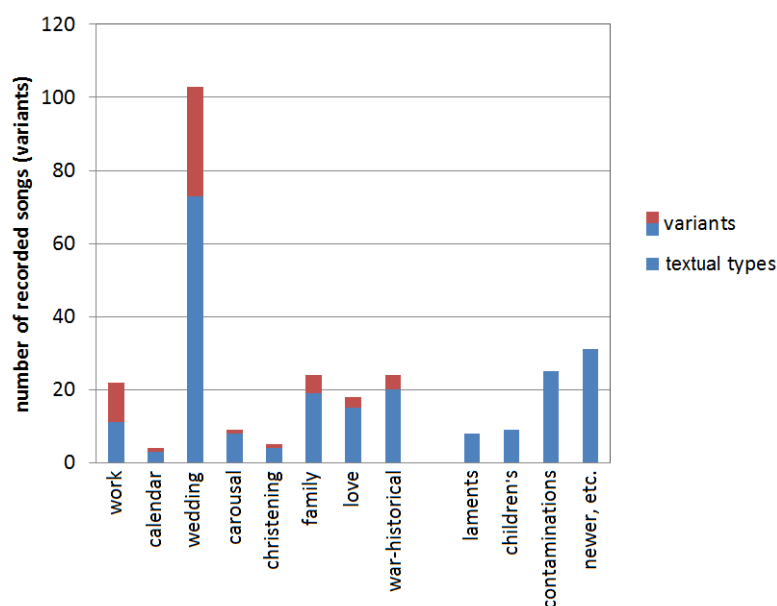


Figure 3: Genres of Mištūnai songs.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the genre distribution:

- Wedding songs constitute the major part of the repertoire;
- The number of recorded work songs might seem unexpectedly small. This points to the vanishing function of the songs, even in the memory of informants. In addition, a certain collector's preconception might be at work. Namely, we are used to emphasising the relative weight of work songs in Dzūkai repertoire. Yet this weight is rather qualitative, not quantitative;

- The recorded calendar cycle songs are extremely small in number; this also purports their vanished function;
- Family, love, and war-historical songs are quite numerous. These genres are ‘nonfunctional’ or ‘partly functional,’ so their survival is facilitated by the possibility of singing them at any time. In addition, the wealth of family songs can be explained by their partly wedding-like profiles, and the majority of war-historical songs consist of popular volunteer army songs.⁸

The textual types have quite different numbers of recorded variants. In other words, popularity of the textual types (ratio of the total number of variants and the number of textual types; or number of informants who performed the same textual type independently) varies noticeably with a genre. Wedding song textual types, on the average, have a relatively large number of recorded performances. The same could be stated of the rye harvesting songs, even to a higher degree. All in all, the textual types are found to be popular because of their communal usage (in the past only or still up to now), however, this does not necessarily mean the present popularity of the genre itself which could be vanishing.

Genres: scientific vs. vernacular classification

The vernacular classification, i.e., the local emic (‘cognitive’) classification used by the singers-informants themselves, is based on function, moment, or on circumstances of the performance. To be precise, this is rarely a real classification, in terms of denominating the songs with certain descriptors. That is, a song can be denominated as a ‘wedding song,’ yet perhaps more often it will be described as a “song performed at weddings.” The vernacular classification does not necessarily correspond to the ‘scientific’ classification, and now we are going to discuss this issue.

The divergence of the vernacular and scientific classifications results, first of all, from the change of musical culture, that is, from the decline of function, convergence, diffusion, or saltatory alteration. Polyfunctionality of a song could also be the reason. Hence, the comparison of scientific and vernacular classifications provides useful knowledge for studies of the named phenomena.

Tab. 2 shows the relation between the genre classifications in the Mištūnai sample. Roughly speaking, if the two classifications were ideally equal, the numbers would lay on the diagonal of the table. In other words, the dissipation of the diagonal shows the divergence of the classifications. The red highlighting marks correspondence of the two classifications.⁹ The decimals appear in the cases when

⁸ The songs from the period of struggle for independence (1918–1920).

⁹ The yellow colour marks non-zero cells and the grey colour shows the intersections of subdivided genres (work, calendar, and wedding) in the two classifications.

performances of the same textual type are supplemented with different notes about the function of the song. The question mark is used for the cases with no notes on the song attribution provided.¹⁰

scientific classification \ local classification		local classification																				
		rye harvesting	flax pulling	Easter	'drinking away'	'drinking away', wedding	bridegroom's parting	wedding eve	pre-ceremonial	post-ceremonial	masqueraders	guest mocking	wedding	wedding, etc.	christening	carousal	farewell for army	dancing party	at any time	etc.	?	
work	rye harvesting	3																				
	flax pulling		0.5																		0.5	
	other work													1					1.3		4.7	
calendar	Advent-Christmas			1																		
	Shrovetide																				1	
	Easter			1																		
wedding	matchmaking				2	0.3		3.3						0.8				1.3	1.3		2.2	
	betrothal and engagement				1	0.3	1												0.5		2.3	
	bridegroom's parting						1															
	wedding eve							0.3	2.5				0.5	1							1.3	
	other pre-ceremonial cycle					1			4.2											1	1.8	
	masqueraders										1.5										0.5	
	guest mocking											12										
	other post-ceremonial cycle	1			0.3				2.7	7				2								7.5
	christening				1										1	2						
	carousal															8						
wartime-historical																2			0.5		17.5	
family				1	1										0.5				3.5	1	7.5	
love					1			0.5	1										3	0.5	9	

Table 2: Relation of scientific and vernacular genre classifications of Mištūnai songs.

