

THE VISUAL AND THE MYTHICAL–POETIC INTERPRETATIONS OF SKY LUMINARIES IN LITHUANIAN TRADITIONAL TEXTILES

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Abstract

This paper analyses some interconnected aspects of Lithuanian folk astronomy. The same mythical–poetic images linking sky luminaries, things in the natural world, and mythological beings as well as human beings are present in Lithuanian mythical–poetic folklore and in the names of textile ornamentations. Their semiotic net generally comprises flowers, plants, wild and domestic animals, celestial luminaries and mythical people as well as human beings and their artefacts. The investigation of images reveals the mythical–poetic linkage between all the celestial luminaries and concepts of light, marriage and fertility that belong more generally to the Sun Maiden mythology complex.

Key words: ornamentation symbolism, Lithuanian textiles, folkloric images, sky luminaries, Baltic mythology.

Introduction

The phenomenon of the sky has various interpretations in the semiotics of language, folk art and mythical poetry that are manifestations of the traditional worldview. Mythical–poetic images of folklore associated with the authentic names of patterns on folk textiles (woven bands) represent a particular tradition of astronomical knowledge deriving from archaic mythology. Here celestial luminaries, the local natural world and human beings are all interwoven into the holistic concept of a universe inhabited by mythical beings that are strongly associated with one another.

The main ornamentations have been replicated without modification since the earliest known geometrically ornamented textiles in Baltic cultures, which date from the 11th century. The semantic space of pattern names and their forms reveals a set of associations with the phenomenon of the sky that operates at several levels.

The aim of this study is to identify interconnected aspects of folk astronomy and to reveal regional peculiarities and the universal features of mythical–poetic concepts in the Lithuanian tradition linking sky luminaries, objects or elements in the natural world (local flora and fauna) and mythological beings as well as the human with his artefacts into the one meaningful cosmic net.

The main tasks are to classify the different forms of Lithuanian traditional textile ornamentation and their folk names as mythical–poetic images associated symbolically with the stars and celestial luminaries; to reveal their links with the peasant environment and worldview; and to trace their mythological origins.

We use data from Lithuanian and other Baltic and neighbouring cultures. These data derive from folk textiles, archaeological material, mythology, and mythical–poetic aspects of folklore and language. The collection of textile pattern forms and names together with the analysis of their cultural and historical context and semiotics reveals an astounding continuity of folk-weaving tradition and mental interpretation in Lithuanian folk culture. It unveils many archetypal features and similarities that are not strongly bounded to any particular time, space or culture. Comparative and contextual analysis is necessary in order to reveal the traditional Lithuanian ornamentation symbolism because it is not clearly enough explained in the oral tradition.

Ornament as a Part of Mythical World Structure

The principal myth in any tradition is attested by having many applications in very different fields and aspects of folk memory and customs. The results of such a multiply supported codification of mythology are found in various elements of culture operating both in everyday life and in spiritual practices (Toporov 2000 p. 127–129). Owing to the subordination of elements of the world into one global semiotic structure, a network of various correspondences exists between different types of object: sky luminaries, elements of clothing, landscape, biosphere, and so on (Baiburin 1989). The historical, comparative, typological, and also contextual methods of archaeology, art history, mythology and cultural anthropology (Rybakov 1965, 1, p.24–47; 2, p. 13–33; Hodder 1989) are often used for the investigation of Baltic traditional folk art, especially orna-

