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Ludwig J. Rhesa *Dainos, oder Litthauische Volkslieder* (Königsberg, 1825): Text as an Event of Cultural Memory

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Abstract. This article examines the cultural significance of Ludwig J. Rhesa's *Dainos, oder Litthauische Volkslieder* (1825), the earliest systematic collection of Lithuanian folk songs. The study investigates the editorial history, translations, and performative revivals of Rhesa's collection as it relates to cultural memory. Using Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory and Richard Schechner's concept of performance, the article demonstrates how the text functioned both as a philological object and a dynamic cultural tool across different historical eras.

Utilising qualitative content analysis, comparative textual study, and empirical data from interviews, recordings, and concert documentation, the research demonstrates how Rhesa's songs became part of folklore ensemble repertoires in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Two interpretative approaches are identified: an authenticity-driven, historical-ethnographic model and a more experimental, genre-blending ethnomusicological practice. The findings reveal how Rhesa's textual legacy continues to be reinterpreted within diverse cultural frameworks, illustrating the dynamic interaction between written heritage and contemporary performance.

Keywords: Cultural memory, folklore ensembles, Ludwig Jedemin Rhesa, Rėza, Lithuanian folk songs, songbook edition, performance, revitalisation of folklore, textual reception, translation.

Introduction

2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the first collection of Lithuanian folk songs, Ludwig J. Rhesa's[1] *Dainos, oder Litthauische Volkslieder* (Rhesa 1825). Born in the Curonian Spit, part of the former Prussian Kingdom, Rhesa was a priest and theologian who later became professor and vice rector of the University of Königsberg (1820, 1824, 1830), as well as head of its Lithuanian language seminar (1810–1840). His culturally self-determined initiative to collect and publish Lithuanian folk songs, and to translate them into German, laid the foundation for their preservation, dissemination across Europe and North America, and continuing relevance in contemporary performance contexts.

In the second half of the 20th century, the songs from Rhesa's collection became the standard repertoire of Lithuania Minor[2] folk music for folklore ensembles in the Klaipėda region and throughout and beyond Lithuania. During the Soviet era, these songs were the only officially sanctioned means of accessing and practising this unique musical dialect, as permitted by the communist cultural authorities. This illustrates the symbolic significance of Rhesa's song collection within various historical, ideological, and aesthetic contexts.

This article explores the representational forms of the sung folklore compiled by Rhesa at the beginning of the 19th century. Rhesa's folklore legacy includes 64 melodies, more than 230 poetic texts, and one of the earliest analytical articles on Lithuanian folk songs, "Betrachtung über die litthauischen Volkslieder". Across five editions published over two centuries, Rhesa's work has exerted considerable influence on Lithuanian folkloristics, particularly in the field of song research and in the folklore revival movement of the Klaipėda region, part of the historical territory of Lithuania Minor. Translations into German, Czech, Polish, Russian, Italian, Yiddish, English, and Prussian produced by a range of authors reflect philological interest and a desire to incorporate Lithuanian songs into broader international cultural contexts. The article is structured around three interrelated parts: the editorial history of Rhesa's *Dainos*, its translations into European languages, and the collection's role in reviving and representing the musical folklore of the region.

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodology that combines cultural memory theory (Assmann 2006) and performance theory (Schechner 1985). It aims to examine the long-term reception, reinterpretation, and performative renewal processes of the Lithuanian folk song collection compiled by Rhesa in the early nineteenth century. As Jan Assmann states,

> The theory of cultural memory, which amounts to a kind of 'ontological turn in tradition,' could be summarised with the words 'Being that can be remembered is text.' … Text, on the other hand, is constituted based on prior communication. It always involves the past. Memory bridges the gap between then and now (Assmann 2006: IX).

Songs become canonical cultural texts, gaining normative authority in processes of meaning and identity creation. Richard Schechner's concept of performance and 'restored behavior' and 'twice-behaved behaviour' offers to both individuals and groups the chance to rebecome what they once were, or even, and most often, to rebecome what they never were but wish to have been or wish to become (Schechner 1985: 36–38). These approaches reveal how folklore texts have become an academic object over two centuries. They also acquire new meaning through ritualised performances and become living cultural texts, operating in the structures of memory and the practices of self-expression of contemporary communities.

The research employs qualitative content analysis, as well as interpretative and historical-comparative methods. The study draws on both primary textual sources – published editions with their paratextual elements and translation cases with contextual framing – and contemporary data related to the collection's use in the practices of folk ensembles. The empirical basis of the study includes: 1) an analysis of the original editions and translations of the Rhesa songbook; 2) an analysis of publications, video, and audio recordings of ten folklore ensembles from the Klaipėda region, two folklore ensembles from Vilnius, and the folklore group Rasa from Riga; 3) analysis of YouTube channels that publish folklore ensembles' videos; 4) observation and semi-structured interviews with respondents.[3] During the period of folklore revival, folklore ensembles from 1975 reconstructed the musical folklore of Lithuania Minor, preparing about 40 thematic programs and performances and releasing more than 20 audio and video recordings. The vast majority of these programs drew from the Rhesa folk song collection.

Rhesa's personality and his entire folklore legacy have attracted particularly close attention from various social circles, including the academic world, over the past two centuries. First of all, Rhesa himself evaluated the songs in his comments and in a special study of Lithuanian folk songs (Rhesa 1825). Soon after the songbook was published, it received favourable reviews in Europe (Citavičiūtė 2017). Each new edition or translation of Rhesa's songbook received attention, and there were also negative reviews. Professor Georg Heinrich Ferdinand Nesselmann of the University of Königsberg critically assessed Rhesa's work, claiming that the songs were published indiscriminately and edited unprofessionally (Nesselmann 1853; Citavičiūtė 2018: 10). But over time it has become clear that Rhesa's method of maintaining as much of the song's authenticity as possible is more acceptable.

