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## WOMEN'S IMAGES IN LITHUANIAN *SUTARTINES*

Lithuanian *sutartines* are unique archaic polyphonic songs. The image of women given in these songs is discussed. The symbolic style is difficult to understand for ethnographic purposes and requires investigation of symbols and allegories. Some important rites and responsibilities are outlined and the symbols (e.g. the wreath; summer snow and green birch bathing switches in winter; golden apple trees with silver apples) decoded. Parallelism is a sophisticated method to express facts and feelings. Special attention is given to rites of passage in old age, for they have never been singled out previously in Lithuania.

Key words: women, Lithuania, polyphonic songs, *sutartines*, symbol

### Introduction: Lithuanian *sutartines*

*Sutartines* are archaic Lithuanian polyphonic songs (e.g. Slaviūnas 1958/1:24, Sauka 1982:104-117). From the typological view of musicologists, the most similar music is found in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Bulgaria (Elschekova 1981:240, Šeškauskaitė 2004), having in common the quality called *Schwebungsdiaphonie* (Messner 1980:196-202, Šeškauskaitė 2001a:140-144). Investigation of folksongs is very often divided into research of either text, music or choreography. Neglecting musical classification criteria, *sutartine* texts are mixed with those of the *dainos*. Thus, the texts of *sutartines* have not been a topic of thorough investigation as yet. The narrative content of *sutartines* should be compared with the content of Balkan polyphonic songs.

There is a good book on songs in English written by Katzenelenbogen, including translated texts (1935:1-86). This book is old but is correct in most respects. *Sutartines* are not mentioned there. A book on *sutartines* has been published in English (Račiunaitė-Vyčiniene 2002).

Sure signs that a song is a *sutartine* (or was, for some polyphonic *sutartines* degraded to quasi-monophonic *dainos*) are refrain words usually accompanying the plain text. Some *sutartines* may consist only of such words (fig. 1). Those refrain songs are claimed to be the oldest stage of development of music and poetry (Sruoga 1957:188-191). Slaviūnas claims: "dances of *sutartines* are as old as *sutartines* themselves. The fact that they are not accompanied by instruments but voices and that a lot of dances consist of refrains only prove it. The slow walked *sutartine* belongs to the oldest stage of all of Lithuanian dances" (1959:15). It is notable that the same persons dance, play and sing. There is no differentiation into public and artists.



Fig. 1. *Sutartine*-dance (Slaviūnas 1959:485, No. 1623)

Unfortunately, in most cases refrains are not regarded as important parts of the text. Usually, they are claimed to be a matter of rhythm, metrics and mood only, being meaningless (cf. Sauka 1978:95). As refrains are related to mood or onomatopoeics, they do have a meaning. Thus, the position of Sauka is already formally untrue. A word from a foreign language, jargon or special terminology may yield no meaning to some. Nevertheless, this word has a meaning for other speakers. If the music, dances and texts of the *sutartines* belong to an old stage of culture, the same should be true for the refrains. The possibility that their meaning is now forgotten should be taken into consideration. Plant names may also figure as refrains and some formerly "meaningless refrains" have now been given an explanation (Šeškauskaitė 2001a:20-67, Šeškauskaitė 2001c, Šeškauskaitė and Gliwa 2005). Linguists often consider "meaningless refrains" as "phonetic events", which are not worthy of research (e.g. personal communication with W. Smoczyński 1998 and B. Stundžia 2000). Therefore many refrains do not appear in the twenty-volumes dictionary of the Lithuanian language (LKŽ). Some ethnographers omitted refrain words completely when they reported on texts without musical notation (cf. Šeškauskaitė and Gliwa 2002:461-462).

Because the texts of *sutartines* are symbolic in character, they seem to be less informative than the *dainos*, and more difficult to understand. Their collective singing requires constancy in structure and text. They cannot be changed individually. An exception is the text embedded in "refrain brackets", which is easier to improvise to a certain degree. Depending on the style in which a *sutartine* is performed, one voice may figure as the *rinkėja* – "collec-tress", having the right to offer any text where the relative syllable's length fits the rhythm. The main body of the *sutartine*, including syncopated rhythm and refrain words, remains unchanged. Remarkable changes happened mostly in the nouns of the narrative text, a kind of *Requisitenverschiebung* (cf. Lüthi 1996:84). One recognizes Slav loanwords like *sztklo* – "glass", *bažnyčia* – "church", and *razumelis* – "intelligence". They appear in about ten per cent of all texts, not essentially influencing the content.

Nowadays *sutartines* have experienced a renaissance prompted by Lithuanian folklorists and composers.

### The girl, her garden, her wreath

The image of a woman depends on the age of the woman to be described. Each period has clear symbols and main responsibilities. Passing from one period to another takes place with *rites de passage*, which occur as general behaviour in human society (Sofsky 2001:458-459). Let us begin with a girl, a virgin, waiting for a youth and a matchmaker.

The great majority of songs and poetry deal with love and lovers. This universal fact is also true for *sutartines*. The main exceptions are dances with refrains only, and some *sutartines* on agriculture: oats or flax are asked or ordered to grow high.

The most important concern for a girl is the creation and care of her flower garden. It has to be situated in a prominent place. Matchmakers and young men understand that there is a girl preparing for marriage in this particular house. Rue, a symbol of virginity, should be among the plants there. A wreath has to be twisted from it.