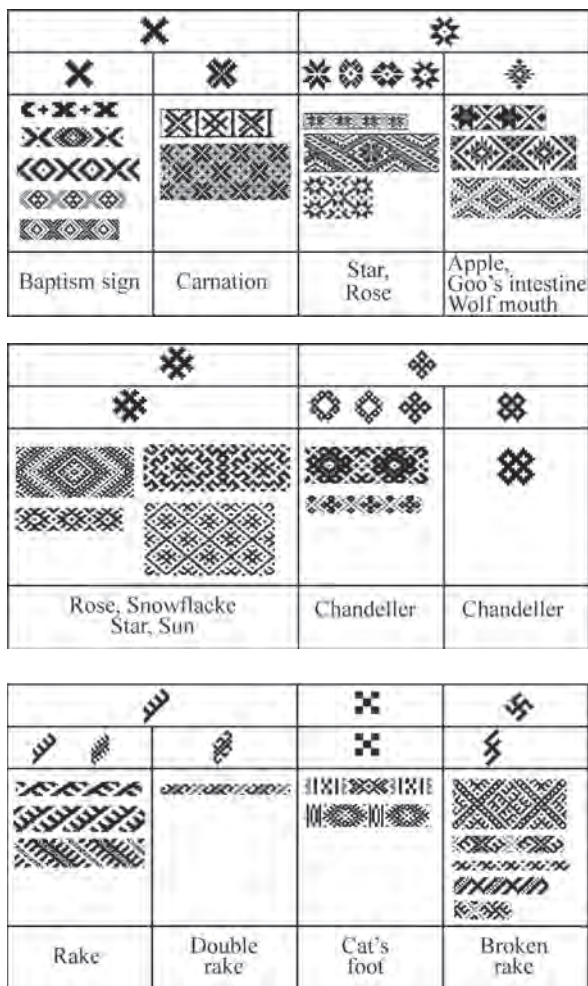


Fig. 1. Archetypal signs in the ornamentation on Lithuanian woven bands, derived pattern types, and their names, which are associated with celestial luminaries.

mentation, folklore and language semiotics (Gimbutas, 1958; Vastokas 1977; Urbanavičienė 2000; Rizhakova, 2002; Tumėnas 2002; Vaitkevičienė 2003). Methods similar to the phenomenology of religion (M. Eliade) are often used to interpret local art symbolism based on the analysis of worldwide similarities, i.e. analogues of their form and features (Eisler 1910; Gimbutas 1958; Vastokas 1977).

Geometrical signs and the sky luminaries

Careful and detailed analysis of the evolution of the form of many different signs in Lithuanian woven band decorations showed that they are based on just a few primal, archetypal signs that are international in nature but locally interpreted, refined using various formal/decorative stylistic elaborations. They are 17 in total: a rhombus, a diagonal cross, a snake, a herringbone, a goat's foot, a zigzag, a frog, a rose, horses, a rake, a meander, a diagonal line, a star, a five-square star, a swastika, a roof, and a chessboard pattern. These

primitive signs serve as the basis for many other sophisticated types of sign and their variations. Some of these signs are associated with the sky luminaries and their semantic space (Fig. 1).

A historical and typological comparative analysis of their form and their place in the compositional arrangement helps to elucidate these signs' cosmological associations.

The Lithuanian band signs have analogues in signs of ownership found on 12th- to 14th-century Latvian fishing floats (Caune 1988, p.114). A direct historical linkage is evident between Lithuanian and Latvian woven band decorations from the 19th century and 11th- to 13th-century textile signs from Latvia (Dzērvīte, Ģinters 1936, att. 36; 32, 44, 27, 26 (tab. 2) and West Russia (Levinson 1959). They are characterised by compositions of separate signs: a five-square cross/star, a cross, a horned rhombus, a swastika, and a toothed star.

Ancient decorated bands containing the same type of geometric ornamentation are known from 10th- to 13th-century archaeological finds in Lithuania (Valatka 1974, p.74-75) and Latvia (Zariņa 1999). Similar textile ornamentations have been found in Finland (Lehtosalo-Hilander 1984), Sweden (Geijer 1938) and Denmark (Hald 1980, p.225-231).

In pre-Christian times their symbolism was associated with mythological world-view. The ornamentation, general structure and sign composition on Latvian 10th- to 13th-century wraps (Zariņa 1999, p. 22, 25; Dzērvīte, Ģinters 1936) suggests what this celestial symbolism was: the triangles in the margins signify mountains, roofs, or other mediators between the sky and the earth, while the horned rhombus, crosses, and swastikas in the middle part symbolize the celestial luminaries. This carpet-like clothing was worn as a ceremonial funerary costume by noblewomen. Such types of shawl and coat, decorated with sky luminaries in figurative or schematic ways, are well known from many traditions: they were for liturgical and ceremonial use by priests and kings (Eisler 1910). Consequently, a similar interpretation is reasonable for similar pieces in Latvian traditional (archaeological, folk) art. The same composition of sky symbols surrounded by earthly signs is found in the organization of the mandala, where the earthly lower level with the gates is situated at the periphery and the highest holy celestial level occupies the centre. Similar hierarchical compositions with the solar signs in the centre are characteristic of Saami shamanic drums (Ahlbäck 1991). The decorations on Persian carpets are based on similar compositions: the highest, most significant place is in the middle of the carpet and represents the