Some conclusions:

- In the case of work songs (especially in the case of rye harvesting songs), the two classifications correlate strongly;
- In the case of calendar cycle songs, the Easter-Easter correlation is evident. But what about the attribution of Advent-Christmas songs to Easter? We will return to this question a bit later;
- Wedding songs: a moderate correlation of the classifications. Since the most salient nonfunctional genres (family and love songs) correspond substantially to the genre “at any time” in the vernacular classification, we can state that some interchange between wedding songs and non-functional genres is observable. That is, some wedding songs are performed “at any time” and some songs of non-functional genres are performed during the wedding cycle. Hence, in the vernacular classification, the differentiation of family and love songs, on the one part, and wedding songs, on the other part, is smoother, especially since the non-functional genres obtain wedding functions;
- Some interchange between wedding songs and christening and carousal songs is also noticeable. This could be explained by similar feasting functions;
- There is strong correlation of the masquerades’ and guest mocking songs in the two classifications. The lyrics reflects verbatim the event situations, thus, not surprisingly, the songs retained clear function;
- Some interchange within the wedding genre could be partly caused by specific local wedding schedule (the scientific classification lists the comprehensive schedule of wedding events while some events might be omitted in the local schedules).

¹⁰ The large amount of wartime-historical songs without the notes results, most probably, from the confidence of collector in the obvious assignment of the songs to the wartime-historical genre.

These are the most distinct regularities of relations between the scientific and vernacular genre classifications. Besides of the regularities, there are a number of peculiar cases which we will now discuss.

Perhaps the most interesting calendar song in the Mištūnai repertoire is ‘Vidury dvaro meška karo’ (‘A bear hangs in the middle of a farmstead’; Fig. 4, top). The singers remember well the circumstances under which the song was performed; it was a *lalavimas* song used by *lalauninkai*, Easter processionists visiting homesteads expressing their best wishes, and asking for Easter gifts. However, the song lyrics are a contamination of Christmas and Easter lyrics. Take, for instance, the song of Christmas processionists (Fig. 4, middle): “A bear hangs in a farmstead; it puckers its back, bends its tail, and invites all the guys and girls...”. The typical song of Easter processionists (Fig. 4, bottom) announces: “A pear tree stood in father’s farmstead; a girl sat under the pear tree. Come out, vernal girl, bring us a wealth of eggs. We wish you matchmakers, an early marriage, and rich brood.” The actual Mištūnai song ‘Vidury dvaro meška karo’ starts with the motif of a bear and then attaches the motif of the girl; the processionists’ asking for eggs is further complemented by asking for vodka, cheese, and tobacco.

The melodies of these certain types of Christmas and Easter songs have clearly much in common (Fig. 4, middle and bottom). The Mištūnai melody under discussion (Fig. 4, top) is somewhat closer to the typical Easter melody (Fig. 4, bottom). At any rate, we can conclude that the similarity of melodies and the partial analogy of Christmas and Easter processions resulted in the peculiar yet logical connection between the genres.

Vi - du-ry dva - ro meš - ka ka - ro, vy - ne - lis mū - sų ža - lia - sai.

An to dva - ro meš - ka ka - ro, da le - li - mai rū - te - la, meš - ka ka(ro).

An tē - vu - lio dva - ro grū - ša - lė sto - vė - jo, vy - ne - lis ža - lias, ža - lia - sai.

Figure 4: Top: Easter song ‘Vidury dvaro meška karo’; transcribed from Ambrzevičius (1999b). Middle: Advent-Christmas song ‘An to dvaro meška karo’; adapted from Ūsaitytė and Žičkienė (2007, 640). Bottom: Easter song ‘An tēvulio dvaro grūšalė stovėjo’; adapted from Ūsaitytė and Žičkienė (2009, 198).¹¹

¹¹ The melodies are transposed so that the tonal center is G (except for the second and third melodies in Fig. 5).

The wedding song ‘Oi dėkui dėkui manai motulai’ (‘Many thanks to my mummy’) which is classified in the scientific classification as sung “at newlyweds’ visit to the bride’s parents” was performed in Mištūnai “when cutting rye” (the cell “other post-ceremonial cycle”/“rye harvesting” in Tab. 2). Why? In Dzūkija, this textual type is usually performed homophonically, applying a major-type melody and with addition of the lower voice (cf. Jokimaitienė-Vėlius 1986, 122; see Fig. 5, top). However, in the monophonic performance, the tonal center can be reconsidered (Fig. 5, middle). Then the song becomes similar to the rye harvesting song, in terms of mode and melody patterns (Fig. 5, bottom).

Oi dė-kui,dė-kui mie-lai mo-tu-lai, kad ma-ni jau - nu va-lioj au-gi-nai.

Oi dė-kui,dė-kui mie-lai mo-tu-lai, kad ma-ni jau - nu va-lioj au-gi-nai.

Lai-dos sau - la - lė, lai-dos sau - la - lė va - ka - rė - liuo - san.

Figure 5: Top: wedding song ‘Oi dėkui dėkui manai motulai’; a typical two-part performance; adapted from Jokimaitienė and Vėlius (1986, 122).

Middle: the same, without the lower part and with the tonal center shifted.

Bottom: rye harvesting song ‘Laidos saulalė’; transcribed from Ambrzevičius (1999a).