I  
Lioi ža lia rū ta, rū ty té la ža lio ji Lioi ža lia rū ta

II  
Lioi ža lia rū ta, rū ty té la ža lio ji

III  
Lioi ža lia rū ta rū ty té la ža lio ji

Fig. 2. A *trejine* – "song for three" about the wreath (Slaviūnas 1958/1:676, No. 447)

It is often difficult to find the botanical identity of the plants mentioned. In particular, these are *žalia rūta* – "rue" (Slaviūnas 1959:340, No. 1445), but *rūta* may also be understood as a "twig" (Šeškauskaitė and Gliwa 2002:465), *lelijėliu* – "lily" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:362, No. 797), *diemedėliu* – "Lad's love, *Artemisia abrotanum*" (ibid.:194, No. 655), *baltų rožių* – "white roses" (ibid.:195, No. 656), *šalavijo* – "salvia" (ibid.:205, No. 664), and *liepos žiedų* – "lime flowers, flores *Tiliae* spp." (ibid.:390, No. 821). The wreath is green (Slaviūnas 1959:306, No. 1425), from silver or gold (Slaviūnas 1958/2:457, No. 892) or *sunkiai pelnytą, šilaly rinktą, trakely pintą, rygelėj pirktą* – "hard to get, collected in the forest, twisted in a glade, bought into the threshing barn" (ibid.:82, No. 540).

The wreath marks her social status, as does the garden (Baldauskas 1936:3-4). *Sutartines* and *dainos* are rich in parallel presentations: one line shows some objects from nature. This is followed by a very similar text showing human beings (cf. Sruoga 1957:204-228). The example given below demonstrates a comparison with a high, tall fir-tree and also mentions the wreath.

<i>Liepa aukštuole, Laduto tuto.</i>	High lime tree, laduto tuto.
<i>Nedaug teaugai, Laduto tuto.</i>	You didn't grow much, ...
<i>Viena viršūnėle, Laduto tuto.</i>	One tree-top only, ...
<i>Nedaug tedužėjai, Laduto tuto.</i>	You didn't become much stronger, ...
<i>Vien žievutėle, Laduto tuto.</i>	One bark only, ...
<i>Oi sese augale, Laduto tuto.</i>	O grown sister, ...
<i>Nedaug teaugai, Laduto tuto.</i>	You didn't grow much, ...
<i>Vienu vainikėliu, Laduto tuto.</i>	One wreath only, ...
<i>Nedaug tedužėjai, Laduto tuto.</i>	You didn't become much stronger, ...
<i>Viena širnavane, Laduto tuto.</i>	One waistcoat [i.e. bodice] only, ...
(Slaviūnas 1959:347, No. 1452)	

In this *sutartine* – and elsewhere in Lithuanian folklore – the wreath is a sign of an adult girl. Putting on the wreath corresponds with the need for a specially strapped waistcoat for the breasts. The beginning of menstruation cannot be mentioned directly. This would be *tabu*.

Thus, the wreath is one of the most important ritual artefacts, the main symbol of a virgin; it delineates the bearer from little girls as well as from married women (Šaknys 1996:42). A ring was used for twisting the wreath: *gražus tavo vainikas unt žiedėlio nupintas* – "your nice wreath twisted on a ring" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:376, No. 810). There is no information on how often the wreath was renewed. In wintertime, evergreen bearberries (*Arcostaphylos uva-ursi*) were used with rue, which can be well conserved throughout winter (one of the reasons for rue "*Ruta graveolens*" becoming a popular wreath plant) (Kudirkienė 1970:203). In literature, beside the wreath and green rue, one also finds silken ribbons as a newer symbol for the time from the first menses to marriage (Baldauskas 1936:3).

Wreathed, the newly adult maiden shows her changed social status by means of a round dance. This period goes on until marriage:

<i>Pasišok sesiula, Čiulado totata,</i>	Dance sister, čiulado totata,
<i>Pakol vainikuota, Čiulado totata.</i>	While wreathed, ...
<i>Nuims tau vainikų, Čiulado totata.</i>	The wreath will be taken away, ...
<i>Būsi kaip parduota, Čiulado totata.</i>	You will be as sold, ...
comment of the singers: " <i>Šokdamos giedodavo, suktinį kai sukdamo</i> "  (Slaviūnas 1959:304, No. 1423)	"Sung while dancing, when twisted was twirled"

The maiden's outfit is not the main topic. There are only some allusions to the ideal properties of a rather abstract character: she should have *raudonų žundelių* – "red cheeks" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:62-67, 245-254, 365-372, Nos. 519-524, 695-708, 800-804), *balto veidelio* – "a white face", *geltonom kaselėm* – "blond plaits", *melsvų akelių* – "blue eyes" (ibid.:246, No. 697), *baltom rankelėm* – "white hands" (ibid.:245, No. 695), *aukštas kraitelis* – "a big dowry" (clothes, dresses, shirts, towels) consisting of *plonos drobėlės* – "thin, finely-woven clothes". While outlining her handiness, especially in weaving, she is demonstrated to be a more suitable bride than girls from the town, who can't weave well and sleep very late (Slaviūnas 1959:312-321, Nos. 1431-1433).

Thus *sutartines* outline the main concerns of the maiden about preparing herself for marriage, including the necessary knowledge of certain handicrafts and agricultural work.

### Wedding customs

During the wedding celebration, the bride and groom exchange their wreaths. It is unknown whether there was an important difference between her wreath and his. The composition of flowers was probably used for charms and prophecy, as is the case with today's St. John's Day nosegays. In one particular *sutartine*, three young men come riding up to a maiden. The first one offers her a shawl. She does not like it. The second produces a golden ring. She does not like that either. The third offers a wreath. She likes it, and likes the man even more (Slaviūnas 1959:330-332, No. 1441). This could already be a reminiscence to the opposition between the town and the tradition-conserving countryside. Thus, the youth from the country is accepted by the village maiden as the most suitable of the young men. The alternate, where the town girl is opposed to the village girl, is also found: here it is pointed out that only the latter is skilful in weaving etc. (cf. *ibid.*:312-321, Nos. 1431-1433).

Some other texts provide evidence of the custom that the suitor (or already intended) offers her a wreath *iš tos didžios meilės* – "because of great love" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:374-376, Nos. 808-810).

