

Paganism of the Balts. The Beggar Pilgrim: Origins and Evolution

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Using the sources currently available, it is almost impossible to determine when exactly beggars and tramps first appeared in the lands of the Balts. We only find information about them in the written sources from the 16th century on (although this information is fragmentary and even contradictory). Even so, information from the chronicles of this period is sufficient to allow consideration of parallels between beggars and the servants of the old religion, and consequently of the reasons for the appearance of the first beggars as well. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the supplicant was already performing sacrifices in secrecy from the ecclesiastical and temporal powers. The supplicant was forced to wander about and hide his calling. The supplicant thus became the original supplicant-beggar, whom, according to tradition, the community continued to maintain and support. From the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 18th century, the beggar had become a syncretic figure of two religions (pre-Christian and Christian) made up of equal parts Christian charity and honor for the remains of the old hierophantic class. The differentiation of the image of the beggar in the traditional period (to negative and positive) is connected with the appearance of the so-called charlatan beggars.

Key words: Paganism, beggar pilgrim, sacrifices, rituals, beliefs, folklore.

It has been noted by Norbertas Vėlius that a number of gods in the older mythologies (Greek, Germanic, other Indo-European) disguised themselves in the form of an old man, in order not to be recognized, and appeared one-eyed, blind, lame, and so on. This was how the Greek Pluto, the Teutonic Odin and the Prussian Patulas showed themselves among men. The conclusion to be drawn is that the sources for the appearance of the god in the form of a beggar or tramp is much older than the advent of Christianity.¹ Algirdas Julius Greimas seconded Vėlius's notion, saying

“beggars, as a social group, represent, it is true, an already extinct, degraded but authentic clerical class of the old Lithuanian religion,” which, after the arrival of Christianity, is comparable to the Catholic clergy.²

A study by Rima Praspaliauskienė closely related to this topic was published in 2000. The first section of the monograph “Nereikalingi ir pavojingi: XVIII a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos, ir plėšikai Lietuvoje“ [„Unwanted and Dangerous: Beggars, Tramps and Robbers in Lithuania from the End of the 18th to First Half of the 19th

1 Norbertas Vėlius. *Chtoniškasis lietuvių mitologijos pasaulis: folklorinio velnio analizė*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1987, p. 165.

2 Algirdas Julius Greimas. *Lietuvių mitologijos studijos*. Sudarė Kęstutis Nastopka. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2005, p. 406–407.

Century”] presents and analyzes the attitudes of society and of the beggars themselves towards this marginal group.³

Among those who have published articles touching in one way or another upon the beggar caste and their status and role in traditional culture (besides those just mentioned) are Albinas Rekašius,⁴ Alfonsas Motuzas, Dalia Černiauskaitė Alfonsas Motuzas, Dalia Černiauskaitė,⁵ Aušra Simoniukštytė⁶ and Gražina Kadžytė.⁷ Other researchers whose works have not treated beggars and the begging lifestyle as their main subjects have limited themselves to certain insights, such as the statement that the trump is none other than “the reflection of the image of God who once walked among us,”⁸ „the successor of the *žymys* [hierophant] of the old religion,”⁹ and so on.

Note that the servants of the religious cults of the first civilizations known to us made their living from offerings made by the

devout public to the gods. The hierophants who slaughtered livestock in the ritually-proscribed manner cooked the meat and distributed portions to other participants in the ritual. Sacrifices were one of the few events when meat was on the menu in the Greek cultural area. It was forbidden to eat unsacrificed and thus unsanctified meat. At the conclusion of rituals the hierophants took for themselves the “table offerings,” placed before the feet or waist of the image of the god and intended for the god, tactfully left uneaten by the god himself.¹⁰

The first beggars, according to some researchers, appeared during the decline of the civilization of antiquity.¹¹ The beggars of this period carried with them images of the elder gods and collected money and food for demonstrating them (or for their own theophanies?) to the public. With the establishment of Christianity in Europe there appeared tramps who asked for alms in the name of the new god (Christ). The Pope at Rome even ordered a certain quota of beggars be maintained within society so that the people might not neglect charity.¹² It was from among these beggars blessed by the Pope that the community of traveling monks (*mendicanti*) grew. Under Church law the mendicant monks were not allowed to hold any property and had to live exclusively from alms collected during their journeys through cities, towns and villages.

3 Rima Praspaliauskienė. *Nereikalingi ir pavojingi: XVIII a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos, ir plėšikai Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Žara.

4 Albinas Rekašius. Apeiginės aukos elgetoms. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*. Nr. 10. 1990, p. 19–20.

5 Dalia Černiauskaitė. Elgetos vaizdinys lietuvių tradicinėje kultūroje. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. XIII(XX). Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2000, p. 187.

6 Aušra Simoniukštytė. Elgetos ir elgetavimas. *Liaudies kultūra*. Nr. 5. 1994, p. 15–17.

7 Gražina Kadžytė. „...Ubago lazdos – niekada neišsižadėk“. *Lietuvos žinios*. 2012-02-21. Webpage: <http://lzinios.lt/lzinios/Prie-kavos/Ubago-lazdos-niekada-neissizadek>. Accessed November 10, 2013.

8 Nijolė Marcinkevičienė. Kuo įsimintinas konkursas „Etninės kultūros šaltiniai. Žmogus ir jo gyvenamoji aplinka“. *Žmogus ir jo gyvenamoji aplinka. Konferencijos medžiaga*. Vilnius: Lietuvos liaudies kultūros centras, 2007, p. 20.