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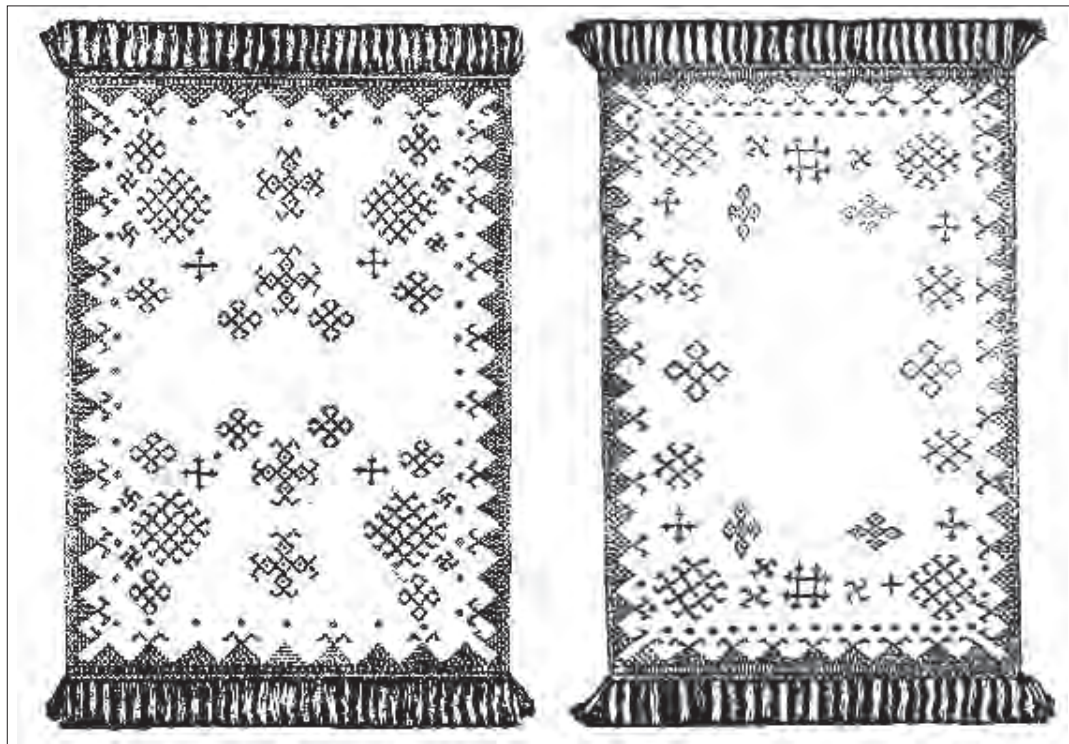


Fig. 2. 10th- to 13th c. textile ornamentations from Latvia similar to Lithuanian traditional woven band designs.

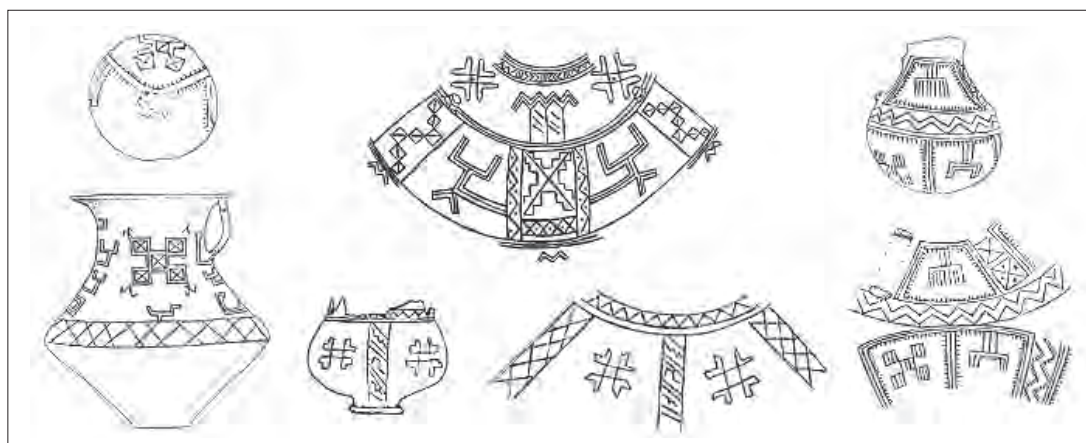


Fig. 3. Celestial signs in Early Bronze Age Hungarian ceramics.

celestial garden. The same composition is also common in East Prussian folk carpets (connected with the West Balts' tradition), which were used by newly wed couples as bed covers (Hahm 1937, p. 34, 94). People, animals and small trees are very often represented in the periphery of these carpets but the ideograms of the sky luminaries – stars, crosses, and flowers – are represented in the central part of the carpet (Fig. 4).