The treatment of Rhesa's folkloric legacy in Lithuania as an object of folkloristics and its detailed study began at the beginning of the 20th century (Biržiška 1935; Eretas 1938; Brazaitis 1938). After World War II, the assessment of Rhesa's personality and work took place within the framework of the Soviet cultural paradigm, without avoiding an ideologised interpretation and conscious Lithuanianisation of the culture of Lithuania Minor (R I 1958; R II 1964; Jovaišas 1969; Čiurlionytė 1969; Lebedys 1972; Jonynas 1989; etc.). Modern research into Rhesa's legacy aims to reconstruct a comprehensive picture of his work, and to correct previously formed distortions of information and supplement it with new data obtained from foreign archives (Gineitis 1995; Citavičiūtė 2015, 2017, 2018, 2018a, 2019; RR 5 2018; Aleknavičienė 2019; Petrošienė 2007; Stundžienė 2018, etc.). Issues relating to the musical interpretation of Rhesa's songs have been explored by Audronė Kaukienė (2000), Rimantas Sliužinskas (2007), and in the broader context of the singing tradition and intangible cultural heritage of Lithuania Minor, by the author of this article (Petrošienė 2021, 2025). A different perspective on reviving Rhesa songs as part of the heritage of the Baltic Prussians and all Balts was offered by Latvian ethnomusicologist Valdis Muktupāvels. His work is notable because he not only shared his vision of reviving the extinct Prussian culture that inspired him and his like-minded group, but also outlined the principles behind their new musical folklore compositions (Muktupāvels 2023).

However, how the textual heritage of the early 19th century changes its existential forms and, from the second half of the 20th century, is transformed

into a new expression of living tradition and cultural identity, these are new questions of scientific research which are explored in this article.

Five Editions of Rhesa's Songbook and Folkloric Legacy[4]

Rhesa's collection of Prussian Lithuanian songs and its manuscript folklore heritage go beyond ethnographic or philological documentation. This publication marks the turning point when song heritage is transferred from a living tradition to a written cultural memory that acquires the functions of public symbolic capital. Writing is a form of knowledge storage, a precondition for its reproduction and a mechanism that allows memory to expand beyond the boundaries of specific generations and communities:

> The stock of memories stored up in the medium of writing quickly transcends the horizons of a knowledge of the past that can be put to immediate use, and transforms the bonding memory through a cultural memory that operates on a much larger scale (Assmann 2006: 29, 105).

Written knowledge becomes a cultural memory, allowing for the creation of collective narratives of identity and the consolidation of the symbolic order in which Lithuanian folk art became represented. Each edition and translation of the songs in the Rhesa collection speaks of the dynamics of cultural memory: it is edited, rewritten and reconstructed in historical, political, social and artistic contexts. According to Assmann, with cultural memory, millennium memory spaces open up, with writing playing a decisive role in this process (Assmann 2006: 28).

The five editions of the Rhesa folk songs material disseminated almost the same textual material and created memory regimes that reflected the value and cultural trajectories of each era. Applying Assmann's theoretical model, these editions are analysed as layers of written cultural memory in which the folklore text is not only transmitted, but also reinterpreted as a living, but writting-based, instrument of identity formation.

Rhesa's motivation to collect folk songs emerged from both personal and intellectual contexts. He grew up in a multilingual environment where Lithuanian was spoken and valued. The intense development of Lithuanian grammar in the Lithuanian part of East Prussia, dating back to the beginning of the 18th

century, and the Enlightenment's approach to national languages and cultures in Europe were strong external factors that encouraged Rhesa to undertake song collecting as a scholarly and identity-building project.

The pioneer in standardising the Lithuanian language, priest Michael Mörlin, acknowledged the lexical richness of folk songs but recommended that practitioners avoid performing them and instead concentrate on religious singing (Drotvinas 2008: 123). Priest Philip Ruhig supported Mörlin's views on the Lithuanian language and, eager to showcase its beauty and richness, published Lithuanian folk songs with their German translations in his linguistic works. Nonetheless, he advised that one should "devote one's heart and time to beautiful religious hymns" (Ruigys 1986: 157).

This ambivalent attitude towards folklore, fluctuating between linguistic appreciation and moral restraint, developed over time. Around the turn of the 19th century, the first Lithuanian song texts emerged, published in German poetry almanacks along with collections of folk songs from various European nations (SVL1813: 129–142). These collections reflect a new approach to folklore, with Johan G. Herder as the principal architect in Europe. Folk songs began to be treated as a vehicle of collective poetic imagination and cultural memory.

It was within this ideological background that the theoretical principles of collecting and researching Rhesa's sung folklore, as well as the songbook itself, developed. Rhesa's pedagogical and scientific Lithuanian pursuits, along with his high regard for Lithuanian folk poetic creation, motivated and engaged the enlightened people of East Prussian parishes – priests, teachers, landowners, and servants – in the work of collecting folklore. Subsequently, other writers and researchers from Königsberg, and from other European and Lithuanian universities, followed his example.

Rhesa stated that he had been working on his publication *Dainos* for 15 years. Nine individuals – priests and civil servants from Lithuania Minor – submitted song texts and melodies (Lebedys 1972: 251; Citavičiūtė 2019: 184–185). The correspondence between Rhesa and Johan W. Ghete shows that the manuscript of the songbook, which was not ready for publication, was already prepared in 1815, although it 'matured' for another ten years: edited in both Lithuanian and German, the structure was improved, etc. (Citavičiūtė 2018b: 74). From the submitted songs, Rhesa compiled and published the first collection of Lithuanian folk songs, in 1825, which included 85 texts, seven melodies and the first study of Lithuanian folk poetry.

After the publication of the songbook, folklore collecting in Lithuania Minor noticeably revived. Parish priests and other educated people continued to send Rhesa their recorded folklore, and his archive was filled with new material. Rhesa's personal archive contained many unpublished texts and melodies. He did not lose interest in folk songs even in his old age, perhaps intending to publish them (Citavičiūtė 2019: 183–205).

Collections of Lithuanian songs compiled by later authors show that some of the folklore recordings belonging to the Rhesa archive were also available to other folklore collectors. Almost everything that is now commonly considered to be Rhesa's legacy was published in periodicals or songbooks in the 19th century. Nesselmann, who critically assessed Rhesa's publication, used his archive and was the first to publish 90 drastically re-edited, previously unpublished song texts from Rhesa's legacy, in Berlin in 1853 (Aleknavičienė 2019: 118–119). However, he did not publish the previously unpublished melodies contained in it, reprinting only four melodies from Rhesa's publication. Nesselmann's large-scale collection of Lithuanian songs was in great demand for a while, although due to the free editing method of the texts to "restore the original, uncorrupted form of the song", it eventually lost its scholarly value (Balys 1948: 224; Petrošienė 2007: 15–16; Citavičiūtė 2018: 10).