On the other hand, the bride's three wreaths are presented as follows: the golden one for the brother, the silver for the "boy" [i.e. the groom] and the last one of rue for her sister (*ibid.*:457-458, No. 892). This shows the importance of the bride's brother, who remains the closest male relative, even after marriage. It is notable that a marriage was completely justified only after a child had been born (Vėlius 2001:210), a boy (*ibid.*:137). At least until that stage, the care of her brother seems to have been necessary. In giving the rue wreath to her younger sister, she confirms her as the oldest maiden at home, thus having the right to receive matchmakers and also to marry. It was the practice up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that a younger girl could not marry while her older sister was still unmarried.

As discussed above, the maiden legitimates her social status by round dances or the like. The same process is described for the bride emerging from this period: she has to dance with every male member of the bridegroom's family. This was, so to say, the equivalent of today's signature by the bride, the groom and witnesses and was based on the convention of the society to which one belonged. Without any written document, the judicial aspect was attested to by the memory of the persons who took part in the ceremony. Thus, the more persons the better, the more gigantic the party the better it would be remembered.

Sometimes, the sister lost her wreath in "times of blossoming" i.e. before marriage (or engagement; it seems that sexual intercourse was permitted in earlier historical periods as soon as after agreement had been reached with the matchmaker).

In *Lio lelijėle, lio dagilio* the brother-youth invites his sister-maiden to dance through the granary. Older children, especially maidens, had a room nearby the granary in a building called the *kletis* or *svirnas*. That was also where the maiden's dowry was collected. While dancing through the granary *kliuvo, rizgos sukenkytės, puola, rieda vainikėlis* – "the dress was tangled, caught, and the wreath fell and rolled away" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:229-230, No. 687).

In *Lelijėl, lelijėl* the wreath is falling as she dances through the *svirnas* and a sliver strikes her. After her wreath is lost, her young days have vanished (Slaviūnas 1959:354-358, Nos. 1461-1462). Disappearance of the wreath may be caused by dancing the *Vajonelis* (a folk dance, *ibid.*:343, No. 1447), it may be blown away into the river *Dunojelis* (*ibid.*:354, No. 1460), or half the wreath may be thrown in a river (Slaviūnas 1958/2:341-345, No. 772). It may disappear while she takes a seat in the cart (Slaviūnas 1959:327-330, No. 1439) or the youth may throw it into a lake (Slaviūnas 1958/1:631-632, No. 411b), or feed it to the horse (Slaviūnas 1959:351-352, No. 1458). The brothers' horses trample down the green *rūta* (Slaviūnas 1958/2:223-224, No. 682). Mainly in sung folklore, the horse is often a symbol for the penis, both in the Baltic and Slavic tradition (cf. Gura 2001:114, Šeškauskaitė and Gliwa 2002; Sruoga 1957:307-312 offers a different view).

During the wedding ceremony, the wreath is removed and the bride is tied up with the *nuometu* (a linen shawl, worn by married woman in North-East Lithuania and former East Prussia). Some *sutartines* accompanying this event imagine a speaking wreath: God knows whether your husband will be a drunkard or not (Slaviūnas 1958/2:372-373, Nos. 805-806).

The wreath may hurt her as other signs of virginity do: long hair pulls down the head, golden rings hurt fingers, golden adornment is painful (*ibid.*:334-338, No. 769) – it is time to marry. This song is a dialogue, but there is no information that it was sung dialogue-like by different parties. The song was apparently an accompaniment to the rite *in vivo*, rather than a story about things that happen.

Daughters can not marry without a wreath. They cry bitterly, they are not given a dowry, receive no inheritance (i.e. livestock, land), and no wreath.

<p><i>Lio lepalio, eglelio</i>  <i>Aš regėjau</i>  <i>Liepa, lieputėli.</i>  <i>Aukštus kalnus</i>  <i>Ant tų kalnų</i>  <i>Du beržučiu</i>  <i>Ant tų beržų</i>  <i>Dvi geguti</i>  <i>Bekuoja jant.</i></p>	<p>Lio lime-tree, fir-tree.          I saw          A lime-tree,          High hills.          On the hills          Two birches.          On the birches          Two cuckoos          Cuckooing.</p>
<p><i>Mes ne gegės</i>  <i>Tėvo dukrės.</i>  <i>Ko jūs verkiat?</i>          – <i>Ar neskyrė</i>  <i>Tėvas bandą?</i>  <i>Močia kraitį?</i>  <i>Ar nepynė</i>  <i>Vainikėlį?</i>          – <i>Kad ir skyrė,</i></p>	<p>We aren't cuckoos          Father's daughters.          Why are you crying?          – Didn't Father distribute          the livestock?          Mother the dowry?          Didn't anyone twist          A wreath?          – Though distributed</p>
<p><i>Kad nedavė.</i>  <i>Kad ir krovė,</i>  <i>Kad nedavė.</i>  <i>Kas po bandą,</i>  <i>Kas po kraitį,</i>  <i>Kad nepynė</i>  <i>Vainikėlį.</i></p>	<p>Not handed over.          Though she prepared [one]          She didn't give [it].          Why so the portion,          Why so the dowry?          If there is no          Wreath twisted.</p>
<p>(Slaviūnas 1958/2:278, 687, No. 727)</p>	

The wreath is more important than the dowry. Without it, she had lost her virginity and is excluded from normal life. Therefore, daughters are compared with cuckoos. The cuckoo may also be a symbol of death, talking from the Otherworld, or the animated soul coming home to the mother to mourn her difficult life with her husband and mother-in-law.

It is noteworthy that the bride's wreath for the wedding ceremony is twisted the day before, that is called *mergvakaris* (the maidens' evening). The bridal wreath is twisted not by the bride herself but by her girl-friends, sisters and maidens from nearby villages: the more maidens the better, and the higher her reputation. It may be assumed that they also have to prove the bride's virginity, which they confirm by twisting the symbol of virginity.