This means that it is possible to identify several geometrical signs on Lithuanian, Latvian and East Prussian textiles as the symbols of celestial luminaries: the horned rhombus, the toothed rhombus, the double diagonal cross, the swastika, the chessboard pattern, and the five-square cross.

The ancient and stable tradition of these signs' symbolism in Eastern Europe is evident from Early Bronze Age (2100-2000 BCE) Hungarian ceramics where rose, cat's paw, and candelabra-type ornamentations are used. Their separate – surrounded by free space – and hierarchical composition suggests associations with the concept of celestial luminaries in the structure of the Cosmos (Fig. 3). Their origin can be traced back to the Neolithic (Kalicz – Schreiber 1990, p.59-100).

Similarly, the most ancient analogues of known Lithuanian textile ornamentation motifs are found in decorations and abstract sign systems from the Neolithic Old European Civilization (Tumėnas 2002, p.73; Gimbutas 1989; Harman 1996).

Another channel of investigation into the symbolism of the signs is the association of their authentic names with the semiotics of language, folklore and mythology.

The celestial symbolism of patterns

The patterns on Lithuanian woven bands have many symbolically meaningful names (Fig. 1). What is the imagined cultural context of these signs' names and what are the interactive semantic connections they imply? The analysis of the mythical-poetic context of Lithuanian textile pattern folk names (collected by the author in ethnographic expeditions as well as by other investigators) (Tumėnas 2002, p.112-123) reveals the role of celestial luminaries, and especially the stars, as key symbols strongly associated with other luminaries, as well as with the country's flora and fauna.

1. The Cross has several types.

a) The Simple cross also has associations with christening/baptism, because the name for this sign *small cross* – *kryžiukas* (EMO 3561), *baptism sign* – *krikštelis* (E 3023), links with the word *krikštas*, which in Lithuanian has the meaning – baptism, sanctification, protection and also – the beginning and the end. The simple cross sign in Latvian ancient textiles seems to be first of all a symbol of the celestial luminaries. The cross sign links with star symbolism: this sign – *krikštelis* also is linked with the start of a new life after the ending of previous one. In the Lithuanian traditional worldview *Verpėja* (Spinner – another word for the goddess *Laima*, who has many similarities with the Greek Fortuna and Aphrodite) supervises man's life's thread, which ends in the star (Gizevijus 1970, p.147). According to the Lithuanian folk song of baptism, the goddess *Laumė* (or *Laima*) wants to prepare beer and to invite all the stars for the celebration, but she forgets to invite the Sun (Slaviūnas 1959, Nr. 1202). Here, *Laumė*'s association with the stars and baptism is similar to *Aušrinė* (Morning star)'s resemblance to all the stars and also to the Sun (who is treated like one of the stars). On the other hand, *Aušrinė* has a particular difference from the Sun, who sometimes appears forgotten by her. The connection of the star *Aušrinė* with baptism is reminiscent of Greek mythology where Aphrodite's birth from the sea can be interpreted in terms of the rituals of purification and ritual bathing that ensure her ever-renewed virginity. Aphrodite is clearly rooted in the ancient tradition of goddesses of renewal and regeneration (Eliade 1987 15, p.278).

b) The Double-line cross in the Lithuanian band tradition is called *carnation flower* – *gvazdikas* (EMO 8108). But it seems that this name has come from the

Polish name for the star *gwiazda*. On the other hand, the shape of the carnation flower is indeed very similar to a sparkling star. The flower name given to the double-cross sign in general allows us to suggest that it symbolically represents the stars.

In Baltic mythology and folklore, the Morning and Evening Star are both strictly associated with the Sun – they are known as the Sun and Moon daughters – *Saulės dukrytės*. Sometimes all the stars were treated as their children (Narbutt 1835, p.126-134). This could explain why we sometimes find the sun and a star being designated by the same motif in textiles.