The publication of the musical part of Rhesa's folklore heritage is related to the interests of Peter von Bohlen, a professor at the University of Königsberg and a Sanskritologist. The manuscript of Lithuanian songs compiled by him ended up in the archive of the Lithuanian Literary Society in Tilsit after his death. When compiling *Dainu Balsai* (BDB 1886, 1889) Christian Bartsch used this archive and published 82 songs with melodies that are attributed to Bohlen's literary heritage. However, 47 of them are considered to be copies of Rhesa's manuscripts (R II 1964: 6–7; Petrošienė 2001: 139). The entire material of Rhesa's heritage was later spread through various collections and translations of Lithuanian songs with the folklore collected by Rhesa published four more times in separate publications between the 19th and 21st centuries.

Rhesa's songbook was immediately and widely distributed in Europe in the 19th century, attracting international interest from writers and linguists. Reviews appeared in leading journals across Königsberg, Weimar, Stuttgart, Berlin, Vienna, Leipzig, Lviv, and Göttingen (Citavičiūtė 2017: 147–159). These responses positioned the collection not just as a local ethnographic effort, but as part of a European scholarly discourse.

The second edition of Rhesa's *Dainos*, which was initially published in a small limited edition and was very popular, was prepared and published in Berlin in 1843 by Rhesa's student, professor of linguistics Friedrich Kurschat (Kurschat 1843). The title page states that the songs have been "reviewed, revised, and improved". This indicates that the language of the lyrics and translations has been carefully modernised, considering the specifics of the songs. The book's structure has been reorganised: the table of contents and Rhesa's article about the songs have been moved to the beginning, and the songs have been numbered. This edition was studied and learned by students of the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Königsberg, which was led by Kurschat (Citavičiūtė 2018a: 48). The second edition was frequently used by translators of Lithuanian songs across Europe.

In the first half of the 20th century, Rhesa's works and influence on Lithuanian folklore studies in Lithuania were highly esteemed. Contemporaries took pride in the fact that the centenary of his death in Lithuania would be appropriately commemorated – with comprehensive research into his biography and works (Brazaitis 1982: 542). One notable academic publication is the third edition of Rhesa's folkloric legacy, which was prepared and published in Kaunas between 1935 and 1937 by professor and literary historian Mykolas Biržiška (Biržiška 1935, 1937). It is a two-volume, particularly thorough, scientifically grounded, critical edition of Rhesa's sung folklore collection in Lithuania. Biržiška visited the Königsberg State Archives and compared the manuscript material with both Rhesa's published and unpublished songs and his numerous collaborators and followers. This publication establishes a foundation for comparative study of the variants and origins of the sung folklore of Lithuania Minor and Lithuania Major.

Biržiška, like Kurschat, edited and modernised the orthography of the songs in the first edition and published the songs from the manuscripts, leaving the original orthography intact. For the first time, he refused to publish translations into German. This is now regarded as a significant shortcoming, as it deprives us of the chance to explore this creative aspect of Rhesa (Citavičiūtė 2018a: 10). Biržiška did not attempt to publish all the melodies in the manuscript, reprinting only seven from Rhesa's first edition. For the first time, Rhesa's songbook was published in Latin script, whereas both editions had previously been printed in Gothic script. It was believed that the greatest value of the publications prepared by Biržiška lay in the fact that, even without access to the original Rhesa

manuscripts, we can, if necessary, "be content with second-hand sources – the data from this [Biržiška] edition" (Brazaitis 1982: 541–542). However, there were limitations to exploiting this opportunity in Soviet-era Lithuania: Biržiška's books, like those of many other writers who fled to the West after World War II, acquired an artificially created status as 'bibliographic rarity'.

After World War II, the fourth two-volume edition of the Rhesa folklore heritage, published in 1958 and 1964, had a different cultural mission (R I 1958; R II 1964). It was designed for both academic purposes and the general public, including schools. This edition became one of the most essential sources of musical folklore from Lithuania Minor during the emerging post-war folklore movement in Soviet Lithuania. Among many benefits of the publication – such as a facsimile of the first edition and detailed scientific commentaries – one of the most significant is that 64 song melodies from the Rhesa archive have been published. These melodies were edited by music professionals, allowing the songs to be sung. In the transposed text, the spelling and dialectal phonetics are replaced with the spelling and phonetics of the modern literary language (R I 1958: VIII–IX). The songs in Rhesa's collection are classified into genres on a functional-thematic basis according to the Lithuanian folk song classification system that was already officially established at that time (Stundžienė 2018: 64).

Published without German translations, the fourth edition reflected the cultural-political stance of the time in order to distance Rhesa from the German context and establish him as a collector and preserver of Lithuanian origin and Lithuanian folklore. The songbook became part of institutionalised memory, blending into the officially supported Soviet narrative of Lithuanian national culture, but at the same time masking Rhesa's German aesthetic and intellectual aspirations.

The changed historical and political conditions after the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990 – primarily the restoration of academic autonomy, access to foreign archives and digitised sources – created the conditions for a new look at Rhesa's personality and work. The complete collection of Rhesa's Collected Writings, edited by Liucija Citavičiūtė, began to be published in 2011. The fifth volume, which is also the fifth edition of Rhesa *Dainos,* was published in 2018 and dedicated to the centenary of the restoration of the Lithuanian state (RR 5 2018).

The fifth edition reprints Rhesa's songbook, his songological research, and articles analysing this material, with various commentaries and facsimiles. It

is regrettable that the song material in the manuscripts, which was published in the third and fourth editions, has not been included in the latest edition. This is a significant shortcoming as it omits a part of Rhesa's legacy that is very important for ethnomusicology and awaits a new approach to Rhesa's musical and manuscript material.

An analysis of the Rhesa songbook and its manuscript editions reveal how historical, linguistic, and ideological shifts shape the significance of folklore texts within culture. Each edition alters the original material in some way, reflecting a specific view of sung folklore as a document, symbol, or representation. Editorial choices, such as including or omitting translations and melodies, reflect different cultural memory regimes, showing how Rhesa's legacy is interpreted, adapted, or sometimes rewritten. Both the Rhesa *Dainos* itself and its publication history demonstrate a changing relationship with folklore, cultural heritage, and personality, spanning different eras.

Rhesa's *Dainos* Translations: Between Languages and Cultures

Rhesa's *Dainos*, published simultaneously in Lithuanian and German, marked the start of Lithuanian folk poetry spreading across Europe. The bilingual format gave the songs legitimacy among educated audiences and turned them into a form of cultural representation. The Lithuanian version signified national authenticity, while the German language acted as a medium for international communication and interpretation.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, between a few and several dozen translations of Rhesa's *Dainos* were published in various types of publication at different levels across Königsberg, Berlin, Heidelberg, Vilnius, Prague, Warsaw, Poznań, Lviv, Moscow, Rome, Amherst, and Chicago. This section seeks to discuss and evaluate the translations that are most well known in scientific and artistic circles.