A maiden who lost her virginity had a difficult role in village society, as reported in ethnographic material. She could not take part in youth dances; if she tried to, she was laughed at, struck with a stick, and dipped in dung instead of a wreath. One such maiden took part in a wedding ceremony as a bridesmaid. The priest took her rue wreath, crushed it and demanded that she

leave the church. Only after that did the priest agree to bless the young couple (Dulaitienė 1958:304). Of course, terms of chastity are older than the baptism of Lithuania by the Roman Catholic Church in 1387.

<i>Ko tujei tėvutėli, Sudaučio, sudaučio, sudaučiutėl</i>	Why [have] you father
<i>Ilgai pamigėli, Sudaučio, sudaučio, sudaučiutėle</i>	Slept so long?
<i>Miegą bemigantem...</i>	While [you were] sleeping
<i>Užvažiavo sveteliai...</i>	Guests arrived
<i>Išvežė sūnelį...</i>	Took out your son.
<i>Katro tau, tėvutėli...</i>	Which one, father,
<i>Daugiau pagailėja...</i>	[Do you] commiserate with more?
<i>– Ne taip gaila man žirgelio...</i>	– I don't regret the horse
<i>Kaip man gaila sūnelio</i>	As much as the son.
<i>Aš žirgelį nupirksiu...</i>	I will buy a horse
<i>Ir pirmisiais meteliais...</i>	Next year.
<i>O sūnelą nebužauginsiu...</i>	But I can't raise up a son
<i>Nei dešimtis metelių...</i>	In ten years.
<i>– Ko tujei motinėle...</i>	– Why [have] you mother
<i>Ilgai pamigėle...</i>	Slept so long?
<i>Miegą bemigantei...</i>	While [you were] sleeping
<i>Užvažiavo svetelių...</i>	Guests arrived and
<i>Išvežė dukrelę...</i>	Took out your daughter.
<i>Ir dukrelės kraitelį...</i>	And her dowry
<i>Katro tau, motinėle...</i>	Which one, mother
<i>Daugiau pagailėja...</i>	[Do you] commiserate with more?
<i>– Ne taip gaila man kraitelio...</i>	– I don't regret the dowry
<i>Kaip man gaila dukrelės</i>	As much as the daughter.
<i>Aš kraitelį sukrausiu...</i>	I will collect a dowry
<i>Dvejais trejais meteliais...</i>	In two, three years.
<i>O dukrelės nebužauginsiu...</i>	But I can't raise up a daughter
<i>Nei dešimtis metelių...</i>	In ten years.
(Slaviūnas 1958/2:271-273, No. 722)	Reported by Miezinis about 1840.

Parallel texts where one line is about the maiden moving out to marry and the other is about a young man going off to war are quite common in *dainos*, too (Stundžiene 2002:17). The sleeping parents are not easy to explain. The first part relates to a sudden mobilization for war. Actual events in 1840 involving the forced enlistment of soldiers for the Russian army may be considered. The second part – which is more relevant in this article – allows one to suppose a "stolen marriage", which was later made official (Baldžius 1940; about I.-E. peoples' wedding types cf. Puhvel 2001:158). Otherwise, the dowry would not have been handed over. We can take into account the possibility of a ritualized, staged "stolen marriage" where the parents are obliged to "sleep" until the daughter is carried off together with her dowry.

In *Aušrela žvaigždela* (Slaviūnas 1959:365-367, No. 1468) the mother looks for her daughter; she finds all the attributes necessary for a wedding celebration and evidence of defloration (in symbolic terms, of course): *Rūtėlas barstytos* – "scattered rue", *vainikėlis pintas* – "wreath twisted", *rasėla nukrėsta* – "dew shaken off", *žirgeliai ganyti* – "horses grazed", *undenis drumstytas* – "water stirred up", *žirgeliai girdyti* – "horses watered", *ugnela kūrinta* – "a fire heated", and *žiedėliai mainyti* – "rings exchanged". When the mother finds her, her daughter sits, weeps and says: "I will not come back, Mama. The words have been spoken, the rings exchanged" (ibid.). In other words, the daughter has been kidnapped (or seduced).

### The *marti*'s and her round dance

The *marti* – "daughter-in-law" has to legitimise her presence on her husband's farmstead by presenting gifts to all members of his family. Additionally she has to dance through the whole farmstead, visiting every building:

1. <i>Ričiou ratų, ritingo,</i> <i>Per dvarelį, ritingo.</i> <i>Jeį siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	I roll around through the estate (farmstead).
2. <i>Tek' martėla, ritingo,</i> <i>Per dvarelį, ritingo</i> <i>Jeį siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	Marti dances through the estate.
3. <i>Kų neš' marti, ritingo,</i> <i>Tekėdama, ritingo?</i> <i>Jeį siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	What does she carry dancing?
4. <i>Neš' martėla, ritingo,</i> <i>Dovanėlas, ritingo</i> <i>Jeį siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	Marti carries gifts.
5. <i>O kam duosi, ritingo,</i> <i>Dovanėlas, ritingo</i> <i>Jeį siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	Whom you will present the gifts?

6. <i>Duos' anytai, ritingo, Jei siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	I'll give presents to the mother-in-law.
7. <i>Neprijeme, ritingo, Jei siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	She rejected the gifts.
8. <i>Išruogoja, Iškolioja, ritingo Jei siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	She insulted and railed at me.
9. <i>Storai verpta, ritingo Minkštai austa, ritingo Jei siudeł' siūdi, Siudirgytėł' siūdi.</i>	Thick spun, weak woven.

(Slaviūnas 1958/1:339, No. 153)

Remarks on the text and its translation: Lithuanian *marti* means daughter-in-law, but it had been a wider term. *Marti* was also the young wife until childbearing (of a boy?). She was called *marti* by all members of the new family, not only by her mother-in-law (Buivydienė 1997:78, 133-142; Šeškauskaitė 2001b). Lithuanian *tekėti* means "to flow (water, river), rise (sun), marry (bride)". Without knowing this, the text is an empty wordplay. While most people accept the gifts, the mother- and father-in-law do not accept them in many cases, or, at least, do not speak with their daughter-in-law. This opposition is quite ritualized and common, though it is not a private antipathy but is derived from the authority of a custom. This is one reason why her life is hard after marriage, but there are more: she doesn't know anyone, she is alien to everything.