In addition, lyrics of some rye harvesting songs contain motifs of the post-ceremonial wedding cycle.¹² This way the peculiarities of melody and lyrics result in the reinterpretation of the wedding song as a rye harvesting song, in the Mištūnai case.

To summarise, certain (sub)genres change their assignment or lose their strict application and dissipate, contrasting with the relatively ‘stubborn’ (sub)genres. There are musical and extra musical causes for such migrations/stability. The revealed processes also suggest re-evaluation and migration of the defined ‘theoretical’ genres.

¹² For instance, the motif of returning home is the main motif in the *grižtuvės* (literally, ‘return’; newlyweds’ visit to the bride’s parents) songs and one of the motives in the rye harvesting evening songs (i.e., returning home after the daily work).

The Rasos case: Reconstructed tradition. Rasos-Kupolinės-Joninės

Rasos is a newly (in the 1960s) reconstructed pre-Christian Midsummer festival; one of the components of the folklore movement and national renaissance. First, we should mention that Lithuania was the last pagan state in Europe; the acceptance of Christianity began only 600 years ago after two attempts. Thus the pre-Christian elements and a plentitude of beliefs were still alive for a long period and vanished quite slowly. Not going deep into the description of the beliefs and actions, we can generalise that in ancient times, this day was an occasion to pay homage to water, fire and plants. It was also a time to cleanse one's soul as well as to celebrate the summer solstice.

The summer solstice, midsummer celebration is June 24 or, to be precise, the evening and night (thus the shortest night of the year) from June 23 to 24.¹³ Literally, the ancient name Rasos (or sing. Rasa) means 'dew,' "the glistening droplets of dew that cover meadows at daybreak. It was believed that [among other things] washing your face with dew collected from rye could rejuvenate the skin" (Likelocal 2015). Another name of the celebration (some argue that it is more on a profane level) is Kupolės (Kupolinės). There are several meanings and explanations of this word. One derivation is from the verb *kupėti* or the nouns *kupa*, *kupėjimas* meaning fraught, being in every fullness. And indeed, at this moment of the yearly cycle, "vegetation seems more lush and luxuriant than ever, with every single tiny plant reaching maturity, ready to create new life" (Likelocal 2015). Another explanation refers to the Slavonic origin, to the name *Kupala* (roughly bathe). At any rate, the word *kūpolis* means the herb known in English as common cow-wheat and *kupoliavimas* is picking herbs on the Rasos evening. *Kupolė* is also the name for the special pole erected for the celebration.

With Christianisation, the celebration was associated with St. John. The new name of the celebration – Joninės – comes from Jonas, the Lithuanian equivalent of John. As mentioned, over time, the Rasos holiday lost most of its sacral meaning and only its various festive elements remained. Traditionally, people gathered in beautiful spots such as on hilltops or by rivers to feast and honor men named Jonas (and women with equivalent names – Jonė, Janina). A large bonfire and wheel hub on a post were set afire. It was thought that the wider the area that was illuminated by the fire, the better the harvest would be.

Young people gathered herbs (see further the activity called *kupoliavimas*) with which they predicted their futures. Girls also wore wreaths and later set them afloat on rivers and lakes to find out if they would marry or not in the following year. Unmarried young men and women sang, danced and jumped over the remains of the bonfire until daybreak. Joninės dew, beside many magical healing

¹³ Actually, sources say that the Midsummer celebration took even more days than just one evening and night.

purposes, was also used by village sorceresses for malevolent purposes – for preventing cows from giving milk.

Birth of the reconstructed celebration

On the one hand, many of the customs associated with Joninės had already vanished during the 20th century. Today, in the unbroken tradition there remains only the burning of bonfires, festivities, feasting and the honouring of persons named Jonas, Jonė, and Janina. The mass character of Joninės was exploited by ideological culture which embellished it with uncharacteristic elements and vulgar forms. In this way, Rambynas Mount, once famous for its role in Joninės traditions, became the site of Communist Youth celebrations.

On the other hand, Rasos are reborn anew, like a phoenix from the ashes. In the early 1960s, conditions were favourable for the birth of a folklore movement, which would draw from Lithuanian traditions and roots. Interest in traditional culture arose as a quasi-politically acceptable patriotic movement and as an alternative to official culture.¹⁴ This phenomenon was stimulated by the development of a new generation of scholarly folklore works and expeditions organised by the Kraštotyros draugija (Ethnographic Society). Students living in cities, especially those from Vilnius University were most active in these undertakings.

The foundation of a tourism club at Vilnius University gave impetus to the Žygeiviai (‘hiking’) movement most active from 1968 to 1971 after the Prague Spring events. Hikers travelled throughout Lithuania tending to historical areas, visiting the sites of resistance battles and learning folk and patriotic songs. Within this movement arose the Lithuanian Ramuva Society which sought to reconstruct ancient pre-Christian Baltic celebrations.¹⁵ In 1967, this organisation was initiated with the first celebration of Rasos on the castle mound at Kernavė, a picturesque site of the first capital of Lithuania. Celebrating Rasos, Jorė (the first greening), equinoxes and other ancient Baltic occasions, the crafting of archaeologically-based clothing and jewellery reconstructions became quite popular in folklore circles. A considerable part of these movements was formed by emerging folklore ensembles.¹⁶ At first, there were only handfuls, mostly based in several of Vilnius’ educational and other institutions. Later, in the 1980s, they grew in number. Ensembles appeared in smaller towns and in the countryside.