9 Dainius Razauskas-Daukintas. *Krosnis mitologijoje. Baltų mitologijos ir ritualo tyrimai*, T. 3. Vilnius: Aidai, 2011, p. 27.

10 Robin Lane Fox. *Pagonys ir krikščionys Viduržemio paaulyje nuo antro amžiaus iki Konstantino atsivertimo*. Vertė Mantas Adomėnas. Vilnius: Aidai, 2006, p. 74.

11 Иван Гаврилович Прыжов. *Нищие на святой Руси: материалы для истории общественнаго и народного быта в России*. Москва: Изд. М. И. Смирнова, 1862, p. 4.

12 Compare with the beggar-monks of Islam, the der-vishes.

In the 13th century formal orders of wandering monks (*Bettelorden* or Beggars' Order) evolved from the communities of mendicant monks.¹³ They were called this because the monks, lacking property, were forced to beg, that is, to ask humbly for the people's support, and by keeping their vows of poverty they were able to carry out their evangelizing mission. Of the beggar orders then formed, two are best known: the Little Brothers, also called the Franciscans, and the Preachers, or the Dominicans, started by Francis de Assisi and Dominican Guzman.¹⁴

From what has been said, at least three insights can be had: a) the beggar's lifestyle (collecting alms in the name of the god) was well known in neighboring lands before Christianity arrived in the lands of the Balts; b) offerings made to the gods were also the main source of sustenance for the *žyniai* (hierophants) of the Balts in the pre-Christian era; and c) Christianity, exalting poverty and charity to the poor, created favorable conditions in the Middle Ages for creating a complex and controversial portrait of the beggar.¹⁵

1. Beggar-Pilgrims in Lithuanian Prussia

It is almost impossible using the sources currently available to determine when exactly beggars and tramps first appeared in the lands of the Balts. We only find information about

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Turning back to the ritual for catching a thief from the Book of the Sūdūvians about which we spoke in an earlier chapter, this ritual was conducted by the *vaidila* (*waidler*), who is also called here a *žegnotojas* (*Segnoten*, signer, later a maker of the sign of the cross) and a fortune teller: "If someone has had something stolen, he seeks the *vaidila* (*waidler*), whether that be man or woman (emphasis added)... the *vaidila* (*waidler*), or fortune teller, also called *žegnotojas* (*Segnoten*), they honor greatly, lest he place something in his pouch which could harm someone's livestock or health. These *žegnotojai* (*Segnoten*) are usually feeble, poor, blind and unable to help themselves in any way [emphasis added]. When they are asked why they don't help themselves, the answer is usually this: their god so desires it. So this *žegnotojas* (*Segnot*) calls upon the god of the sky *Ukapirmas* (*Ockopirmum*) and the god of the earth *Puškaitis* (*Puschaitus*) and asks them not to allow the thief to escape... The victim of the theft must bring beer, which he [the *vaidila*] blesses." Then prayers are made to the gods *Ukapirmas* and *Puškaitis* and the vessel of beer is watched. The entire ritual is repeated until "the devils deliver him a sign: foam appears on the surface of the beer."¹⁶

We should scrutinize the formula "seeking

13 Иван Гаврилович Прыжов. *Нищие на святой Руси: материалы для истории общественной и народного быта в России*. Москва: Изд. М. И. Смирнова, 1862, p. 4–6.

14 For more see <http://vienuolynai.mch.mii.lt/visos-vienuliojijos.htm>. Accessed November 7, 2011.

15 Norbertas Vėlius. *Chtoniškasis lietuvių mitologijos pasaulis: folklorinio velnio analizė*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1987, p. 165.

16 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. II. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001, p. 139–140, 154.

a *vaidila*” who may be either “man or woman,” and that these are often “feeble, poor, blind.” One understands the *vaidila* is not a member of the community because he/she is specially sought out and is characterized as a beggar, although during the performance of a ritual in essence he/she plays the part of the hierophant (*žynys* or *krivis*), because he/she calls upon the elder gods, makes prayers to them and receives reply from them (a sign), and interprets this sign for those suffering the affliction.

Lucas David provides valuable information about beggars in the second half of the 16th century. Information in the Prussian Chronicle about beggars appears at first glance contradictory, but it is exactly this which demonstrates one of the possible reasons for equating beggars and the old servants of the cult. First, David writes that Prussians “do not allow anyone from among them to go begging, and if someone does fall into poverty, they helped him out of pity to recover, or took care of him in such a manner that he was fed, given drink and otherwise cared for one day at one person’s home, the next at another person’s.”¹⁷

Later, describing the religion followed by the Prussian peasants in the 16th century,

17 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai, T. II.* Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001, p. 298. It seems the Sūduvians of Semba maintained a similar tradition. Johannes Poliander (pen name of Johann Gramann or Graumann, 1487–1541), who said he obtained his information from one elderly man who had lived long among the Sūduvians, wrote: “The people of this nationality stubbornly strive to preserve the clothing, traditions and rituals of their forefathers, do not intermarry with the later Prussians and do not allow any of their own to go begging for a living” (see Ingė Lukšaitė. *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje. XVI a. trečias dešimtmetis – XVII a. pirmas dešimtmetis.* Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1999, p. 179).