The bilingual edition of the publication, along with reviews in European academic circles and translations into various European languages, enhanced the authority of Rhesa's work. This recognition allows it to be regarded as a canonical text of Lithuanian culture. As Assmann states, "Canonization is a special form of writing. Texts are not merely written down: their authority is

increased" (Assmann 2006: 64). The translations served as a means to spread Rhesa's ideas globally and affected the national traditions and cultural, particularly philological, debates of other nations.

The books of Professor Rhesa from the University of Königsberg were relatively well known among scholars from other countries. His bilingual edition of Kristijonas Donelaitis's poem *Metai* (Four Seasons) and the songbook of Lithuanian folk songs published in 1825 quickly reached the Czech Republic (Šeferis 2009: 41). Philologists were also the first to become interested in folklore in the Czech Republic. They, like Rhesa, were within the sphere of influence of historical-comparative linguistics, which had emerged in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century (Piročkinas 1981: 43).

Čelakovský was a Czech writer and folklorist of the first half of the 19th century. He was interested in Lithuanian songs influenced by the ideas of Herder and Lessing, which were popular across Europe, as well as Polish literature (Piročkinas 1981: 44). However, his primary focus was on the relationship and interaction between Slavic and Baltic languages. In the second volume of his collection *Slowanské národnj pjsně* (Slavic Folk Songs), he published three Lithuanian songs from Ruhig's 1745 treatise on the Lithuanian language, including both the original and Czech versions (Čelakovský 1825: 200–206; Lemeškin 2008: 69).

Čelakovský's correspondence indicates that he already possessed Rheza's songbook at the start of 1826 and had begun translating it as well as publishing individual Lithuanian songs in the Czech press. In 1827, Čelakovský's translation of Rheza's songbook was published, with 73 original Lithuanian songs and their Czech translations (Čelakovský 1827). Čelakovský rearranged the order of the songs according to his classification logic, and for unclear reasons he did not translate or include twelve songs in the Czech edition. Čelakovský's publication gained popularity and was reprinted twice (Piročkinas 1981: 46–57).

We mentioned earlier that Čelakovsky became partially acquainted with Lithuanian folklore through Polish literature, although no publication in Poland included a complete translation of the Rhesa songbook. However, by 1829, the first response to Čelakovsky's translations appeared in the Lviv press. The Polish priest and writer Franciszek Siarczyński published a review of Čelakovsky's translation (Siarczyński 1929: 51–67) that included eight songs from the Rhesa collection translated into Polish by Adam Rościszewski, a member of the Krakow Scientific Society (Jovaišas 1969: 311; Piročkinas 1981: 48).

The Polish public first encountered Rhesa's folklore activities and Lithuanian songs around 1830 through the work of Polish poet and translator Kazimierz Brodziński (Brodziński 1872). He translated Rhesa's article "Betrachtung über die litthauischen Volkslieder" and 16 texts from the *Dainos* into Polish (Jovaišas 1969: 311). At the same time, several translations of Rhesa's songs by Antoni E. Odyniec and Stanisław Jachowicz (VLE 3) appeared in the Polish cultural press. Later, individual Rhesa's songs were also included in various song collections, such as *Pieśni ludu nadniemeńskiego z okolic Aleksoty* (Brzozowski 1844), among others.

Rhesa's songs have attracted significant attention from Polish poets and writers, who have incorporated historical events into their works. Poet Franciszek Zatorski published Rhesa's songs alongside his historical poem in verse *Witold nad Worksłą*, which depicts one of the bloodiest battles of Medieval Europe between the Tatar hordes and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Zatorski 1844). Although Lithuanian songs typically depict military-historical events through a female lyrical perspective, the author deemed it appropriate to publish 66 Rhesa songs translated into Polish, including not only the historical context of the Battle of Worksła but also a poetic commentary on the songs (Zatorski 1844). Subsequently, Zatorski admitted that Rhesa's songbook "aroused a general interest in Lithuanian songs" (Zatorski 1846: 683).

Zatorski's thoughts were supported by one of the most productive Polish writers, poets, and historians, Józef I. Kraszewski. In 1844, while discussing Lithuanian songs, he paraphrased Rhesa's ideas about Lithuanian folk poetry and translated more than 50 of Rhesa's songs into Polish (Kraszewski 1844).

In the context of the multi-ethnic narrative of Tsarist Russia, the first translations of Lithuanian songs into Russian appeared in Vilnius and Moscow in 1854. They typically included extensive commentaries, particularly relating to history, folklore, and mythology. The writer, historian, professor at Vilnius University, and censor of the Vilnius Censorship Committee, Pavel Kukolnik, translated 56 songs from Rhesa's collection into Russian. These were published in the collection *Cherty iz istorii i zhizni litovskogo naroda* (Features from the History and Life of the Lithuanian People) (Kukolnik 1854), edited by Adam Kirkor. Kukolnik also prepared a substantial introductory article with comments on the nature of Lithuanian songs and their context. He notes that the first song collections were published by Ruhig and Rhesa using Kraszewski's Polish translations, discussed above, for the translation.

At the same time, poet, publicist, and translator Nikolai Berg published his collection *Pesni raznykh narodov* (Songs of Nations) (Berg 1854), in Moscow, which included 26 folk songs from various European nations, presented in both their original languages and Russian. Among these, 12 songs were from the 1843 Rhesa collection. In 1921, these songs were issued as *Litovskiye pesni* (Lithuanian Songs) in Vilnius (Berg 1921).

In the first half of the 20th century, there was significant interest in the legacy of Indo-European languages and in the knowledge of Slavic and Eastern European languages and cultures in Italy (Nuncio 2014: 110–122). A prominent figure in promoting Lithuanian literature in Italy at that time was Giuseppe Morici, who was familiar with Donelaitis' work. He was the first to translate Lithuanian songs, including those from the Rhesa collection, into Italian and to compile a collection, titled *Canti popolari lituani* (Lithuanian Folk Songs) (Morici 1925, 1930). While Morici's publication is not an academic study, both editions (1925 and 1930) feature songs published only in Italian, without the original texts. Nonetheless, it is a comprehensive and well-structured essay (Morici 1930: 7–47), providing an in-depth overview of Lithuanian folk poetry and analysing the thematic, linguistic, and rhythmic aspects of the songs, which is considered accurate and reliable (Nuncio 2014: 112–120).