2. The Star sign has two types.

a) The Star sign is most commonly called *star* – *žvaigždutė* (ES b. 134, l. 87) but also *snowflake with leaves* – *lapuota snaigė* (ES b. 1983, l. 3) and sometimes *sun* – *saulutė* (ES b. 1983, l. 3). The sun and a star are feminine sky luminaries in Lithuanian. The snowflakes are similar to stars because they look like a star falling from the sky.

Similarly the star signs are named *rose* (*rozha*), *sun* (*sontsa*), *flower* (*kvietok*), *star* (*zviozdachka*), and *star/sun* (*zviozdachka/sontsa*) in Belarussian textiles (this culture being distinctive in having a mixture of Baltic and Slavic traditions) (Niachaeva 2004, p.76-77, 79-80, 83-84, 89, 127).

A star-like pattern whose Lithuanian name is *clover* – *dobiliukai* (ES b. 1958, l. 10) is associated with the five-leaf clover, which brings good luck according to Lithuanian folk beliefs.

In short, in both Lithuanian and Belarussian traditions there were strong associations between the stars and the sun and roses and other flowers.

b) The Toothed rhombus/Star sign has the names *star* (ES b. 1959, l. 8; EMO 1826) and *apple* – *obuoliukas* (E 2876). An apple or an apple tree in Lithuanian folklore often stands for the symbol of fertility, matchmaking and marriage (Basanavičius 1970, p.393-403). The motif of golden apples in Indo-European mythical poetry is associated with eternal youth and immortality.

This sign also has important name *wolf's mouth* – *vilko gerklė* (ES b. 1983, l. 4). In Lithuanian folk dream symbolism, wolves signify matchmakers and bridegrooms (Tumėnas 2002, p.204). A woman after childbirth first entering the bathhouse was called *the wolf* (Urbanavičienė 2000, p.90). The wolf also appears in fertility magic: if you want your bees to steal the honey from other bees, you must let the beehive fly through the opened mouth of the wolf (Elisonas 1932, p.128). The mythological wolf's mouth symbol is probably similar to the *vagina dentate* image, well known in the

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European tradition, which serves to make boys fear having sexual interaction with girls (Lévi-Strauss 1997, p.125).

Another name *goose's intestine* – *žušiųžarnis* (EMO 2193) and the Belarussian denomination *swan* (Niachaeva 2004, p.84) are associated with water birds. In Lithuanian folklore, water birds are popular bridal and marriage symbols. In archaic wedding dances the limping steps of the woman resemble the way water birds walk (Račiūnaitė 2000, p.39). Advent songs describe a boy who ties up some ducks and sends them to his beloved girl as a strong symbol of romance (Ūsaiytė 2007, p.116-118). Other songs present direct parallels between the duck hen, who builds a nest and hatches her chicks, and the young girl (bride) who walks in the rue garden of the palace (Valiulytė 2000, p.62-63). Other wedding songs compare the duck hen, who is swimming and diving in the lake, with the young girl (bride), who cries because of the inappropriateness of the chosen boy (husband) (Burkšaitienė, Krištopaitė 1990, p.353-355). The belief is that if the duck jumps on the fence, the wedding will happen (Elisonas 1932, p.66). In this mythical-poetic context it is easy to understand another Belarussian denomination for this sign type – *a heart* (Niachaeva 2004, p.160).

In this way, the notion of a star is associated with local plants and fauna and with idea of marriage.

3. The Horned rhombus (Rose) is another star-like sign which has the name *star* (ES b.1958, l. 6) but also *flower* – *gėlytė* (ES b. 1954, l. 9), *rose* – *roželė* (EMO 505), and *snowflake* – *snaigė* (ES b. 1983, l. 3).

This sign is placed in the top or centre of cosmic structure compositions in the aforementioned Latvian and Hungarian artefacts, as well as in East Prussian 19th-century carpets *koc* (Hahm 1937, p.34, 94) (Fig. 4). The context of Baltic folklore and mythology demonstrates the strong association of the rose sign with sun or star symbolism; with mythical images of the flowers of the World Tree, Sun Garden or Sun Bush at the centre of the World or Sky; and with the highest level in the cosmological structure. In Latvian songs, the rising and setting sun is depicted as a rose wreath, bush or garden. A rose garden is one of the most characteristic motifs in Baltic mythology. The association



Fig. 4. The Rose Bush or World Tree with blossoms on an East Prussian carpet 19th c.

between the Sun as celestial fire and the image of a rose is known in Lithuanian and Latvian mythological traditional folklore (Vaitkevičienė 2003, p.23-29).