David says that in spite of the endeavors of religious teachers and priests and the harsh fines imposed by the temporal authorities, “the majority of the people remained dark.” This darkness of the people David describes in further detail: “...baptized, taught the catechism, they go to church, hear the word of God, pray, accept the holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, act as others do in public, but, very sadly, they maintain the worship of idols in secret and sometimes so secretly they don’t even tell their own children. And most often this poison and evil lodges among old women and men, who are usually diseased and beg, but claim they can help others (emphasis added). Asked why they cannot help themselves through the great favor of the gods, they reply that it pleases their gods for them to serve others.”¹⁸

Information from David’s chronicle can be parsed and interpreted in different ways. It appears that a member of the community who became impoverished or sick was not considered a beggar by the community, because he was supported by that community.¹⁹ More importantly, nowhere is his ability to serve as a *vaidila*, i.e., to conduct ritual offerings, discussed. Furthermore, the performers of ritual sacrifice are described by David and the author of the Book of the Sūduvians as people who have chosen this as their life path intentionally, as the *vaidilas*, the servants of the old cult who have dressed themselves up as (or

18 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai, T. II.* Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001, p. 281–282.

19 Compare this with the tradition surviving right into the 20th century whereby all village residents took turns taking care of an elderly beggar. V. Trinkas. *Elgetų karšinimas. Gimtasai kraštas. Nr. 1.* Šiauliai: Šiaulių Kraštotyros Draugija, 1935, p. 243.

become) beggars, wandering from village to village and earning a living from the services they provided people. Dressing up, or hiding, was necessary because those who performed these sorts of rituals were severely punished by the Church and secular authorities in the 16th century. One might recall here the story written in the 16th century about the *vaidila* Valtinas Suplitas. In 1520 he performed sacrifices on the sea shore, sending enemy ships elsewhere, and later caused fish to return to that coast. When the bishop of Semba (Sambia) learned of this, he severely punished both *vaidila* Valtinas Suplitas and all the peasants who took part in the sacrifices.²⁰

Despite the bans and punishments, information from the written sources clearly shows beggars in the 16th century were understood and accepted as being able to communicate with the elder gods, carrying out their will and thus able to serve others. In the 16th century beggars were considered mediators through whom the will of the gods was expressed, and in separate cases through whom the gods themselves spoke, just as in antiquity. Whether these beggars (*vaidilos*) should be considered the successors to the *tulisonys*, *hygiašonys* (*Tulissones*, *Ligaschones*) and *kriviai* (*Criwe*) mentioned in earlier written sources (13th–14th centuries) is not a simple matter to determine. There just aren't enough data. Nonetheless, it may be hypothesized that at least a portion of the *vaidilos* (beggars) mentioned in the 16th century are related to the servants of the cult of the old religion (their functions are identical). On the other hand, it is just as possible that there existed alongside

the ranks of the *vaidilos* (beggars) a stratum of different sorts of fortune-tellers, soothsayers and readers of signs, mentioned by A. von Bremen and later authors, and against whom both the government of Lithuanian Prussia and the Church contended equally fervently.

These hypotheses are supported by information Matthäus Prätorius provides several centuries later, which shows that at the end of the 17th century communal rituals were sometimes, albeit rarely, conducted by a traveling (wandering) religious person or pilgrim. In practice, according to Prätorius's observations, when such a supplicant was not available, his role was played by the master of the house.²¹ Prätorius also explains why the master of the house would lead rituals, stating: "The strict supervision by the Protestant priests in the Prussian duchies contributed to the extinction of the Maldininker [Lithuanian *maldininkai*, makers of prayers, supplicant] who arose to replace the Weydulutten [*vaidilučiai*], who were necessary at such meetings of the communities."²²

Another observation by Prätorius is also relevant: "In former times these *Maldininker* had their own villages which they visited annually and earned a bit from their prayers." Now, Prätorius says, "you can hardly find" a

20 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, T. II. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001, p. 288–292.

21 During the celebration marking the end of fertilizing the fields with manure, "the maldininkas [the prayer] enters the farmhouse, and if there is none, then the head of the household..." and the same holds true during ceremonies to mark the beginning of the rye harvest: "if there is a Maldininkas [a person who performs prayers]..." (*Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. III. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003, p. 298, 290).

22 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*. T. III. [Baltic Religious and Mythological Sources, volume 3.] Norbertas Vėlius, editor. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003, p. 299.

single example of these supplicants, “except perhaps dressed in the course homespun coat of the Samogitian beggar.”²³

This observation provides four insights: a) these supplicants (*vaidilos*) still presided over annual sacrifice rituals by the communities in the 16th century; b) they were supported by one or several communities; c) a territorial network of the old sacred sites based on the location of the communities might still have functioned (vestigially) into the 16th century; d) there remained only traces (beggar-suppliants) of the institution of the *vaidilos* (*maldininkai*) by the end of the 17th century.