¹⁴ Thus, in terms of motives for revival efforts, this movement is one of the typical cases of revivalist movements, or even encompass several motives; recall Livingston (1999) or Bithell and Hill (2014, 10–12).

¹⁵ Thus Ramuva could be collated with other “pagan” ideologies in the New Age subcultures, although with some limitations; see more in Strimška (2012).

¹⁶ Members of these movements were followed and persecuted by the KGB following the Brezhnev Reaction, especially after Romas Kalanta immolated himself in protest in 1972. Nevertheless, their members continued engaging in activities promoting folklore, and later these organizations were revived. Quite a few of the participants became eminent statesmen.

During the fifty years from the first reconstructed Rasos celebration, the structure and the essential significations of the celebration were polished and have solidified. Now we can consider Rasos not as an ephemeral experiment, but rather as established tradition. Rasos-Joninės became truly popular and June 24 was set as an official public holiday in 2003.

Structure of the celebration

The place itself is considered an important element of the celebration. Usually it takes place in a picturesque landscape, on a hill with a lake or stream nearby. The preparation of the place is quite substantial and time consuming. First, the site for the celebration should be mowed. Then different constructions are designed and erected. These include a special wooden gate decorated with herbs (Fig. 9 shows a typical example), a *kupolė* pole (a branchy and partly lopped off tree trunk), one or several tall poles with wooden wheels soaked in tar, and, of course, a bonfire, large enough to be kept burning all through the night until dawn. The preparation is believed to be a necessary introduction into the celebration as the participants, in a way, prepare themselves spiritually.

One or two hours prior to sunset, the celebration starts at the gate. Walking through gate is a symbolic entrance into the celebration space. Often it is used to wash the hands and face from water in a jug and to then dry off with a fine traditional towel provided by the hosts meeting the participants at the gate. From the gate, the group proceeds to the *kupolė* pole (although it is not always the case; see further). Gathering at the *kupolė* signifies the beginning of the event. Some introductory speeches may be made at this moment.

Then *kupoliavimas*, i.e. herb gathering (Fig. 6) starts. In my experience, *kupoliavimas* is not merely collecting herbs and composing lovely bouquets, but rather the picking of grasses according to fixed rules, such as gathering grasses found at every ninth step. As a result, your bouquet may appear not at all lovely. During the *kupoliavimas*, girls also make their wreaths if they had not done so in advance. The bouquets are used for fortune telling provided by ‘witches,’ that is, the persons possessing knowledge of connotations of the individual herbs and the general bouquet compositions. Unmarried girls turn away from the *kupolė* pole and throw their wreaths onto it. If the wreath catches on the *kupolė* branch at once, the girl will marry next year; if it happens on the second try, the wedding will come about a year later, and so on.



Figure 6: *Kupoliavimas* (herb gathering).¹⁷

Then there is bidding farewell to the sun and proceeding to the altar, a small construction of stones with a bit of wood on it prepared for the fire. The altar is usually set up near an oak – a sacral tree or the ‘king of trees’ for the Balts. Lighting the altar (Fig. 7) is the most sacral element in the celebration agenda. Remembrance and honouring of ancestors, as well as sharing bread and beer around the fire, are frequent activities.



Figure 7: Lighting the altar.¹⁸

The fire from the altar is brought to the large bonfire and it is ignited. The carousal begins,¹⁹ accompanied by drinking a simple, preferably traditional cold nosh and limited amounts of beer. The celebrants break

¹⁷ Source: <http://www.baltai.lt/?p=9142>.

¹⁸ Source: <https://svajksta.by/archives/16244>.

¹⁹ I use here the generally received word ‘carousal,’ yet probably ‘regale’ would be more congenial and corresponding to the ritualistic weight of the celebration.

into roundelays and dances accompanied by an accordion, fiddles, and some more traditional instruments, if available.

In contrast to the other communal activities at Rasos, the search for the fern flower is an extremely individual action. The internet website www.likealocalguide.com provides an accurate and picturesque description:

The most important and mysterious tradition of Joninės night is the search for the fern flower. The fern is said to bloom at midnight and anyone who finds its flower, which only blooms for a short moment, will gain incredible power – they'll understand all the mysteries of nature, read minds, see what's invisible and acquire wealth and lasting happiness. (Likelocal 2015)

At some moments, the poles with wooden wheels soaked in tar are burnt and the burning torches are prepared. A procession with the burning torches proceeds to visit various sites, such as fields, streams, hills, outstanding trees, and so on. The main destination is a stream or lake where girls put their wreaths on wooden crosspieces with candles attached and then set them afloat on the water (Fig. 8). The faster the wreath recedes from the shore or the faster the stream current carries it, the sooner the girl will get married. Fellows may swim to catch the wreaths of their beloved, this way expecting to get them married.



Figure 8: Wreaths with candles floating on water. Photograph: Valdemaras Peterson.²⁰

After returning to the celebration site, the feasting and dancing continues. When the bonfire dies down, jumping over the fire is a common activity. It is said that the jumping makes you healthy and cleanses you of your sins. The party continues until sunrise. In the early morning, dew condenses on the grass. It

²⁰ Source: <https://alkas.lt/2016/07/01/baltu-ir-vedu-tradicijos-susitiko-sventeje-goloka-rasos-nuotraukos/>

is common to wash faces with the dew and to walk barefoot in the grass, believing in healing qualities of the dew.