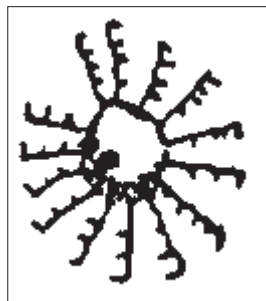
The horned rhombus represents the sun, and sometimes it is called *Sun* (in Lithuanian – *saulukė* (ES b. 1949, l. 5) and in Latvian – *saulyte*) (Slava 1992, p.17). In Lithuanian folklore, the Sun rising on Christmas morning is associated with, or replaced by, the flowering rose and has marriage symbolism (*On Christmas morning the rose fell into blossom/ The reindeer with the nine horns on head is coming/ On the first horn the fire burns/ On the second – the smiths are hammering/ Oh smiths, my brothers/ Please make me a golden ring...*) (Valiulytė 2000, p.70). This song resembles the image of the Sun, forged by a *Smith* – *Kalvelis* (*Televelis*) (the name being similar to the Estonian mythical hero Kalev) who, in Lithuanian mythology, is the servant of the Thunder God Perkūnas (Obolenskii 1851, p.19-21).

Another association of the mythical-poetic image of the rose with a star, the sun and fertility is evident in the names of the flax laid out for drying in the sun as was done during harvest rituals. The figure so formed – the circle of rays – was called: *rose, star, wreath, circle* (Vyšniauskaitė 1977, p.68-70).

The other name *star* also refers to the sky luminaries and its synonymous name *snowflake* designates snowflakes as sky elements, given their similarity to falling stars. Another name for this sign – *cat's paw* – *katės pėdukė* (ES b. 1949, l. 5) again harks back to the love and marriage symbolism of the sky luminaries in Lithuanian folklore (see section 6 below).

4. The Five-square cross/star has two types: **a) vertical star-like cross**; and **b) diagonal cross**. They both have the name *chandelier* – *liktoriukai* (ES b. 1983, l. 3). All over the world the stars have been called luminaries, lamps, campfires and similar terms. The Bible calls all the celestial bodies luminaries. In the book of Genesis, the Sun and Moon are called the great and the small luminaries. A lamp is a good metaphor for a star, because it also shines in the dark. It is not by chance that the Pleiades in Lithuanian are similarly named – *Candelabra* (*Sietynas*). Another name for this sign – *wild rose* – *erškėtrožė* (ES b. 319 (73)) – is again similar to the star symbols already discussed.

5. The Rake or E sign is of two types: **a) Rake with simple teeth**, and **b) Rake with crooked teeth**. They are called *rake*, *raker* – *grėbliukai* (ES b. 1954, l. 9) and *comb* – *šukos* (ES b. 1985, l. 45) respectively. **The Rake** pattern is connected with the image of the rake and comb. In Lithuanian mythical-poetic Shrovetide folk songs, a girl in a boat in the middle of the sea, a lake or a river combs her hair with a fish-bone comb and then floats it across the water to her beloved, asking whether he loves her. But the boy answers that he does not, and that he is willing to make a rake from her fingers (Kriščiūnienė 1992, p. 62, 64-65). It is evident that the images of the rake and comb are associated with the idea (or problems) of courtship and matchmaking. The image of a girl sitting in a floating ship and combing her hair is also used in folklore sung during hair-combing rites on the eve of a wedding (Burkšaitienė, Krištopaitė 1990, p.223-227), and corresponds to the ritual of hair combing. On the other hand, these actions are similar to the mythological images of the solar or morning-star Goddess: her hair is the metaphor of the rays of the Sun or the star Venus (Aušrinė). The association of the sign of the Rake with the symbolism of the rays is also clear where it appears in the ornamental compositions of other cultures. It is often



placed near to, or together with, symbols of celestial luminaries, as, for example, in Hungarian Bronze Age

Fig. 5. The sun with rake-like rays on a piece of clay (Tajo de las Figuras, Spain).

(Kalicz – Schreiber 1990, p.59-100) (Fig. 3) and Spanish Late Neolithic ceramics (Fig. 5) (Sandars 1985, p.231).