Hence the *maldininkas* (dressed as a beggar) was a rare guest at agricultural sacrifice rituals performed by the latter half of the 17th century. And that apparently led to a weakening of the meaning and significance of the ancient rituals performed in the home, since the Christian god was given honor equal with that paid the elder gods, while the offering (gift) was made to the vicar and beggars sheltering under the church eaves or met along the way there, i.e., to these very same *maldininkai*. The syncretism of rituals is seen clearly in Prätorius’s written descriptions of the consecrations of farms and residential homes. He says entreaty is made to the gods protecting the farmstead several times, libations are poured on the ground and toasts are made, and he concludes his description with this summary: “This kind of consecration of the site of the farmstead or residence takes place every year. Usually on this occasion the master of the house brings some sort of gift to the vicar and asks him to pray for him. Usu-

ally he also sends something to the hospice and asks for their prayers. If the master of the house is affluent, then he drives a carriage that day, takes with him a basket full of pieces of bread, and gives some to every beggar he encounters, so they would pray for him, his entire house and farm, and likewise at this time no beggar leaves his home without alms.” The same exact procedure is performed when moving into a new home. Prätorius testifies two loaves of bread are rolled into a newly built home which are later sliced and passed out to the poor, so that the latter might pray for the welfare of the new residents.²⁴

In Prätorius’s writings we see that the usual sacrificial rites had not only had a change in who conducted them at the end of the 17th century, but also a change in venue for the rituals: a) sometimes sacrifices to the elder gods were made in the home and that was performed by a supplicant (beggar); b) sacrifices were already being made to the Christian god in church (or to the vicar), and to beggars clinging to the church and on roads leading to the church. In neither instance did the intent of the sacrifice change: for the health and welfare of the home and extended household.

As stated earlier, the reason for the disappearance of the wandering supplicants, and later of beggars in general, was not just the natural decline of the old religion and the practices associated with it, but also was the result of actions by the secular authorities of Lithuanian Prussia and the church. Records of visits from the Rusnė church in 1863 and 1864 show there was an established order and punishments in place at that time

23 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. III. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003, p. 299.

24 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. III. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003, p. 301–303.

in Lithuanian Prussia to keep beggars from walking the streets, and those who arrived from elsewhere (from Samogitia/Žemaitija, for example) were quickly driven beyond the borders of the parish.²⁵

In the 18th century there were more intense efforts to solve the beggar problem. Prussian king Frederick II issued an order on April 28, 1748, stating beggars should be forbidden completely to engage in begging, and that peasants and urban dwellers must start a treasury for the maintenance of beggars.²⁶ Frederick Wilhelm II issued an order on October 31, 1793, which sets out regulations for the Tapiau Beggars' House (Lith. Tepliava), indicating the Prussian government was guardian of beggars, old soldiers and all categories of the homeless, and was building poor houses for them. The order demands the peasantry as well as government officials detain beggars and the unemployed wandering between estates, investigate them and deliver them to the indicated locations. It also calls for punishing beggars who came from other lands: such an arrested beggar was to receive twelve lashes and be sent back across the border. For a second offense by unrepentant foreign beggars, the punishment prescribed was especially severe: imprisonment in the fortress. This same order enumerates the duties and responsibilities of beggars, indicating that all beggars resident in Tapiau must not only take care of

their own life completely (weaving wool, cutting kindling, carrying water and carrying out other work), but must also help residents of the city (on approval from the director of the poor house, city residents could for a certain sum take beggars away for different kinds of services).²⁷ Besides the tasks listed, it appears beggars also took part in funeral processions. This is indicated in a report of church visitations from 1638 which states beggars sang for the Lithuanians' dead.²⁸

One assumes the punishments listed for beggars were ineffective, because an order from December 20, 1793, for combating the practice of begging no longer targets the beggars themselves, but rather the citizens providing them alms and support. The order says no resident may allow beggars or tramps into their home, provide them a place to sleep or feed them, and disobedience, i.e., taking in beggars, was to be punished by monetary fines and corporeal punishment.²⁹

Later reports in 1797 and 1803 by the Tapiau poor house would show the latter measure might have been effective. In 1797 the number of residents at the poor house was registered at 315 people (including 43 waifs from the city, 102 from the countryside and 170 who had no business being there), while in 1803 the same poor house had a population of 512 beggars.³⁰

25 *Klaipėdos miesto ir valsčiaus evangelikų liuteronų bažnyčių vizitacijų 1676–1685 m. dokumentai*. Sudarė ir parengė spaudai Ingė Lukšaitė bendradarbiaudama su Sabina Drevello. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2009, p. 208.

26 *Prūsijos valdžios gromatos, pagraudenimai ir apsakymai lietuviams valstiečiams*. Sudarė P. Pakarklis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1960, p. 25–26.

27 *Prūsijos valdžios gromatos, pagraudenimai ir apsakymai lietuviams valstiečiams*. Sudarė P. Pakarklis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1960, p. 37–38.

28 Wilhelm Mannhardt. *Letto-Preussische Götterlehre*. Riga, 1936, p. 429.

29 *Prūsijos valdžios gromatos, pagraudenimai ir apsakymai lietuviams valstiečiams*. Sudarė P. Pakarklis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1960, p. 38.

30 *Prūsijos valdžios gromatos, pagraudenimai ir apsa-*

2. Supplicant-Beggars in Lithuania

We do not have information on how the disappearance or degradation of the servants of the old cult, or their restructuring into a caste of supplicant-beggars, took place in Lithuania. The sources from the 16th–17th century appear only to record the destruction of the old religion. Both *žyniai* and peasants (men and women) presided over sacrificial ceremonies in descriptions by authors of the period.