Figure 9: Rasos gate and bonfire. Photograph: Vytautas Daraškevičius.²¹

One may ask, what is the contemporary attitude of Christian believers towards the ‘pagan’ celebration of Rasos. Actually, Rasos is ‘accessible’ for everybody and everybody is invited to celebrate. Signification of the celebration and its elements may differ for different groups. Romuva believers of the old faith communicate their direct sacral link with the rites, while Christians and other participants probably do not assign great prominence to the symbols and actions. The embodying close connection with community and nature, and the feeling of being ‘inside the tradition’ are worthy experiences in themselves. After all, ‘pagan’ elements are still alive in folk Christianity, causing no conflict.

Songs

Almost every single event is accompanied by singing. It could be stated that the songs work, more or less, as certain markers for the different moments of the celebration. They actually dominate among other factors, creating the ritualistic order and bonding the celebration into an integral entity. However, as already mentioned, the unbroken Joninės tradition has actually vanished, especially in terms of sacrum and sacral repertoire. There are only 15 textual types of Joninės songs documented while, for instance, work songs contain 913 types and the richest wedding genre numbers as many as 2103 types. Joninės songs constitute only a small part of Rasos songs. Other songs are recruited from various genres and

²¹ Source: <https://alkas.lt/2011/06/16/klaipedje-v-daraskeviciaus-nuotrauku-paroda-%E2%80%99Etrumpiausios-nakties-paslaptis%E2%80%9C/>

now we will discuss the most characteristic examples. The set of examples is based on my personal experience (some 30 participations in the Rasos celebrations) and on Internet data.²²

Entrance. Keyword: gate. Songs with references to the gate are relatively sparse. These include, for instance, the swinging songs with the motif “The sun rises through the first gate and the moon declines through the second one,” and some rye harvesting songs. Couple of examples follows: ‘Apėjo saulutė aplinkui zarią’: “The sun circled twilight, a falcon flew round a garden and asked cuckoos how to fly in. Through the gate...”; ‘Linko jievaras vartuosna’: “A sycamore flagged to the gate, its branches flagged to windows, and its blossom flagged to hands...”. There are also some roundelays with the motif “open the gate.”

Crop visiting sutartinė ‘Tu žilvitėli’: “You osier willow, a green tree, where were you growing? If I had steel scissors, I would poll the willow’s head. Hopefully I would see my father’s manor with three gates. The sun rises through one gate, the moon rolls through other gate, and my sister goes through the third one...”.

At the *kupolė* pole. Keywords: *kupolė*, rounding up. Songs and roundelays with references to *kupolė* are used. For example, ‘Oi ta ta, kupalia graži’ (Fig. 10): “Oi ta ta, beautiful kupolė, where were you? I was in a field to look after rye. Whose rye is the finest? Jonas’ rye is the finest...”; ‘Kupolio rože’: “Kupolė the rose, where were you, Jonas? In a rye field. What did you do? I picked kupoliai...”.²³



Figure 10: Crop visiting – Joninės song ‘Oi ta ta, kupalia graži’ (Barauskienė, Kazlauskienė and Uginčius (1962, 242 and 681)).

Since circling round the *kupolė* pole is considered the beginning of the celebration, songs important for the feasting group are appropriate, such as various gathering songs and the songs with an accent on patriotic and family values. For example, ‘Kur eisiu eisiu’: “Wherever I go, I will not forget Lithuania, with my father’s pretty garden, mother’s barn, brother’s stable and sister’s flower garden...” and ‘Kas po

²² Unfortunately, the descriptions and impressions of Rasos on internet provide sparse information about the songs. The main sources were Balčiūnienė (2015) and https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrLh0Vet5pcIAJmWhA_eSx-sS7C-Rx_eU, last access 28 August 2017.

²³ *Kupoliai* – pl. from *kupolis*, *kūpolis*, an herb; see the next footnote.

mano sodelį vaikščiojo”: “Who was walking in my garden? Maybe my father was looking after bees?” Then lyric branches with mother, brother, and sister follow.

The topics actually depend on the meaning ascribed to this part of the celebration. Sometimes the *kupolė* pole is used only for the wreath throwing. In this case, no special repertoire is applied or there is no singing at all. The discussed repertoire moves either to the gate entrance or to lighting the altar.

Kupoliavimas (picking flowers). Keywords: *vosilka*, *kupolė*,²⁴ diadem (wreath). Luckily there are quite a number of original Joninės songs for this activity in the Rasos schedule.

For instance, ‘Kupolėle, kas tave skynė’: “Kupolėle (dim.), who picked you? Country girls picked me, brought me with six horses, and placed me at the copper gate...”; ‘Sėjau vosilkų ir raspyliau’ (Fig. 11): “I was sowing cornflower and spilled it. Let cornflowers rye grow, bloom, and mature. We will cut and sheaf the rye; we will make diadems of cornflower and grace our heads with them...”.

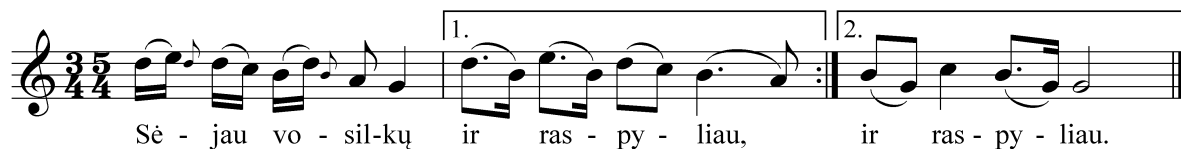


Figure 11: Joninės song ‘Sėjau vosilkų ir raspyliau’ (Mukaitė (2003, 339)).