6. The chessboard pattern consists of a combination of five dark squares and four light ones. It bears the name of *rose* – *rožytė* (ES b. 1953, l. 2), but also *star* – *žvaigždukė* (ES b. 1958, l. 24), as well as *cat's paw* – *katpėdėlė* (Kišūnaitė 1971, p.45). *A cat's paw* resembles a feline paw-print, and is also like a four-leaved flower with a spot in the middle. In the Lithuanian folkloric tradition, cats are associated with the female sex and married life. In one folk song, a young wife asks her husband: *Tell me, young boy, when I will return to my mother?* He answers: *When buckwheat has become seed in the oven and cats are harrowing the fields* (*Pasakyk berneli, pasakyk jaunasis, kadu aš sugrįšiu pas savo močiutį / Kai un pečiaus grikius sės, katės nagom priakės, tai tadu, tai tadu par mačiutį sugryši...* – Vyžiai, Utena r., recorded by the author on the eve of a wedding, 1985). The image of seeding the fields symbolises fertility. By examining the wedding symbolism of the cat we can explain the connection between the *cat's paw* pattern and the rose and star images.

7. The Swastika (fragmented half-swastika) is occasionally named *rake* (ES b. 2029, l. 2). Its Latvian names are of disputable origin: *Laima cross* (*Laimos kryžius*); *Perkūnas cross* (*Perkūno kryžius*); *fire cross* (*uguns krusts*) (Brastiņš 1923, p.71-72). The thunder god *Perkūnas* and his wife *Laima* (literally – happiness) are celestial deities in Baltic mythology. This suggests that in the Baltic tradition the swastika is associated with the symbolism of light, lightning, power and happiness. In textile decorations from the Latvian Bronze Age, swastikas may signify sky luminaries, because they are placed in the otherwise quite empty central space that represented the celestial world. In textiles from western Russia (10th-13th-centuries), the swastika is also placed centrally, near to other star or sun symbols such as the star and horned rhombus (Levinson 1959).

Conclusions

In the ornamentation on Lithuanian woven bands there are several types of sign whose form and meaning is associated with sky luminaries: 1) the Cross: a) the Simple cross, b) the Double-line cross; 2) the Star: a) the Flower/Star; b) the Toothed diamond; 3) the Horned rhombus; 4) the Five-square cross/star: a) the Vertical star-like cross; b) the Diagonal cross; 5) the Rake: a) the Rake with simple teeth, b) the Rake with crooked teeth; 6) the Chessboard pattern; and 7) the Swastika.

The signs on Lithuanian woven bans that have been investigated so far have direct links with 11th- to 13th-century pre-Christian wraps found in Latvia, where similar signs are placed in an otherwise quite empty central area evidently reserved to represent the celestial realm.

The folk names for the patterns reveal associations with mythical-poetic images of the stars and sun, and also of flowers (roses, carnations, clovers), baptism, apples, wolves, geese, cats, combs, chandeliers, the celestial goddess *Laima* and the god *Perkūnas*. In particular, the complex links (star-rose-sun-cats' paw etc.) indicate that these denominations are not fortuitous. Strong associations between different elements of the world are characteristic of traditional and archaic word-views. The semantic net of these images in the Lithuanian mythical-poetic tradition reveals linkages mainly with fertility and marriage symbolism, and with Sun Maiden mythology. The net includes names connected with the stars, artificial light sources, noble flowers, plants, water birds, domestic and wild animals, and attributes or artefacts used by, the mythical-poetic beings.

The star-like signs in Lithuanian textiles refer first of all to the star Aušrinė/Vakarinė (Venus – the Morning and Evening star, the daughter of the Sun and Moon, the bride) and the Sun (female gender in Baltic languages) and other stars. The mythical-poetic image of Venus Aušrinė (Aušra) is an archetype deeply rooted in Lithuanian tradition. It is the key concept in defining a semiotic kinship of very different cultural phenomena that appears at first to be accidental.

Abbreviations

- E – The National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum accession book.
 EMO – The Lithuanian National Museum accession book.
 ES – The Lithuanian Institute of History, Ethnology Department Archive.

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VIZUALINĖS IR MITOPOETINĖS DANGAUS ŠVIESULIŲ INTERPRETACIJOS LIETUVIŲ TRADICINĖJE TEKSTILĖJE

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami integralieji lietuvių etnoastronomijos aspektai.