Intense Jesuit activities at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century and written reports of these activities show that in remote villages there was an abundance of believers and practitioners of the old religion (as in Lithuanian Prussia), but that at the same time there was a change in the rituals. A Jesuit report from 1611 confirms that this process was underway, saying that until recently “men and women criminally made sacrifices to the spirits of their friends and ancestors annually, and especially during Easter, Christmas and All Hallows’ prepared feasts for them,” but now they are “changing their practices, make an effort to attend holy mass and distribute alms to the poor.”³¹ In other words, by the beginning of the 17th century, making offerings to beggars was already being equated with making sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors. That means that in making offerings to the beggars, they were at the same time “sacrificing to two institutions: the pre-Christian and the

Christian,”³² and the offering was made on the one hand to attain the favor of the ancestors, and on the other out of Christian motivations, out of a sense of charity towards the poor who lacked food.³³

The conditions for such a change in and transformation and evolution of traditions were ripe in Lithuania by the end of the 16th century. It was at exactly this time that the construction of shelters for beggars began next to churches at the initiative of the clergy, places for beggars and the elderly of the parish to shelter and where servants of the church sometimes stayed as well.³⁴ The residents of the hospice had to perform certain tasks in the church in exchange for food and shelter: to keep the buildings clean, ring the bells, recite prayers, perform hymns³⁵ and take part in

32 Albinas Rekašius. Apeiginės aukos elgetoms. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, Nr. 10. 1990, p. 19.

33 Dalia Černiauskaitė. Elgetos vaizdinys lietuvių tradicijoje kultūroje. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. XIII(XX). Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2000, p. 187.

34 Lithuanian terms used to describe these shelters include *elgetynas*, *elgetnamis*, *špitolė*, *maldanumis*, *prieglauda* (see *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas. T II. Vyr. redaktorius J. Kruopas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1969, 1123; Lietuvių kalbos žodynas. T XV. Vyr. redaktorius K. Ulvydas. Vilnius: Mokslas, 1991, 277*. The first such shelter was opened in Vilnius in 1518 (Rima Praspaliauskienė. *Nereikalingi ir pavojingi. XVIII a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos ir plėšikai Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Žara, 2000, p. 40).

35 In 1636 the synod of the Samogitian Bishopric demanded of the beggars that they learn all the prayers and pay a fee in order to sit next to the door of the church and ask for alms, upon receiving which they were to sing hymns (Paulius Rabikauskas. Iš Pašiaušės jėzuitų kolegijos. *Tautos praeitis. Tomas I. Knyga 3*. Chicago, 1961, 377). By 1655 they wrote: “explanations by the beggars of God’s commandments and the religious hymns impressed upon the memory of children travel through the villages going from house to house, driving out secular songs...”

kymai lietuviams valstiečiams. Sudarė P. Pakarklis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1960, p. 43, 46.

31 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. II. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001, p. 633.

funeral processions³⁶ and processions around the church,³⁷ among other tasks.

The tradition slowly arose in Lithuania that not just a hospitaller, but also any beggar upon entering a home sang some sort of hymn and recited prayers (Alfonas Motuzas. *Žemaičių Kalvarijos Kalnai ir Kryžiaus kelias*. Kretinga, 1993, 377; Alfonso Motuzas. *Žemaičių Kalvarijos Kalnų giesmių ištakos. Tiltai. No. 2. Klaipėda, 1997, p. 54.*

- 36 Entries in various documents testify to this: “15 ausksinai [monetary unit] to the beggar Aleksandrienė for keeping vigil” (Kretinga, Lithuania, May 12, 1731); “2 ausksinai for the anniversary of Andriuska’s funeral for the Mass, bell-ringing and beggars as indicated by her grace” (Salantai, December 14, 1782); „One auksinas and 15 grašiai for the poor of the shelter who ring the bells at Christmas; one auksinas for local beggars of the women’s section; 24 grašiai for beggars who have come from the parish...” (Salantai, December 26, 1782); “On the occasion of the name day of her grace one and a half ausksinas to be given to beggars in the women’s section and to beggars arriving from elsewhere” (Salantai, July 26, 1784); “On the death of her grace, two ausksinai to the poor bell-ringers of the shelter for weekly ringing; one auksinas and 15 grašiai to local and parish beggars who assembled for the funeral procession; two ausksinai to the twenty devoted souls of the church of Salanta for [saying] the rosary” (Salanta, March 16, 1785) (*Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kasdienis gyvenimas. Lietuvos istorijos skaitinių chrestomatija*. Vilniaus Dailės akademijos leidykla, 2001, 630, 445, 446, 451). Incidentally, there was a similar tradition known throughout Catholic Europe much earlier, i.e., to give recompense to beggars for participating in a funeral procession (see Philippe Aries. *Mirties supratimas Vakarų kultūros istorijoje*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1993, p. 115–116).