In the context of research on Rhesa's work, little is known about the translations of his published and collected Lithuanian songs into Yiddish and English. Uriah Katzenelenbogen, a Jewish writer, journalist and translator born in Vilnius, who emigrated to North America in 1927, translated 590 Baltic songs into Yiddish and published the songbook *Daynes: Litvishe and Letiše Folkslider* (Songs: Lithuanian and Latvian Folksongs) (Katzenelenbogen 1930; JLV). The songbook contains translations of 140 Lithuanian song lyrics, including Rhesa's legacy songs, and 450 Latvian songs. It features a detailed introduction to the cultures and songs of each nation. Five handwritten Lithuanian and Latvian song melodies have also been included.

In his introduction to Lithuanian songs, Katzenelenbogen addresses a broad range of issues. He discusses Rhesa's Lithuanian songbooks, the fundamental songbooks of Antanas and Jonas Juška, and others already published at that time, including the content and genres of the songs as well as the interaction between melody and language. He explains the specific challenges of translating into Yiddish, given the differences between Lithuanian and Yiddish language systems. He also pays significant attention to actual historic events in Lithu-

ania and Europe, without avoiding discussing the increasingly apparent threat of anti-Semitism. Additionally, he highlights the relations between Jews and Lithuanians and advocates improved mutual communication and understanding (Katzenelenbogen 1930: 5–20). In 1935, Katzenelenbogen's translation of Lithuanian and Latvian songs into English was published in Chicago, featuring 19 Rhesa songs (Katzenelenbogen 1935).

Katzenelenbogen's translations were rooted in cultural self-reflection and dialogue. They serve as evidence of the Jewish intelligentsia's effort to establish its position within the Lithuanian cultural landscape and to showcase Baltic culture in a global context.

In the second half of the 20th century, a great interest in the extinct Prussian language arose in Lithuania and beyond its borders in Germany, Poland, and Russia. The research of Baltists Vytautas Mažiulis, Audronė Jakulienė Kaukienė, Letas Palmaitis and Vladimir Toporov inspired the restoration and creative development of Prussian language and culture. In 1984–1985, and later, Letas Palmaitis, Glabis Niktorius and Vytautas Rinkevičius translated several songs from the Rhesa collection into Prussian (MLE 1 n.d.; Muktupāvels 2023: 19–24). The idea, which was developed and is still supported by upholders of the old Baltic religion, is that the code of the extinct Baltic-Prussian nation might have survived in the songs of Prussian Lithuanians.

Rhesa songs in Europe and North America have mainly been the focus of linguistic, cultural, and partly historical imagination. Translators from various linguistic backgrounds, guided by their distinct approaches to folk art, have reinterpreted Rhesa songs so that they become not only a direct reception but also a cultural construction that aligns with their cultural expectations, value orientations, aesthetic norms, and historical experiences. Translations of Rhesa songs have served as an important resource for demonstrating national identity, the search for cultural kinship, and even political representation.

In this context, the musical expression of Rhesa's songs hardly functioned and for many reasons was discovered much later. Firstly, this was caused by Rhesa's inadequate preparation for working with musical material, as well as the general practical difficulties in transcribing the melodies of folk songs. The Tetzners aptly discussed the challenges of rhyming translations, their arrangement with the melody, and the fact that Germans, according to Tetzner, read songs rather than singing them (Tetzner 1897: 52).

Revitalised Tradition: Rhesa's Folkloric Collection between Text and Stage

Rhesa's collection of songs, which became a source of textual memory, was transferred to a new form of existence in the second half of the 20th century – the stage. The staged performance of folklore reflects what Schechner defines as restored behaviour. It is a conscious, repetitive action, removed from its authentic historical context, but actualised and gaining a new meaning in the present. Schechner notes that restored behaviour is symbolic and reflexive: "This special way of handling experience and jumping the gaps between past and present, individual and group, inner and outer" (Schechner 1985: 36, 115).

The theoretical approach of performativity allows us to understand the 'revival' of Rhesa's songs through singing not as a return to their original, ethnographic form, but as a creative, selective and sometimes ideologically motivated process in which the entirety of the song is embodied in new artistic, educational or representational means.

In the second half of the 20th century, Rhesa songs gained renewed significance within Lithuania. Historical and geopolitical shifts symbolically and physically relocated Rhesa's songs to the Klaipėda region, where local performers began to sing them. Who were these performers? Most of them were newcomers to the Klaipėda region who had never sung or even heard these songs before.[5] The tradition of demonstration and imitation had already been broken, and when the connection with living examples is lost, people turn to texts in search of anchors. In such cases, as Assmann states, not only do new texts emerge, but existing texts are also granted greater normative importance (Assmann 2006: 69).

From the 1970s onwards, folk ensembles in Klaipėda and the surrounding areas started learning and singing songs from the fourth edition of Rhesa's *Dainos* (R I 1958; R II 1964). In establishing cultural coherence in written culture, learning songs from sheet music and performing them are considered "functionally equivalent procedures for creating cultural coherence" (Assmann 2006: 39). This also marks the moment when leaders of folklore ensembles gain the status of new agents of cultural memory (Assmann 2006: 43).

An analysis of how eleven folklore ensembles have expressed themselves – through programmes, audio recordings, and concert activities – from 1971

to 2024 reveals that many of them possess their understanding of how to perform Rhesa's songs. Alternatively, they are all endeavouring to find an individual approach to this relatively little-known musical dialect. These approaches can generally be categorised as:

– Historical-ethnographic, aiming to revive cultural memory, including the musical folklore of Lithuania Minor;

– Ethnomusicological, focusing on stage adaptation, musical innovation, and audience engagement.

Data on the songs of Lithuania Minor and especially their performance contexts is incomplete, but some information exists in historical and ethnographic sources from various periods. When reproducing the songs of the Rhesa collection, available historical data is used to develop a model of how these songs might have sounded, and then they are performed. This kind of aesthetic performance is the main way to physically recreate an extinct behaviour (Schechner 1985: 48). Folklore ensembles, as mentioned, chose different paths to recreate the sound and contexts of Rhesa songs. In the following, we will discuss one aspect of song performance related to a key feature of Prussian Lithuanian songs, monophony.