Dangaus reiškiniai įvairiai interpretuojami žodžių semiotikoje, tradiciniame liaudies mene ir mitopoetikoje. Tie patys mitopoetiniai įvaizdžiai aptinkami mitologinių elementų turinčioje lietuvių tautosakoje ir tekstilės (juostų) raštų liaudiškuose pavadinimuose.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama dangaus šviesulių sąsaja su regiono gamtos objektais, mitinėmis būtybėmis ir žmonėmis. Siekiama atskleisti regioninius ir universaliuosius tautosakos ir audinių raštų pavadinimų mitopoetinių įvaizdžių aspektus, semantiškai jungiančius dangaus šviesulius, šalies gamtą (gėles, vaisius, laukinius ir naminius gyvūnus), žmones bei mitines būtybes ir jų artefaktus į vieną reikšmių tinklą.

Pagrindinių tekstilės ornamentų tradicija Baltų kraštuose aiškiai atsekama nuo XI a. Straipsnyje klasifikuojami šių raštų ir jų pavadinimų, kaip mitopoetinių įvaizdžių, tipai, susiję su dangaus šviesulių simbolika. Atskleidžiamos tų mitopoetinių įvaizdžių sąsajos su kaimo žmogaus aplinka, realijomis, atsekamos jų mitologinės ištakos.

Tyrime remiamasi lietuvių ir kitų baltų kultūrų duomenimis: etnografinė bei archeologine tekstile, mitologija ir mitopoetiniais tautosakos bei kalbos aspektais. Komparatyviniai tyrimai ir kontekstinė analizė yra būtina tiriant lietuvių tradicinio ornamento simboliką, kadangi vietiniai žodinės tradicijos aiškinimai yra nepakankami.

Dauguma lietuvių juostų raštų atitinka XI–XIII a. ikikrikščioniškos epochos audinių, rastų Latvijoje, raštus, kurie būna centrinėje skarų dalyje, priskirtinoje dangaus sferai. Šių ženklų ir jų kompozicijos simbolikos analogų randame ir kitų kultūrų ornamentuose.

Iškirti šie lietuvių juostų ornamento tipai, simboliškai susiję su dangaus šviesulių semantikos lauku: 1) Įstrižas kryžiuokas: a) paprastas, b) dvigubų linijų; 2) Žvaigždė: a) gėlė (roželė) / žvaigždė; b) dantytas rombas; 3) Rombas su ataugėlėmis; 4) Penkialangis kryžiuokas / žvaigždė: a) vertikalus žvaigždinis; b) įstrižas; 5) Grėbliukai: a) paprasti, b) su užlaužtais dantukais; 6) Katpėdėlė; 7) Svastika.

Raštų liaudiški vardai siejasi su mitopoetiniais žvaigždžių ir saulės, taip pat gėlių (rožių, gvazdikų, dobiliukų), krikšto ženklo, obuoliuko, vilko, žąsies, katės, šukų, sietyno (žvakių), dangaus mitinių personažų Laimos ir Perkūno įvaizdžiais.

Šie mitopoetiniai įvaizdžiai semantiškai sieja dangaus šviesulių ir šviesos, vestuvių, vaisingumo koncepcijas, kilusias iš Saulės mergelės mitologijos: jie apima vardus, susijusius su žvaigždėmis, dirbtiniais šviesos šaltiniais, kilniomis gėlėmis, vaismedžių vaisiais, vandens paukščiais, naminais ir laukiniais gyvūnais, mitinių būtybių artefaktais – atributais.

Žvaigždės tipo ženklai lietuvių tekstilėje visų pirma sietini su Venera (Aušrine / Vakarine žvaigžde, kuri baltų mitologijoje yra Saulės ir Mėnulio dukra, nuotaka) ir Saule bei kitomis žvaigždėmis. Aušrinės mitema itin reikšminga lietuvių tradicijoje. Ji yra tarsi pamatas, kuris semiotiškai jungia labai skirtingus (ir iš pirmo žvilgsnio menkai susijusius) kultūros reiškinius. Jie suaudžiami į holistinę visatos sampratą, kurios visi elementai – ir dangaus šviesuliai, ir supanti žemiška erdvė, ir audiniai – vieni su kitais itin glaudžiai susiję. Tai savita lietuvių etnoastronominė koncepcija.

III

III. ASTRONOMICAL AND ETHNOCOSMOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL ARTEFACTS