- 37 As an example, the beggars of the “prayer house” (beggars’ shelter) of Žemaičių Kalvarija sang hymns on the Hills of the Way of the Cross, or inside the church in the event of poor weather (Alfonas Motuzas. *Žemaičių Kalvarijos Kalnų giesmių ištakos. Tiltai. No. 2. Klaipėda, 1997, p. 47–58*). There also existed the tradition of using beggars in punishment processions around the outside of the church: “In the past, if a girl got a child, on the holy day the beggars would chase her with sticks outside around

Clearly there was not enough space for all beggars at the shelters. Meanwhile, the number of beggars, judging from the written sources of the period, continued to grow. The reasons for this growth were varied. Dalia Černiauskaitė, based on M. Katkus’s observations, finds several population groups behind the increase in begging: a) serfs who were too old to work and driven out by their masters, b) recruits returning from service in the Tsarist army, and c) elderly parents, widows and orphans driven out of their homes.³⁸ These classes, it seems, can be supplemented. Jurgis Pabrėža notes that a certain portion of the ranks of beggars was composed of farmers who had lost everything due to drinking.³⁹ Unproductive years, due to drought or too much rain, were likely also a reason for going begging. This is demonstrated by a surviving belief that the fate of the family in the coming year can be determined by the number of rainy days in the month of August. There is a saying: “If it rains for five days of the week, the beggars will come knocking.” A whole week of rain is even worse: “Seven bad days and the gentleman comes with hat in hand.”⁴⁰

The rapid growth in the number of beggars at the end of the 18th century and

the church” (*Lietuvių kalbos žodynas T. XVII. Vyr. redaktorius Vytautas Vitkauskas. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1996, p. 345*).

- 38 Dalia Černiauskaitė. *Elgetos vaizdinys lietuvių tradicinėje kultūroje. Tautosakos darbai, t. XIII(XX)*. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2000, 187; Mikalojus Katkus. *Balanos gadynė. Mūsų tautosaka. T. IV*. Redaktorius prof. V. Krėvė Mickevičius. Kaunas: Tautosakos komisija, 1931, p. 132–139.
- 39 Viktoras Gidžiūnas. *Jurgis Ambraziejus Pabrėža: (1771–1849)*. Roma: Lietuvių katalikų Mokslo Akademija, 1993, p. 174.
- 40 *Kaimo metai. Kalendorius*. Sudarė A. Naujokaitis. Vilnius: Mokslo, 1988, p. 4.

early 19th century led to the search for novel methods for society to deal with this phenomenon. At the onset of the 19th century the priest Jurgis Ambraziejus Pabrėža wrote up a set of instructions called *Pariedims diei Óbagu Szpytolys Plungijs* [Regulations on the Beggars' Home in Plungė] to which everyone was supposed to adhere. The rules were read publicly once per month.⁴¹ Pabrėža prepared a set of rules for the behavior of the residents of the Kartena shelter based on the Plungė regulations called *Pastanawiyimay Apey Szpytolys Óbagus (Kartynas). Rašyta Kar[t]ennoj 1807–1810* [Rules for the Beggars' Home (Kartena). Written in Kartena, 1807–1810].⁴² A bit later, in 1811, Samogitian bishop Arnulfas Giedraitis promulgated similar rules in his “Establishment of Parish Shelters in the Bishopric of Samogitia.” Among other things, these regulations placed beggars in three categories: a) shelter (hospice) beggars, b) parish beggars bearing licenses issued by the priest to practice begging within the parishes, and c) charlatans, or professional beggars.⁴³

It is clear these measures did not drive down the number of beggars (especially in the professional category). This is shown in rather abundant ethnographic material from the 19th and early 20th centuries surviving in works by Pabrėža as well as M. Valančius,⁴⁴ M. Katkus,⁴⁵ and A. Fromas-Gužutis.⁴⁶ At the end of the 19th century the priest A. Dambrauskas-Jakštas, noting the number of professional or

41 Viktoras Gidžiūnas. *Jurgis Ambraziejus Pabrėža: (1771–1849)*. Roma, Lietuvių katalikų Mokslo Akademija, 1993, p. 32; Rima Praspaliauskienė. *Nereikalingi ir pavojingi. XVIII a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos ir plėšikiai Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Žara, 2000, p. 41. The fate of this small, 9-page booklet is not known today, but as recently as 1925 A. Salys said he saw it in the monastic library at Kretinga (see A. Salys. *Kretingos vienuolyno lietuviškiieji rankraščiai. Švietimo darbas*, Nr. 1. Kaunas: Valstybės spaustuvė, 1927, p. 23).

42 Giedrius Subačius. *Du Jurgio Ambraziejaus Pabrėžos rankraščiai: Kninga turinti savę kozonius ir Rekolckijos dvasiškos. Archivum Lithuanicum*, Nr. 3. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos institutas, 2001, p. 167–184.

43 Rima Praspaliauskienė. *Nereikalingi ir pavojingi. XVI–II a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos ir plėšikiai Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Žara, 2000, p. 42–43.

44 Bishop Motiejus Valančius writes: “Although the land of the Žemaitijans is sufficiently fertile and her residents but rarely lack for bread, all the same many are poor in this land. In large crowds they flock to the church festivals and fairs, sitting in rows along paths, asking all who pass by to give what they will. Some say prayers with outstretched arms, others, the strong ones among them, sing and shout...” (Motiejus Valančius. *Raštai. T. II. Redakcinė kolegija: K. Korsakas [et al.]*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1972, p. 396).

45 In “Balanos gadynė“ Mikalojus Katkus writes: „And now the door opens wide, and, with sticks rattling and defending himself from the dog, into the home comes the beggar... He sits down on the bench by the door, makes the sign of the cross and recites prayers... He said ‘Our Father,’ ‘Ave Maria,’ ‘I Believe’ and ‘Eternal Rest,’ and continues with the ‘apieravonė’ [offering]: ‘I offer and recite these prayers for the greater glory of the Lord God for the health of our doers of good, for God to help them, whither they go and wherever they enter, them and their animals: for the souls suffering in purgatory, who have parted from those homes, who cry for help and receive no salvation from anywhere. That God would give recompense in all affairs, fecundity to the fields and health to the animals’” (Mikalojus Katkus. *Balanos gadynė. Mūsų tautosaka*, t. IV. Redaktorius prof. V. Krėvė Mickevičius. Kaunas: Tautosakos komisija, 1931, p. 132).