The feeling of being alien is widely expressed in *sutartines* as well in *dainos*. This causes some people to claim that the world of married women in the *dainos* does not mention either worries because of children, or expecting them (Stundžienė 2002:21). Of course, the hard life of the *marti* is a topic in the *dainos*, but the view on this is hardly overestimated.

In the *sutartines*, there are allusions to awaiting offspring and to childbearing, as will be discussed later on; but it is necessary to understand the proper language. The correlation of sign and signed is due to convention, and symbolic terms in folksongs are not exceptions. Such allusions are found in the *dainos*, too. The claim that the life of the *marti* is "squeezed into black coloured frames only" (Stundžienė 2002:21) is not correct, since there are a notable number of *sutartines* where the *marti* is shown in allegory to the sun (Lithuanian *Saulė* – "sun" is female).

<i>Sauliulė Rateliu tekėjo. Dai kas ten teka? Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	The sun Risen in a round. Who rises there? Risen in a round.
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<i>Sauliulė</i>	The sun
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
<i>Marti teka</i>	Marti rises,
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
<i>Sauliulė</i>	The sun
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
<i>Dai ką neša?</i>	What does she carry?
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
<i>Sauliulė</i>	The sun
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
<i>Dovanėles.</i>	Gifts.
<i>Rateliu tekėjo.</i>	Risen in a round.
...	
(Slaviūnas 1958/1:338, No. 152)	

This brilliantly illustrates that the *marti* is not thought of badly or personally rejected. Instead, she is welcomed in a ritual way. Comparison with the sun is close to a laudation; she will give life and warmth to her new family. In Lithuanian folklore, e.g. in pasture songs, the sun is called *Mama* (Balys 2000:23).

In some songs, the father-in-law accepts her gifts and even asks for more (e.g. Slaviūnas 1958/1:354-355, No. 161).

After passing the new world's threshold by distributing gifts and dancing around the court, she becomes familiar with the people, places and ghosts. Now she is ready successfully to undertake some tasks that seem rather impossible. Her mother-in-law asks her to bring *vidur žiemos žalios untos* – "in the middle of winter, green bathing (birch-)switches", the father-in-law asks her for *vidur vasars balto sniego* – "white snow in the middle of summer" (Slaviūnas 1958/1:679-680, No. 451; 1958/2:455-457, Nos. 890-891; 1959:223-227, Nos. 1359-1360). Her parents explain how to solve the problem: the green bathing switch is a bough of green fir or pine-tree, while white snow is foam from the sea.

Ethnographic custom mention that, while the *marti* is guided through the farmstead, her path has to be scattered with straw (Vyšniauskaitė et al. 1995:352) or young twigs of fir (Vėlius 1998:174). The home is adorned with fir-twigs. The *sodas* – "wedding garden" was made from the tree-tops of fir, which was a necessary feature of weddings (Milius 1970:149, Vėlius 1998:176). In a symbolic way, this garden represents the World Tree, centering the events that happen in the middle of the world. Foam from the sea has to be taken from the coast, the border to the Otherworld, which has to be passed or reached to ensure procreation and childbearing (Gliwa and Šeškauskaitė 2003).

A chaste, pure custom is shown in the next text. There are neither guests nor sophisticated rites, just the mother who blesses them.

<p><i>Kas ten teka, dobilio?</i>  <i>Dobilio, dobilio.</i>  <i>Marti teka, dobilio,</i>  <i>Dobilio, dobilio.</i>  <i>Tekėdama, dobilio,</i>  <i>Dobilio, dobilio.</i>  <i>Plonas drobes, dobilio,</i>  <i>Dobilio, dobilio.</i>  <i>Jinai veža...</i>  <i>– Aš nuėjau...</i>  <i>Į girelę...</i>  <i>Ir nukirtau...</i>  <i>Berželį...</i>  <i>Ir nuėjau...</i>  <i>Į darželį...</i>  <i>Ir nuskyniau...</i>  <i>Kvietkelį...</i></p>	<p>Who rises, clover?<sup>1</sup>          Clover, clover.<sup>2</sup>          Marti rises, clover,          Clover, clover.          Rising, clover,          Clover, clover.          Thin clothes, clover,          clover, clover,          she brings.          – I went          into the forest.          And I felled          a birch-tree.          And I went          into the garden          and plucked          a flower.</p>
<p><i>Ir nupyniau...</i>  <i>Vainikėlį...</i>  <i>Ir nunešiau...</i>  <i>Panytėlei...</i></p>	<p>And I twisted          a wreath          and brought it [to]          the maiden.</p>
<p><i>Še tau brangią...</i>  <i>Dovanėlę...</i>  <i>– Kokia tavo...</i>  <i>Dovanelė...</i></p>	<p>Here, a dear          gift.          – What is your          gift?</p>
<p><i>Žalių laukų...</i>  <i>Dobilėlių...</i>  <i>– Ir nunešiau...</i>  <i>Motinėlei...</i></p>	<p>Clover          of green fields.          – And I brought it to          mother</p>
<p><i>Ir padaviau...</i>  <i>Motinėlei...</i>  <i>Ir priėmė...</i>  <i>Motinėlė...</i></p>	<p>and gave it [to]          mother          and mother          took it</p>
<p><i>Į savo rankelę...</i>  <i>Mus abudu...</i>  <i>Blagaslovija, dobilio,</i>  <i>Dobilio, dobilio.</i></p>	<p>in her hand.          She blessed          us both.</p>

The wreath is twisted by the suitor, a dear gift to present to her. The mother blesses them. An interesting interpretation for the motif of the cut down birch

<sup>1</sup> *Dobilio* equals the genitive, hence 'of clover'.