The crop visiting sutartinė ‘Sesutėla mažoji’ serves as another typical example: “My little sister, your wreath is nice. Did you wreath it yourself? No, my mother raised me and made the wreath...”.

Seeing the sun off. Keywords: sunset, heavenly family (cosmological parallels), evening. Perhaps the most beloved and ‘obligatory’ song at present is a Joninės and wedding song contamination ‘Eina saulelė aplinkui dangų’ (Fig. 12): “The sun is circling the sky to wake up the moon. Wake up, bright moon, I woke already a long time ago and irradiated the whole world, the old one, the young one, the small one, and the big one...”.



Figure 12: Joninės and wedding song contamination ‘Eina saulelė aplinkui dangų’ (Barauskienė, Kazlauskienė and Uginčius (1962, 243); Čiurlionytė (1938, 141)).

The cycles of rye and oat harvesting songs contain the songs performed in the evening time, i.e., at the end of a day’s work. These songs are applicable saying farewell to the sun at Rasos. For instance, the rye

²⁴*Vosilka*: *rugiagėlė* in standard Lithuanian, Eng. ‘cornflower’. *Kupolė* (in this meaning): bot. *pievinis kūpolis*, Eng. ‘common cow-wheat’ (Lat. *Melampyrum pratense*).

harvesting song ‘Leidos saulelė’ (Fig. 5, bottom): “The sun set to the west and looked to the east. The sun asked how much work was done during this day. One hundred kapas²⁵ of white rye and one and a half kapas of yellow wheat...”. The oat harvesting song ‘Vakarinė žvaigždėlė visą dangų išvaikščiojo’: “The evening star²⁶ traversed the whole sky and stopped at the moon. Oh father²⁷ moon, tonight I am with you but tomorrow I will stay with the sun...”. Also, some wedding, love, orphan, and other songs encompassing the discussed topics are used.

Lighting the altar. Keywords: oak, fire, patriotism, ancestors, sacredness. The topics are probably the most difficult to determine. Since this part of the celebration is the most sacral, the participants usually choose repertoire which is sacral, extraordinary, and consolidating for the feasting group. Remembrance of ancestors is honored, therefore orphan, war-historical, and patriotic songs (even the Lithuanian anthem) are naturally included, especially songs with expressive and abundant symbolism. The orphan song ‘Ei pūdyme pūdyme’ (Fig. 13) serves as a typical example: “A green oak stands in a lea; our father lays under this hundred-branched oak. We two orphan sons will go to visit our father...”.



Figure 13: Family (orphan) song ‘Ei pūdyme pūdyme’ (adapted from Juška (1955, 376–79 and 810)).

The situation also suggests lyrics with a motif of fate. Such an emblematic song is the family song ‘Putinėli raudoniausias’: “Red vibernum, why have you sagged down? Did the wind blow on you, did rain shower upon you, or did birds perch on you? My fate is grievous; I will sing while walking to search for my fate. My fate echoed beyond the high mountains and blue seas...”.

Carousal. Keywords: beer, wine, hops,²⁸ bee,²⁹ table, feasting. To find songs for this part of the celebration is probably the easiest task. First of all, carousal songs are well suited to accent the ritual or symbolic character of the feasting. For instance, ‘Kur mano tėvelis gėrė’: “Where my father was drinking, a hill of rye sprouted” (Refrain: “A grey bee was flying in a green lea, in white clover”), then branches

²⁵ *Kapa* is an old unit of measurement denoting 60 pieces or five dozen of whatever was counted.

²⁶ Venus in the evening.

²⁷ In Lithuanian, the moon is masculine and the sun is feminine.

²⁸ Many beer drinking songs describe the whole hop ‘story,’ from its planting to the beer brewing and feasting.

²⁹ Bee is symbolically associated with every prosperity and plenty of food.

referring to “mother-flax,” “brother-wheat,” and “sister-rue” are added. Also wedding songs with elements of feasting are adapted.

Promenade. Keywords: crops, trees, herbs, forest, bridge, and other visited places. This element of the celebration corresponds partly to the tradition of crop visiting; the period was around Whitsunday or for even a longer period lasting until rye harvesting.³⁰ The tradition survived roughly until the middle of the 20th century. Thus, the songs ‘At rye fields (Paruginės)’ are naturally included. Concerning the other visited places, actually all genres of Lithuanian songlore have a wealth of references to trees, crops, forests, hills, etc. Here I present just one example of a wedding song (leaving for the wedding ceremony); of course, it does not reflect the entire variety of the repertoires. ‘Ir paaugo žalia liepa’: “A green linden tree grew in the middle of a field. An oriole flew in and perched on a branch. Oh oriole, where were you flying? I was flying in high mountains and in green scrubs...”.

Wreath floating. Keywords: wreath, river, lake, sea, boat. The majority of wreath symbolism appears in the lyrics of various wedding songs; they actually cover the entire cycle of the wedding process. One of the most beloved is the bride’s head-dressing song ‘Bėg upelė vingurdama’: “A stream flows meandering and washes a wreath swaying...”.