46 „Along all roads leading to Šiluva, in all corners of the town, around the church and from there to the chapel, on both sides of the road sat the tramps, and so stood their little carts, lying in which the supposed Lazaruses displayed their awful injuries and tramped as if they were a product for sale” (Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis. *Baisioji gadynė*. Vilnius: Valstybinė. grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1955, p. 99–100).

charlatan beggars was constantly increasing, suggested “separating real beggars from false ones” and not providing the latter, whom he called beggar-tramps, alms any longer.⁴⁷

It appears that this distinction and the negative view taken of the so-called charlatan beggars, a view actively fostered by the church, affected the formation of the image (positive and negative) of the beggar in late 19th and early 20th century folk beliefs, traditions and folklore.

3. The Image of the Suppliant-Beggar in Folklore and Tradition

It seems that only the poor who lived in the shelters and had a license to beg within the parish maintained historical connections with the old, pre-Christian *žyniai*,⁴⁸ and in equal proportion with the servants of the Christian cult. This sort of beggar is still understood in the traditional period as a mediator between mankind and the gods, and also as mediator between two separate realms: the profane (domestic, mundane daily life, the abode of the people) and the sacred, where the spirits of the ancestors and the gods live.⁴⁹

This is demonstrated in the oral tradition (in particular in legends) where God is often portrayed as an old man, beggar or wayfarer

who walks the earth: “God, having become a beggar and walking among the people, once went into a house...” “Once upon a time God went among the people having become a traveller,” “...one old woman fed a poor beggar who, it later turned out, was God;” “Once a beggar went to the home of a farmer and asked for bread...”⁵⁰ The image of the beggar (or rather of the god become beggar) in these works of folklore help us to understand what was considered appropriate behavior (tolerance and encouragement) among those who had been dealt a poor hand by fate, and what was considered inappropriate behavior in the views prevalent at that time. Usually the winning hero is he who shares bread with the beggar (or old man), helps rescue a poor man in some other way, or, having listened to his counsel, is capable of making use of it effectively.⁵¹ In several legends/fairytales the person who has eaten with the old man or beggar is invited to travel to another world.⁵²

The sacred status of the beggar is demonstrated by several surviving folk beliefs and examples of traditional behavior. A custom throughout Lithuania when the sowing of crops is begun is to throw a handful of grain in each of the four cardinal directions while

47 A. Jakštas. Apie mūsų ubagus. *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga. Katalikiskas laikraštis*. Tilsit, 1891. Nr. 20, p. 156–157. Webpage <http://www.epaveldas.lt/vbspi/biRecord.do?biExemplarId=35002&biRecordId=4036> accessed November 12, 2013.

48 Dalia Černiauskaitė. Elgetos vaizdinys lietuvių tradicinėje kultūroje. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. XIII(XX). Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2000, p. 187.

49 Albinas Rekašius. Apeiginės aukos elgetoms. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, Nr. 10. 1990, p. 19.

50 Jurgis Elisonas. Dievas Senelis. *Mūsų tautosaka*. Redaktorius prof. Krėvė Mickevičius. T. IX. Kaunas, 1935, p. 3–6; p. 137–159.

51 Gražina Kadžytė. „...Ubago lazdos – niekada neišsižadėk.“ *Lietuvos žinios*. Sausio 21, 2012. Webpage <http://lzinios.lt/lzinios/Prie-kavos/Ubago-lazdos-niekada-neissizadek> accessed November 10, 2013.

52 Bronislava Kerbelytė. *Lietuvių tautosakos kūrinių prasmės*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2011, 195; Bronislava Kerbelytė. Lietuvių liaudies pasakų repertuaras. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2002, p. 153–154; Norbertas Vėlius. *Baltų mitologija iš sakalo skrydžio*. Pranas Vildžiūnas, editor. Vilnius: Aidai, 2012, p. 469.

saying: “God, make it fertile for me, for the beggars, for the birds and for the animals,” or, to kneel, make the sign of the cross and say: “God, give us what we need, and [give] the Prussians, the poor, the beggars and the Jews [what they need].”⁵³ In other places Gypsies are mentioned as well with Jews and beggars. There has been speculation that not just beggars, but also Jews, Roma and other foreign or “strange” people were believed connected with the world of the ancestors, thus attempts were made through them to influence the spirits of the ancestors in a way favorable to the supplicant.⁵⁴

In the area in and around Ukmergė, beekeepers used to add crumbs of bread from a beggar’s satchel to the smoker, device used for spraying smoke to drive bees out of the hive and calm them. It was believed that bees given this sort of smoke would collect pollen the way beggars do money. To impart success to the bees and to keep them mild, the first honey harvested was supposed to be given to beggars.⁵⁵ There are more examples of similar beliefs known to us: if you wanted piglets to grow fat, you had to feed them crumbs from the bag of a beggar;⁵⁶ and if you found treasure

or dug up a cache of hidden coins, they had to be cleaned, i.e., to ease the “cleansing” of the souls, and this could only be accomplished by giving a portion of the money to a beggar, paying for a special mass or holding a “feast for the dead;” only in this manner would the money bring happiness to its finder.⁵⁷ Jonas Basanavičius cites a corresponding tradition for honoring the dead, saying: “There is no greater offering than Mass and a sauna lit for a beggar, and a luncheon held for beggars.”⁵⁸