<sup>2</sup> *Dobilio* usually allegorize the young man in refrains.

is offered by Gliwa. A small human-shaped figure is made by the husband from a tree. It has to serve as a talisman for conception. Lithuanian tales require a childless couple to make such figures from birch or alder (Gliwa 2003:285, Gliwa and Šeškauskaitė 2003:269-271, 279-281). Ethnographers report that a doll often had to be removed from the cradle when the newborn was laid in it for the first time (Paukštytė 1999:112).

This song probably comes from an early society with strong matrilinear heritage. The critic may argue that the song talks about a poor family where the father is dead or elsewhere. However, if so, the maiden would be called *našlaitė(-lė)* – "orphan maiden", as usually found in all types of Lithuanian folklore.

### Childbearing: *Marti* gathers apples

Rinkinys	first voice called "collection"	Pritarinys "approving"
<i>Obelyt, lilūla, Tūto, sodely Augai, liliūla.</i>	Apple, liloola, Totoo, in the garden you grow, liloola.	<i>Jeį obelytėl, Sodely augai, Sodely augai.</i>
<i>Kas iš to sodelio, Kad nēr obelėlių, Tūto, sodely.</i>	Wherefore the garden is, if there are no apple-trees, Totoo, in the garden.	<i>Jeį obelytėl, Sodely augai, Sodely augai.</i>
<i>Kas iš obelyčių, Kad nēr obuolėlių, Tūto, sodely.</i>	Wherefore the trees are, if there are no apples, Totoo, in the garden.	<i>Jeį obelytėl, Sodely augai, Sodely augai.</i>
<i>Kas iš obuolėlių, Kad nēr rinkėjų, Tūto, sodely.</i>	Wherefore the apples are, if there are no gatheresses, Totoo, in the garden.	<i>Jeį obelytėl, Sodely augai, Sodely augai.</i>
<i>Atves brolis martelį, Tai bus rinkėja, Tūto, sodely.</i>	Brother will bring <i>marti</i> , She will be the collectress, Totoo, in the garden.	
<i>Jeį obelytėl, Sodely augai, Sodely augai.</i>	If you, apple, grow in the garden, you grow in the garden. ...	
(Slaviūnas 1959:295-296, No. 1410)		

An apple is a symbol of love and fertility, of sex and desire (cf. Becker 1998:21-22). The song outlines the importance of fertility for the garden. Of course, collecting apples means bearing children.

Commenting on the *sutartine* *Lioj abalėla* round dance, Slaviūnas (1959:498, No. 1655) says: "All go in an interlocked round and repeat the same again and again". The *Lioj obalėla* is performed in a similar manner, only the direction of the round alternates with additional tramping (ibid.:477, No. 1606). These round dances mark the introduction of the *marti* to the *sodas* – "garden", and probably to the whole *sodyba* – "farmstead" (Šeškauskaitė 2001a:29-35). The aim of this rite is to ensure the birth of children by interconnecting the fertility of humans and flora (indeed, mankind can not live without flora).

In the 19th century, it was considered shameful if married couples did not have children. It was a dishonour and a misfortune. The biggest worry of a young couple was that they would not have children. They believed that a childless woman had to roam in the darkness after death, to soak in water and to carry the devil's children (Kriauza 1943:203).

A lot of actions that were believed to improve the chances of having a family are reported on in ethnography. Such actions started whenever a girl was born. The placenta was buried in the flower garden or outside the threshold of the house, for the girl to marry early (Paukštytė 1999:55). After the meal, which parents ate together with the matchmaker, the mother swept up the crumbs and fed them to an cow that was in calf, begging God to bless the offspring (Kriauza 1943:205). It is not clear whether the calf or the daughter's future children were in question here – but probably both.

The next song shows the fate of a young woman staying at home doing only light work during pregnancy.

<p><i>Galu lauko liepalā</i>  <i>Toj liepalāj krāslalis.</i>  <i>Trys bičiū, dobilio.</i>  <i>Tam krāslaly panalā,</i>  <i>Sušukuota galvala.</i>  <i>Trys bičiū, dobilio.</i>  <i>– Aikš, panala, pas mani,</i>  <i>Pas man darbo nedirbsi.</i>  <i>Trys bičiū, dobilio.</i>  <i>Pakajėly sėdėsi,</i>  <i>Šilkų skorų siūlasi.</i>  <i>Trys bičiū, dobilio.</i>  <i>Po sodelį vaikščiosi,</i>  <i>Obolālius runkiosi.</i>  <i>Trys bičiū, dobilio.</i></p> <p>(Slaviūnas 1958/2:329, No. 762)</p>	<p>A lime tree is          At the end of the field.          Three of bees, clover.          In this armchair is a maiden,          With [a] combed head.          Three of bees, clover.          – Come to me, maiden,          With me you will not work.          Three of bees, clover.          You will sit inside          sewing shawls of silk.          Three of bees, clover.          You will walk through the garden          gathering apples.          Three of bees, clover.</p>
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A review of what happens after birth is shown in *sutartines* from the position of the daughter: *Šiltu šaltu nuprausė, čiūto rūto, storu plonu suvystė, čiūto rūto, margam lopšely paguldė* – "With warm cold [water] she washed [me], with thick [towels] thin she swaddled [me], laid [me] in a motley creche" (Slaviūnas 1959:160, No. 1308) where she talks about Mama, advising guests (suitors) to ask her mother but not her.

There are no *sutartines* about babies and children as commented on by Stundžienė (2002:21) in respect of songs. This fact is not surprising. It corresponds to the circumstance that there is a great fund of songs related to rites which actually happened. Moreover, a child was not a child in contemporary understanding. A child was just a smaller human being with its own strengths and capabilities (cf. Gurevičius 1989:260-261). At that time, families had more children than now (and the child mortality rate was high) and a child was not expected to become a "wunderkind".