Another large part of the repertoire contains work songs; first of all, (not numerous in the tradition) fishing songs. Some subgenres of work songs present solitary, but very vivid items. The hunting song ‘Plaukia antelė’ is an example: “A grey duck glides across a deep lake. Don’t glide, I will throw a net of red silk on you, you will not descry at daybreak...”.

Approaching sunrise. Keywords: sunrise, dawn, heavenly family (cosmological parallels), morning, dew. These themes are found in various genres, mostly in the wedding songs and somewhat less in the rye harvesting and family (including orphan) songs. The following songs seem to be the most relished: ‘Užteka teka šviesi saulelė’: “The bright sun is rising and finds a [morning] star. A pixie meant to make beer and to invite all stars except the sun. Hush, pixie, then I will not rise for nine mornings and I will not shake down the dew in the tenth one”; ‘Užteka saulužė aplinkui dangužį’ (Fig. 14): “The sun is rising. Pass, sun, round the sky and count if all stars are present. One star is absent, the brightest one, which rose the earliest and set the latest...”; and sutartinės ‘Kas ten teka per dvarelį’: “Who is rising across the manor? The sun is rising. What is she bringing? Presents...,” and ‘Ryto rasa krito’ (‘Morning dew was dropping’).

³⁰ The harvest was believed to mature better due to the crops visiting. In some places, crop fields were also hallowed by priests.



Figure 14: Wedding song ‘Užteka saulužė aplinkui dangužį’ (adapted from Juška (1955, 538–39 and 751)).

Tab. 3 summarises observations about usage of different genres in the composing of the “Rasos metagenre.” The numbers in the cells stand for the corresponding numbers of textual types. Only the textual types highly anchored in the repertoires are considered. “N” stands for cases when not only certain textual types are adapted, but rather the entire (sub)genre (or its significant part) suits the discussed situation. The question marks point at uncertainties of the cases, i.e., quite individual and inadvertent appearances of the considered song genres in the Rasos repertoires. In other words, usage of the indicated genres is highly probable, yet no distinct instances of fixed textual types are observed.

Of course, the presented distribution is quite subjective as it is based on my personal observations. At any rate, I participated in roughly thirty Rasos celebrations arranged by several groups. In addition, the observations correlate with the scarce data available on the internet and correspond to the general concepts about Rasos repertoires presented in the only (to my knowledge) published source dealing with the discussed issue (Mukaičė 2003). Thus, a more comprehensive study would likely show essentially the same tendencies.

'subgenres' of Rasos songs		preparation	entrance	<i>kupolė</i> pole, wreath throwing	<i>kupoliavimas</i> (picking flowers)	seeing the sun off	lighting the altar	carousal	promenade, visiting fields, crops, and trees	wreath floating	approaching sunrise
		keywords	scientific classification	haymaking, herbs,..	gate	<i>kupolė</i> , rounding up	<i>vosilka</i> , <i>kupolė</i> (herbs)	sunset, cosmological parallels, evening	oak, fire, patriotism, ancestors, sacredness	beer, wine, hop, bee, table, feasting	crops, fields, trees, herbs, wood, bridge,..
work	night herding		1								
	haymaking	N									
	rye harvesting		2			7			?		4
	oat harvesting					1			?		
	flax pulling								?	1	
	laundrying								?	?	
	fishing								?	N	
	hunting								?	1	
	other work								?		
	mythological										1
calendar	Easter (swinging)		1								
	Whitsunday-crops visiting		1	1	3				?		
	St. John (Joninės)	?		3	3						
wedding	betrothal and engagement							2		?	1
	wedding eve					?				N	
	other pre-ceremonial cycle								?	?	2
	post-ceremonial cycle							?	?	7	5
christening							1				
youth								?	?		
love					?			?	?	1	
family (incl.orphan)			2		?	6		?		5	
carousal								N			
dance (roundelay) songs			N								
wartime-historical							4		?		1
patriotic							?				

Table 3: Relation of scientific and adapted genre classifications of Rasos songs.

Review of Rasos song repertoires show that they accumulate very different genres earlier not used for that occasion. There are only a few cases when usage of the songs corresponds to their original functions – essentially the Joninės songs applied at the *kupolė* pole and *kupoliavimas* activity. Other cases not connected to Joninės directly include crop visiting songs performed at the Rasos promenade (specifically, at crop visiting) and carousal songs used when feasting. As already mentioned, originally the crop visiting took place during a period of the calendar cycle corresponding to Joninės.

One more distinctive case is worth mentioning: I have also inserted the preparation “subgenre” into Tab. 3. From my own experience, girls naturally apply Joninės songs, especially those referring to herbs (*kupolė*, *vosilka*), when making wreaths or decorating the gate and other constructions with grasses and herbs. For young men, haymaking songs occur naturally when mowing the celebration site.³¹ And all in all, “a tribute is paid” to the summer repertoire (Whitsunday, haymaking, rye harvesting songs), the songlore which actually has no other occasion to be performed in contemporary situations. On the

³¹ Incidentally, hay harvesting began around Joninės in the traditional culture.

contrary, other songs of the calendar cycle (for instance, Christmas, Shrovetide, or Easter) are avoided. In those cases, function is strictly adhered to.

Probably the most important observation is that the dominant attribute for incorporating certain song into the Rasos repertoire is suitable lyrics. That is why I have provided the short descriptions of the lyrics in the examples discussed. The majority of the songs is borrowed from wedding repertoire, especially from the part presenting parallels in transformations of nature and humans. Since the cosmological semantics of Rasos (i.e., summer solstice) is accented, the songs depicting the heavenly family or solitary heavenly bodies are especially beloved. The ritualistic character of an action and the sense of sacredness is strengthened by lyrics abundant with various symbols. If the cosmological branch of lyrics is succeeded by the human parallel with description of certain situations alien to Rasos, often this second branch is omitted.³² For instance, the human parallel in rye harvesting (evening) songs tends to be avoided.