Folklore ensembles that followed the historical-ethnographic direction of song revival paid much attention to the analysis of sources. They are dominated by information about the monophonic nature of Lithuania Minor songs, both in terms of melody and performance. Thus, ensembles from this group typically perform songs solo or in unison. Prussian Lithuanian songs generally depict life centred around a person or family surrounded by nature, containing few historical facts. Rhesa's songs were incorporated into folklore performances, utilising historical circumstances, ethnographic stories, fiction, customs, and other means to better connect the present with the past from which the songs originate.

The first institutionalised folklore ensemble in Klaipėda, Vorusnė, which started operating in 1971, followed a historical-ethnographic direction. Throughout its existence, Vorusnė produced programmes and performances related to Lithuania Minor, for example, "Jūrų-marių dainos" (Songs of the Sea and Lagoon) (1979), "Lietuvininkų vestuvės" (*Lietuvininkai*[6] Wedding) (1979), "Mažvydas ir lietuvininkų dainos" (Martynas Mažvydas and the Songs of the *Lietuvininkai*) (1979), "Lietuvininkai" (1985), "Žodis ir giesmė" (Word and

Hymn), "Lietuvininkump ir žemaičiump" (Among the *Lietuvinkai* and the Samogitians), etc.

Vorusnė performed Rhesa's collection and other songs of Lithuania Minor in unison, whether the song had a monophonic or homophonic structure. In the early stages of ensemble activity, they did not use musical instruments to accompany the songs, as there is little information in the sources regarding this type of performance. This is corroborated by listening to the ensemble's audio recordings (FKK 2022 1; FKK 2022 2).

For example, the song "Strazde strazdeli" (Thrush, Little Thrush) from Rhesa's collection is performed by Vorusnė in unison (FKK 2022 3). However, its melody could be sung in a traditional polyphonic manner, this song being close to the polyphonic songs of neighbouring Samogitia. Vorusnė's choice reflects the desire to maintain the authenticity of the musical dialect of Lithuania Minor, but not to exploit the opportunity to expand the sound of the song, to achieve a better artistic effect.

However, not all ensembles resisted the influence of polyphony. Post-war migration brought many Samogitians to the Klaipėda region, influencing local interpretations of folklore and performance culture. For example, in a 1995 video, we can see that the same song, "Strazde strazdeli", is sung in a polyphonic manner by the Nida school folklore ensemble (BF 1995). The Vilnius folklore ensemble Visi, led by music professionals, also performed this song in a distinctly Samogitian style (EV 1995).

The Vorusnėlė children's folklore ensemble from Klaipėda performs Rhesa's minor-mode melodies in a polyphonic style, giving them a distinctly Eastern Lithuanian (with a hint of Slavic) sound, as in the song "Miegužio noriu" (I Want to Sleep) from Rhesa's collection (KEC 1998). Vorusnėlė is interesting because, based on its activities and ideological goals of reviving regional culture and informal representation, as well as educating children and youth, it can be regarded as an ensemble of a historical-ethnographic nature. However, the musical expression of the ensemble tended to align more with the second group of ensembles supporting the ethnomusicological approach to folklore revival.

The second – ethnomusicological – approach focuses on the musical expression of revived folklore. Ensembles seek ways to perform songs, often accompanied by musical instruments, creating a vocal and instrumental polyphonic texture. These performances are most commonly presented as standalone concert pieces. The historical-ethnographic context may be entirely unimport-

ant or, conversely, incredibly inspiring, leading to the creation of ethnographic stories combined with artistic invention.

One of the most prominent early examples of this approach is the interpretation of the Prussian theme "Prūšos manas kājas autas" (I Put on My Shoes in Prussian Land) by the Latvian ethnomusicologist and composer Valdis Muktupāvels and his group of like-minded musicians, Rasa (Muktupāvels 2023: 53).

The future composer and folklore performer's early contact with the spirit and reality of East Prussia in the Soviet-occupied and militarised Kaliningrad region, military service in Gusev (formerly Gumbinė), and subsequent interest in the works of Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian historians and linguists, particularly Baltists specialising in Prussian studies and Baltic-Slavic ethnolinguistic contacts, resulted in a notably distinctive stylistic interpretation of the songs from the Rhesa collection. This interpretation was almost not practised by other Lithuanian folklorists of that period.

The acquaintance that occurred in 1985 marked the beginning of collaboration between the Baltic and Slavic philologist and Prussian language reconstructor Letas Palmaitis and Muktupāvel, which resulted in a notable achievement. In 1988, the Rasa ensemble produced a "Prussian" programme that includes two songs with melodies from Rhesa's collection, arranged and translated into Prussian: "Ei skijā, skijā" (Ei, kilo, kilo / Hey, it rose (R II 1964, No 73) and "Swettei iz Dānskan" (Pirš man iš Danskos / Proposal from Gdansk (R II 1964, No 6) (Rasa 2023). The first song is performed solo, accompanied by the ancient Latvian string instrument the *gīga* and a whistle. The second dance-like melody is sung in unison by the group at a fast tempo, accompanied by percussion and a *gīga*. Performers create an impression of connection with early music.

The initial aim of the "Prūšos manas kājas autas" program, as Muktupāvels defines it, was to create a multi-layered depiction of the Prussians, their language, traditions, and religion based on historical, folkloric, and ethnographic sources. It sought to portray their contact with Christian Europe, their continuity in other nations, and their revival today, all illustrated through Latvian and Prussian (or rather Prussian Lithuanians) music material. Ilze Šarkovska, a member of the Rasa group, recalls that this program resembled a fascinating lecture, during which Muktupāvels discussed the Prussians and their history, and commented on each song (Muktupāvels 2023: 23–30). From this perspective, Rasa's work and contextualised interpretation of Rhesa's songs appear to lean

more in the historical-ethnographic direction, which emphasises the symbolic significance of musical folklore. However, audio recordings and group members' reflections on the musical part of the program point in an ethnomusicological direction, in which musical expression is in the foreground. All members of the ensemble are professional and creative musicians who already had musical skills at that time and were able to improvise and use various traditional and classical musical instruments. Their democratic cooperation enabled the interaction of musical styles and genres; so-called issues of folkloric traditionalism and authenticity were secondary. The ensemble members themselves admit that it is impossible to talk about some absolute authenticity related to the Prussians as it is post-folklore. Gita Lancere described it more drastically: Rasa treated the material "rather shamelessly", but people liked it (Muktupāvels 2023: 67–68).