So songs about babies are songs for them: lullabies, which occur often but not among *sutartines*. Lullabies do not require either choral power or ritual performance.

### Fieldwork and the household

Women worked in agriculture. They raked hay (Slaviūnas 1958/1:179-196, No. 28-47) while men had to mow meadows (ibid.:183-185, No. 34-36). Women sowed, grew and pulled flax (ibid.:415, 432, Nos. 216, 229), cut rye (ibid.:203, No. 56) and collected hops (ibid.:236, No. 84). The same song speaks about beer brewing, so one may conclude that beer brewing was women's work, too. The *marti* was expected both to grow and pull flax and also to prepare and spin and weave it (Slaviūnas 1958/2:418-425, Nos. 851-855). She had to wash clothes (Slaviūnas 1958/1:414, No. 215) and to mill rye (e.g. ibid.:575, No. 363).

Forms of address are always *sesės, sesules* – "sisters". In some cases there may be unmarried sisters, but it is more likely that this term should be understood more generally as "the maidens and women of one large family". Accordingly, the word *moteris* "woman" does not occur in the *sutartines*.

In addition, the woman, now a mother, is working to accumulate dowries for her daughters: *mana matula aukštam svirnaly drobelas audžia, dalalas skiria sava dukralam* – "my Mama in the high granary weaves linen and assigns dowries for her daughters" (Misevičienė et al. 1993:241).

It is also the job of the *marti* to take care of old members of the family: *Marti atitekėjusi rado rūme vyro tris senatas dėl karšinimo: tėtį, matę ir tetą vyro* – "the *marti*, when married, found three old persons to be cared for: the father, mother and aunt of her husband" (LKŽ/12:376).

## Old age

The age periods – childhood, youth, maturity and old age – are marked by symbols. Changing to the next period occurs through *rites de passage*. It is well known from ethnography that there are some judicial aspects of this conversion. Becoming a pensioner means to hand over responsibility and property to the next generation. Therefore, the heir has to secure for his forebears a room, food, medical services, an appletree in fruit, a cow in milk and transport to the church etc. Such customs were often ensured by notarial contracts (Vyšniauskaitė et al. 1995:138-142). However, it has never been investigated which rites, or even whether any rites, accompanied this event.

One quotation reads: *privargo motinėle, kol mane užaugino... Aš stosiu į darbelę, Vaduosiu motinėle* – "Mama became exhausted while she was bringing me up... I will join in the work and replace Mama" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:170, No. 629). Deputizing for the mother is also seen in *sutartines* of the *Ėjau rytelį, čiūta* and *Tamsumai, tamsumai nakteli?* group (e.g. Slaviūnas 1958/1:241-3, Nos. 544-548). Here, the daughters replace their mother in weaving and in grazing livestock. After allowing nine daughters to marry, the mother needs her youngest daughter to help her *aslelę pašluoti, motinėle vaduoti* – "to sweep the floor" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:364, No. 798b) or *Senai matulei, Ta ta Apdabatie, Ta ta Planam drabelam Ta ta Pavel'tie, Ta ta* – "to clothe her and to wash her thin linen" (Slaviūnas 1958/1:282-284, No. 120) and *Siubo sergančiai, Siubo negalinčiai, Siubo unt svirnelį, Pasisiūst* – "to nurse the ill, nurse the invalid, go to the granary" (ibid.:287, No. 123).

*Tai kas gražiai žydėjo?* – "Who bloomed so nicely?" (Slaviūnas 1958/1:239-240, Nos. 87-88; 1958/2:49-50, Nos. 505-506) is a kind of laudation. Sisters pluck flowers of the guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus* L.) and show them to their mother and father or decorate them with the flowers. Expressed through parallelism, the mother shines like the sun in heaven and the father like the moon. Alternatively, the mother brings guelder-roses to her daughter and wishes that she blooms like this shrub (Slaviūnas 1958/1:669-670, No. 440). Authors usually point out that there is an unfortunate meaning associated with the guelder-rose (e.g. Laurinkienė 1990:64-66, Sruoga 1957:315). However, this is not fully evident here. It remains an open question requiring further investigation.

Golden apple-trees with silver apples are the topic of *Sesė sodą sodino* – "Sister planted the garden". When asked by her parents, she answers *Aš tau motule, negailėsiu, saldų obuolėlių paraškysiu* – "Do not worry, Mama, I will pluck sweet apples" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:175-176, Nos. 635-636; 1959:228-230, Nos. 1362-1363). The symbolism of apples has already been mentioned. Golden and silver colours strengthen the power of the symbol granting eternal youth and immortality. These apples are usually protected by goddesses in

certain myths; they are often the target of thieves (Balys 1939:82, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1984:643).

By presenting silver apples to her father and mother, the sister expresses her respect and love for them, as well as ensuring (regaining) health (cf. Basanavičius 1970:392-408). One song was noted with complete choreography. It outlines the ritual behavior of the dance (Slaviūnas 1959:228-230, No. 1362). Parents with adult daughters have reached a remarkable age (bearing in mind the lower life expectancy of former times). Due to their weak health, they ask why they are unable to pluck the apples themselves.

*Beyond blue seas* talks about ritual feather gathering, pillow manufacturing and the mother's taking to her bed.