Fig. 15 presents one of the few applications of songs not attached to certain celebration moments, but rather used for various occasions. “Dijūto” is a vocable; it seems likely to express greeting or homage. “Kolnali” means a mountain (or hill; diminutive). Thus, the tune is well suited for different moments of the celebration (as already mentioned, typically it takes place on a hill), including the passages between locations. This tune is actually “universal” in terms of its usage in different celebrations.

Figure 15: Sutartinė ‘Dijūto kolnali’; as adapted by Rasos participants from Paliulis (1959, 256).

³² Many descriptions of the lyrics presented in the paper are truncated to the branch of nature.

Of course, the choice of repertoire depends on tastes of the Rasos participants and on their understanding and signification of the celebration. If the participants concentrate on the ritual and sacral axis of Rasos, they avoid everyday texts, e.g., love songs (though their themes seemingly are very applicable to the situation on a profane level) or newer and stylised repertoire.

Taste may also determine the use of songs if the melodies alone are considered. Nevertheless, usually not trivial and slower, thus, in a sense, “sacral” melodies are preferred. The examples of melodies presented in the paper certify this. Mukaitė writes about the typical song of this kind, ‘Užteka saulužė aplinkui dangužį’ (Fig. 14):

Although the song belongs to the genre of wedding songs,³³ its smooth, undulating melody, and lyrics fraught with meaning and based on cosmological parallels correspond deeply to the morning mood of the Joninės celebration. The repetitive refrain-vocables *daulėliu lėliu* grace this song with certain sacredness. (Mukaitė 2003, 343)

Other modes of sacredness are embedded in sutartinės gaining this quality through their archaism and peculiar sonority and in the (“field,” “outdoors”) songs characteristic of strong resonating vocal and exclamatory patterns, such as the song ‘Oi ta ta, kupalia graži’ (Fig. 10).

There is at least one noteworthy instance of modern song contamination which could serve as an example for Åkesson’s type “re-shaping/transformation” (‘omskapande’ in Swedish) in her classification of vocal folk music revitalisation (Åkesson 2006). It is the song ‘Eina saulelė aplinkui dangu’ (Fig. 12). Only the lyrics of this Joninės song are known, written down in 1902 (published in Barauskienė, Kazlauskienė, and Uginčius (1962, 243)). Then Rasos participants chose an appropriate melody for the lyrics. Mukaitė writes:

This song, which many folklore ensembles grew fond of, is a derivative from two songs which sprung up in the forming Rasos celebration. The lyrics of a Joninės song... is usually sung with a melody of a ritual wedding song... We might question the genre purity of this contaminated song, yet, in the current publication, it is presented as certain phenomenon of formation of the Rasos celebration and its repertoire. Incidentally, the result is fairly successful and digresses from the tradition only slightly, especially since, the song is close to other Joninės songs in terms of the melody patterns. (Mukaitė 2003, 341–42)

Discussion

The comparison of the two cases of genre migrations shows their similarities and differences. Some (sub)genres or individual songs are constant in their functions or/and circumstances of usage, whereas

³³ Sung at leaving for the bridegroom’s home – R. A.

the other instances show greater or lesser departures from their original applications. Probably the most evident similarity between the two cases are the factors of lyrics and melody in the migrations. That is, provided the genres, subgenres, or just individual songs, are kindred, in terms of lyrics or/and melody, this facilitates the migrations. Sometimes similar functions of different genres result in simple and natural migrations; recall the songs of Christmas and Easter processionists, or drinking songs at weddings, christenings, and the general carousal songs in the Mištūnai repertoire. In general, if songs attributed to different genres are similar in certain qualities, the migrations are highly possible.

Yet the divergences of the Mištūnai and Rasos cases are striking. Briefly, in the Rasos case, the song genres show significantly more courageous migrations, compared to the case of unbroken tradition in Mištūnai. It is understandable: the migrations in the Mištūnai case are unintentional; i.e., the Mištūnai singers have no idea of the changes in the original attributions of the songs. The Rasos singers do this intentionally; i.e., they comprehend that the original function of a song was different, even if they do not know the precise original function³⁴ (the majority of Rasos participants quite easily recognise some genres, such as rye harvesting songs because of their distinct qualities. However, only experts can differentiate between some wedding and family songs).

After all, the Rasos “meta-genre” is a contemporary and newly created phenomenon, thus obviously the discussed migrations are expected to be quite marked. Nevertheless, a part of the Rasos repertoire (though not a very significant portion, i.e., mainly the Joninės songs), still retains its original usage. Moreover, there are instances of creativity that show the abilities of Rasos participants to think “in the tradition” and to apply or invent songs adhering to the original Joninės genre; recall the song ‘Eina saulelė aplinkui dangų.’ This testifies that Rasos songlore includes creativity as a vital process of tradition.

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³⁴ To be precise, I should note that some Rasos participants (mostly newcomers, but also even some “core-revivalists”; (Livingston 1999, 70–71)) only vaguely conceive the real origin of the Rasos repertoire; they believe that a considerable part of the repertoire comes from the original Rasos-Joninės celebration.

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