The ritual folklore group Kūlgrinda, which started its activities between 1988 and 1990 and is part of the Baltic religious community Romuva, was the first to perform Lithuanian songs translated into Prussian, including those from the Rhesa collection. The ensemble declares that it revives and represents "the oldest layer of Baltic folklore known to us, reaching back to the early Middle Ages and even to the times of ancient Europe" (Romuva n.d.). The musical activities of the group are closely associated with the so-called indigenous religion and ritual practices rooted in folklore. The material of musical folklore is used and interpreted very freely and serves the dissemination of neopagan ideas and ideology.

In 2005, the group released the album *Prūsų giesmės* (Prussian Chants), which contains 17 songs from various regions of Lithuania translated into Prussian, accompanied by *kanklės*, bagpipes, drums, and wooden horns (TV n.d.). Among them are three lyric texts from the Rhesa collection and one melody. "Mīniks Saulīkan weddi" (Mėnuo saulužę vedė / The Moon Married the Sun (R I 1958, No 27)) is a song that Rhesa himself discussed in his research as having mythological motifs. Kūlgrinda adapted the melody of another Rhesa song "Pareinu rytą anksti" (I Come Early in the Morning (R II 1964, No 59)) for it, which is sung solo, accompanied by bagpipes. For other Rhesa lyrics (R I 1958, No 78, 83), which lack their original melodies, Kūlgrinda adapted tunes from songbooks by Bartsch (BDB 1889, No 336) and Antanas Juška and Jonas Juška (JSD I 1955, No 582).

Summarising Kūlgrinda's work, one must agree with Austė Nakienė's view that discussing the continuation of the old Prussian tradition is not worthwhile:

the idea that some of its remnants have persisted in Lithuanian culture is very uncertain. The reconstruction is valuable not as a link to the old culture but as a symbol of a modern, entirely new Prussian community, an expression of the creative imagination of its members (Nakienė 2008: 169).

Returning to ethnomusicological-direction interpretations of Rhesa's songs in Lithuanian, we must first discuss the folklore ensemble Visi, led by Evaldas Vyčinas. He began accompanying Rhesa's songs with the nine-string *kanklės* and violin as early as 1988 (KEC 2021). We hear this in the previously discussed song "Strazde strazdeli", as well as on the CD *Liudviko Rėzos dainos* (Songs by Ludwig Rhesa), which contains 18 songs from Rhesa's collection. The nine-string *kanklės* and violin accompany them (LRD 2000).

The work of ethnomusicologists Daiva Vyčinienė and Evaldas Vyčinas at the outset of Lithuania's re-independence had a highly influential and inspiring effect on other folklore groups. After 1990, an increasing number of ensembles performing songs from Lithuania Minor began to incorporate instrumental accompaniment, especially for dance-style melodies.

For example, folk ensembles like Alka integrated regional instruments into their song arrangements, diversifying their performance styles and reaching broader audiences. In a soundtrack recorded in 1997, the Rhesa collection song "Parbėg laivelis" (A Small Boat Sails to the Shore) is performed in unison, with an adapted accompaniment on a reconstructed instrument from this region, now widely known as the Lithuania Minor *kanklės* harp (KEC 1997).

However, another dance-style festive song, "Kas tas miežio grūdas" (What is that Barley Grain), is performed at a quick tempo, accompanied by violins, cymbals, drums, pipe, and double bass. This practice was first noted in audio recordings of folklore ensembles performing songs from Lithuania Minor (KEC 1997 1).

It is important to emphasise that this musical solution does not conflict with tradition. It is documented in the memoirs of folk music performers from the turn of the 20th century. It appears in the iconography of the 17th century, depicting musical instrument bands in Lithuania Minor. This kind of interpretation of Rhesa's songs persists today, including both live concert performances and audio recordings by folklore ensembles as well as the numerous thematic folklore performances produced in recent decades. For example, "Jau saulelė" (The Sun is Already Rising) (Alka, Vorusnėlė, 2012); "Žemė prašo nepamiršti jos vardų" (The Native Land Asks Us Not to Forget Its Names) (Verdainė, 2013); "Kur

medaus upės tek" (Where Rivers of Honey Flow), "Vėjų marės, medaus upės" (Windy Lagoon, Rivers of Honey), "Lietuvininkai" (Kuršių ainiai, 2013, 2015, 2017); "Už stalelio sėdau" (I Sat Down at a Table), "Ernstas Vilhelmas Berbomas" (Ernst Wilhelm Beerbohm), "Eisim žvejoti, duos Dievs laimėti" (Let's Go Fishing, God Willing, We Will Win) (Alka, 2015, 2018, 2018); "Rylužė Jevikei" (Kuršiukai, 2018), "Dirbdysiu laivą" [I will Build a Ship] (Verdainė, 2018), "Esu kilęs iš lietuvių giminės (Liudvikas Rėza)" [I Come from Lithuanian Ancestry (Ludwig Rhesa)] (Aušrinė, 2018), "Moterystė pagal Ievą Simonaitytę" [Womanhood According to Ieva Simonaitytė] (Ramytė, 2022), "Senosios žvejų dainos ir šių dienų žvejų pasakojimai" [Old Fishermen's Songs and Modern Fishermen's Stories] (Giedružė, 2022), etc. This list suggest that the ensembles of the Klaipėda region continued along the path established by Vorusnė to create performances that integrated folklore, literary, and historical themes. Research into regional musical traditions provided a basis for incorporating instrumental music and staged storytelling in public performances.

New creative practices emerged alongside a shift in perspective from authenticity to artistic agency. After 2000, collaborations with jazz and pop musicians became more common, allowing folk material to interact with new genres. Such projects reflect the flexibility and resilience of living heritage.

The earliest jazz and folklore collaborations captured on video is the Sodalė project (2006). Folklore ensemble Alka, together with pop artist Gytis Paškevičius, performs a composition by Romuladas Malinauskas that features the song "Per kalnelį per aukštąį" (Over the High Hill) from the Rhesa collection (KEC 2006). One of the most successful artistic outcomes of the interaction between jazz and folklore is compositions by folklore group Audenis and jazz pianist Saulius Šiaučiulis. Among these is the song "Eisva mudu abudu" (We Will Come Together) from the Rhesa collection, a minor-key melody performed in polyphony, with added piano accompaniment and improvisation (KEC 2009).