<i>Už marių mėlynujų, Dobitėl, bitela. Dobile, doBILE, Dobitėl. Ti vaikščioja trys sasutes,...</i>	Beyond blue seas, Clover, bee. Clover, clover, Little clover. Three sisters walk there,
<i>Ti runkioja plūksnytėlas, ... Prisirinki plūksnytėlių, ...</i>	Gather feathers there, Collect feathers,
<i>Susipyla paduškėlas, ... Asipraše matinėtį, ...</i>	Put them in a pillow, Excuse [us] mother,
<i>– Gulkis, mana matinėla... Un pukinių paduškėlių, ...</i>	– Lie down, my Mama On the downy pillow
(Slaviūnas 1958/2:172-3, No. 632)	

Collecting feathers beyond the blue seas sounds surrealistic and contains symbolic information. In the mythical view, this is the Otherworld, and feathers are important for travelling there and back after death and before birth (cf. Gliwa 2003:284). Because of the apology, it is not clear whether this is the beginning of old age or already the process of dying. In Lithuanian, there is a term *marinimas* – "attend the death" but also "exterminate", which means the arranged coming together of relations and neighbours to visit the dying. This ritual could have had some aspects of euthanasia, because of the double meaning "attend the death" versus "exterminate". When my grandmother was dying, neighbours sent us a telegramme that she was dead. When we arrived at the village some hours later she was still alive. I remember that my parents could not understand why they had written in this way, and why they refused to send for the doctor (1972).

This is a different view of death, hoping to meet one's end on earth under sacred circumstances; it is, of course, also a fatalistic stance.

The refrain *Lioj saudailio, vakaro!* occurs in some songs (Slaviūnas 1958/2:167-171, Nos. 628- 631; 1959:475, No. 1601 dance):

<i>Lioj saudailio, Vakaro! Kločia boltų patalą, Vakaro.</i>	Lioj saudailio, Evening! I'd make the bed, Evening.
<i>Lioj saudailio, Vakaro! Guldyčia motiną, Vakaro.</i>	Lioj saudailio, Evening! I'd bed Mama, Evening.
<i>... Ar miega motinā...? ... Tai miega motinā... ... Sodinčia mėtytą... ... Ar žydi mėtytā...? ... Ar kvėpia mėtātā...? ... Tai žydi mėtytā...</i>	Does Mama sleep...? Mama sleeps... I'd plant mint... Does mint flower...? Does mint smell...? Mint flowers...
<i>Lioj saudailio, Vakaro! Tai kvėpia mėtytā, Vakaro.</i>	Lioj saudailio, Evening! Mint smells, Evening.
(Slaviūnas 1958/2:167, No. 628)	

The sleeping motif may also mean that she is already dead and mint is planted on her grave. The same is valid for the *sutartine Svirtis svyra darželynan* – "the sweep sweeps in the garden" (Slaviūnas 1958/2:165-166, No. 626), where mother is decorated with mint and allegorized to stars: *Nusraškyčia mėtelę, Apkaišyčia motulėlę, Tai gražumas motinėls!, Kaip ant dangaus žvaigždėlė!* – "I'd pluck mint, I'd decorate Mama, Mama is so beautiful! Like a star in the sky!" In Greek mythology, mint is the plant growing out of Minthe, a mistress of Hades who was killed (Grant and Hazel 1992:285).

It is difficult to decide whether death is expected or already a fact. Because elements of lamentation are missing, the texts seem to speak only about putting Mama in her bed with respect and honour. Nevertheless it is important to see how close to them these motifs about death are. While bidding farewell to her mother, the bride laments *Ai, ai, Moczuttele! Kas tau ugnele suszluos! Kas tau patalele paklos!* – "Ai, Mama! Who will lay fire for you! Who will make the bed for you!" (Jonynas 1984:195).

## Conclusion

*Sutartines* give a full panorama of the life of girls and women through all periods. The symbolical style is typical of Lithuanian folklore and *sutartines* emphasise this. There are no details either about tools, handicrafts, food or clothes. What we can experience from the study are rites concerning the passing into a new period and the symbolic attributes belonging to each period. A wreath and a flower garden are for the maiden, apples and a fruit-garden for the *marti*, the young woman. The symbols of old age are not so distinct.

The beloved is often called "brother". Close relations between mothers and daughters show an early stage of kinship, in which the family seems to be organized matrilinearly with daughters staying at home. Otherwise, accepting that the daughters-in-law could acquire the status of daughters, it is necessary to suppose close relations between them, for example, as from the same clan. According to archeology, the process of the disappearance of clans and the formation of feudalism and territorial society ended somewhat later than the 5th century AD (Michelbertas 1986:3).

*Sutartines* about the *marti* and marriage quite clearly show the travelling of the bride to her husband. At her new home, the *anyta* – "mother-in-law" is in charge. Husbands do not figure at all. When men are spoken of, they are usually either a *bernelis* – "boy", or a *brolelis* – "brother", but rarely the father or father-in-law.

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## SLIKE ŽENA U LITAVSKIM SUTARTINAMA

### SAŽETAK

Litavske su *sutartine* jedinstvene arhaične polifone pjesme. Slični oblici, promatrano iz muzikološke perspektive, postoje i u balkanskih naroda. Članak se bavi slikom žena u *sutartinama*. Pjevani tekstovi su bogati alegorijama i simbolima te ih je etnografski teško razmrsiti. Komplicirani paralelizam sredstvom je za izražavanje činjenica i osjećaja. U izlaganju autorica slijedi životni ciklus od mladosti do zrelosti, braka, poroda, rada, starenja, smrtne postelje. Za svaku od faza u ženskom životu autorica ocrta primjerene simbole, kao i obrede i ženske obveze. Prilično univerzalan simbol nevjenčane žene jest vijenac načinjen od različita cvijeća ili nekog drugog materijala. Jedino se u *sutartinama* javlja zagonetno pitanje o ljetnome snijegu i zelenim šibama zimi – i taj paradoks valja riješiti prije udaje kako bi se za nju pripremila. Jabuke su uvriježeni simbol plodnosti mladih žena, no *sutartine* tomu u pjesmama o starosti pridodaju zlatna stabla sa srebrnim jabukama. Posebnu pozornost autorica posvećuje upravo obredima prijelaza u starost jer oni u litavskim istraživanjima dosad nisu bili istaknuti. Ženu se uglavnom naziva "sestrom", a ako je primjereno i "kćeri" ili "majkom", no rijetko "punicom". Uvriježena riječ za "ženu" se ne rabi.

Ključne riječi: žene, Litva, višeglasne pjesme, *sutartine*, simbol