The proficient folklore interpreters Kuršių ainiai and electronic music creator multi-instrumentalist Donatas Bielkauskas joined forces to create the soundtrack *Rasi rasoj rasi* (Perhaps You Will Find It in the Dew). This extended recording features, alongside other songs from Lithuania Minor, a modern interpretation of material from Rhesa's collection in the form of the songs "Mergyte miela" (Sweet Girl), "Kad aš turėjau" (That I Had), and "Jau aušt aušružė" (It is Already Dawn) (KAD 2017).

Analysing the activity of folklore ensembles and their repertoires, it is evident that since the last decade of the 20th century, the number of songs from Lithuania Minor from other written sources has increased. Between 1995 and 2017, almost all the sung folklore of Lithuania Minor stored in Lithuanian archives was published. Ensembles from the Klaipėda region paid particular attention to songs recorded locally. A significant event was the publication of a new edition of Bartsch's *Dainu Balsai* (Voices of Songs) in 2000. In this edition, the lyrics of the songs, translated by Bartsch into German, were restored to Lithuanian based on the variants of Lithuanian songs. Nevertheless, the songs from Rhesa's collection continued to be relevant.

The use and reinterpretation of Rhesa-legacy songs by contemporary folklore ensembles reflects more than artistic variation. It becomes a communal act where performers assert control over inherited cultural material and re-enact it through public performance. This autonomy is evident in the way the groups choose arrangements, styles, and performance contexts, sometimes affirming, sometimes challenging institutional narratives of authenticity and representation.

The interpretation of Rhesa's material exists as an open cultural possibility, constantly embodied and reinterpreted in new contexts. It attempts to imitate authentic tradition, but with its help, it articulates the needs, aesthetics, and even political intentions of the present. The 'transfer' of songs to the stage presupposes their sonic fulfilment and symbolic action, which revives collective memory, directed towards the future.

Conclusions

Rhesa's *Dainos* (1825) marks the first systematic collection of Prussian Lithuanian and all Lithuanian sung folklore, serving as a crucial cultural memory resource and foundational for dynamic stage performances. This publication enabled songs to endure, be disseminated widely, and be reinterpreted within new cultural frameworks for over two centuries.

The collection's reception is international and enduring, as confirmed by numerous translations and reviews that demonstrate academic and artistic interest in Lithuania as a cultural space.

The interpretation of Rhea's songs by folklore ensembles in the 20th and 21st centuries reveals two distinct approaches. The first is a historical-ethnographic focus, centred on reconstructive and documentary performance practices, aiming to revive and preserve the perceived authenticity of the original material. The second is an ethnomusicological approach, marked by experimentation, a variety of musical expressions, and creative fusion with other genres, reflecting broader aesthetic and cultural shifts in contemporary folk performance.

Initially focused on authenticity, folklore ensembles have gradually shifted towards more inventive and expressive formats, especially after 2000, increasingly incorporating theatrical elements, inter-genre dialogue, and culturally reflective modes of expression.

Rhesa's legacy testifies to the continuity and ability of tradition to renew itself, and to how songs function as a dynamic tool for expressing cultural identity in local and international contexts.

Notes

[1] Lit. Martynas Liudvikas Gediminas Rėza; Ger. Martin Ludwig Jedemin Rhesa.

[2] Lithuania Minor is a historical and ethnographic region that emerged in the first half of the 16th century. It was located between the Prieglius (Ger. Pregel) River and the lower reaches of the Nemunas (Ger. Memel) River and was inhabited by Western Baltic ethnic groups. In the early 16th century, the names Klein Litau and Klein Litauen appeared in Prussian chronicles (for example those of Simon Grunau and Lucas David). Later, the term *Preussisch Litauen* (Prussian Lithuania) became widespread in German historiography and is still in use today. In Prussian government documents from the 16th to 19th centuries, as well as on Prussian maps from the 17th century onwards, the region was also referred to as the Province of Lithuania or the Lithuanian Domain (Ger. *Litauischer Kreis*). The area was part of the Prussian/German state from the time of the Teutonic conquest in the 13th century until the early 20th century.

Following the Great Northern War, the Great Plague and the livestock plague in the early 18th century, Prussian authorities resettled large numbers of Austrians (Salzburgers) and Germans in the depopulated homesteads. As a result, the region gradually became multicultural, though it remained dominated by the official Germanic order and culture. After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles assigned the northern part of Lithuania Minor – the Klaipėda Region – to the Republic of Lithuania. After the World War II, the Klaipėda Region was incorporated into to the Lithuanian SSR, while the

remaining territory was divided between the Russian Federation and Poland (VLE 1 n.d.; VLE 2 n.d.).

[3] The Susitikimai+ (Meetings+) project, partly funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture and Klaipėda City Municipality, was carried out in 2021–2022. During this period, the author of the article conducted in-depth interviews with individuals who participated in the movement to revitalise the culture of Lithuania Minor during the Soviet era and beyond. Based on the collected material, eight podcasts were produced, and audio recordings of Vorusnė from 1979 and 1993 were restored. The material has been made publicly available on the *Folkloras. Klaipėdos kraštas* (Folklore: Klaipėda Region) YouTube channel (FKK 2022).

[4] In September 2025, a new edition of L. Rėza's folk song collection was published, after the article had already been prepared (Rėza 2025)

[5] More details are available in the author's articles written in Lithuanian (Petrošienė 2021, 2023) and English (Petrošienė 2025).

[6] *Lietuvininkai* are Lithuanians of Lithuania Minor, also referred to as Lithuanians of Prussia (Ger. *Kleinlitauer*, *Preussische Litauer*), an ethnic and ethnocultural subgroup of western Lithuanians. The autochthonous population of the region referred to themselves as *Lietuvininkai* of Lithuania Minor, a designation that has appeared in Lithuanian writings as well as in official Prussian and German state documents since the 16th century (MLE n.d.).

Abbreviations

BDB 1886, 1889 – Bartsch, Christian (ed) 1886, 1889. *Dainu balsai* (Voices of Songs), Melodieen lithauischer Volkslieder, gesammelt und mit Textübersetzung, Anmerkungen und Einleitung herausgegeben von Christian Bartsch, Bd. I, II, Heidelberg.

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FKK 2022 2 – Klaipėdos universiteto folkloro ansamblis *Vorusnė* (Klaipeda University Folklore Ensemble Vorusnė), 1993. *Folkloras. Klaipėdos kraštas* (Folklore: Klaipėda Region). Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXDNZpx7mpA&t=954s (accessed 29/07/2025).

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