The recorded beliefs show that all economic success, personal and familial, depended upon how a person acted towards those afflicted with misfortune, because “the best prayer is alms;”⁵⁹ „The prayer of the poor transcends the clouds;”⁶⁰ and “the oven is lit for the guest, the corner prepared for the beggar.”⁶¹ This positive view of the beggar is also emphasized in dream interpretation: “alms given to a beggar [means] good deeds will be judged well,” “if you dream you have become a beggar, matters will improve.”⁶²

As is generally understood, the support of the gods and the aid of the ancestors could

53 Jonas Balys. *Lietuvių žemdirbystė papročiai ir tikėjimai. Lietuvių liaudies tradicijos*. Silver Spring, Maryland: Lietuvių tautosakos leidykla, 1986, p. 24.

54 Dovilė Kulakauskienė. *Lietuvių agrarinė magija. XIX a. pabaiga – XX a. pirmoji pusė. Darbai ir dienos. Nr. 11(20)*. Kaunas, 1999, p. 101.

55 Laura Piškinaitė-Kazlauskienė. *Bitininkystė Lietuvoje (XVI a. – XX a. pirmoji pusė)* Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1995, p. 126, 147–148. Beekeepers further used to say: “If you want the bees to bring much honey, after the hive is cleaned, give the first passer-by or tramp a taste of honey, and then you will always have some, but if you’re reluctant to give, then you and the bees will be sorry.”

56 Jurgis Elisonas. *Mūsų krašto fauna lietuvių tau-*

tosakoje. Mūsų tautosaka, t. V. Redaktorius prof. V. Krėvė-Mickevičius. Kaunas, 1932, p. 189.

57 *Šiaurės Lietuvos sakmės ir pasakos*. Parengė N. Vėlius. Vilnius: Vaga, 1985, p. 39.

58 *Jono Basanavičiaus tautosakos biblioteka. Surinko Jonas Basanavičius*, t. 7. *Iš gyvenimo vėlių bei velnių*. Redaktorius Kostas Aleksynas. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 1993, 121, nr. 24.

59 Albinas Rekašius. Apeiginės aukos elgetoms. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas. Nr. 10*. 1990, p. 19.

60 *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*, t. VII. Vyr. redaktorius J. Kruopas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1969, p. 793.

61 Dainius Razauskas-Daukintas. *Krosnis mitologijoje. Baltų mitologijos ir ritualo tyrimai. T 3*. Vilnius: Aidai, 2011, p. 27.

62 *Sapnų Kalba*. Sudarė Nijolė Blaževičiūtė. Vilnius: Algavė, 1997, p. 79.

only be expected following the execution of a specific action or ritual, namely, the sacrifice. In the traditional period the beggar, for a payment (an offering), was tasked with performing a sacred act (a ritual). This sort of offering with ritualistic nuances was made several times during the course of the year, usually during Žolinė (Feast of the Assumption of Mary), All Saints, Vėlinės (originally the pagan holiday Ilgės, now the day after All Saints' Day), and sometimes during Christmas and wakes for and commemorations of the dead.⁶³

In Tverėčius they used to say: "On All Saints you need to give beggars rye-bread for the soul and for the living gentleman and wife, and for the crops, because [otherwise] the rye of the coming year will not be fit..."⁶⁴

B. Saulėnas recorded a tradition which he claims was still practiced at the beginning of the 20th century in Pavarėnai and neighboring villages in the district of Varėna: the "Dziedai," which was applied to several specific holidays, for example, All Saints, Candlemass, Pentecost and the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (called Žolinės in Lithuania).⁶⁵ The

so-called *Dziedai* of the New occurs during Assumption. During these *Dziedai* that year's harvest is prepared as food, including bread from that year's rye and cakes of wheat, a sheep is slaughtered and the so-called *dziedai* [feast] is held. On the morning of the Feast of the Assumption, after everything is cleaned and tidied, breakfast is eaten. Everything intended for the *dziedai* is laid out upon the table: a side of mutton, several loaves of bread and a cake. Then the head of the household takes a candle, lights it and passes it around so that everyone at the table holds it in their hands. As the candle is being passed, the "Litany of All Saints" is recited. After it has passed around the table, the head of the household takes it in hand again and carries it three times around the foods intended for the *dziedai*. After that is completed, the family sits and eats breakfast. After breakfast some members of the family go to church, and they distribute the food set aside to the *dziedai* (beggars) sitting near the church, or they donate it to the hospice."⁶⁶

In the area around Žasliai people baked cakes, slaughtered a sheep or pig and distributed this to beggars during All Saints.⁶⁷ The intent was simple: "If you don't give to the beggars, then God will not help."⁶⁸ There was similar behavior in the Punska parish: "...

63 Albinas Rekašius. Apeiginės aukos elgetoms. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, Nr. 10. 1990, p. 18.

64 Jonas Balys. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės. Tautosakinė medžiaga ir aiškinimai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 282.

65 Lithuanian *diedai* is a borrowing from Polish *dziady* and has at least two meanings: 1) alms; 2) three bread buns and meat brought to commemorations of the dead. From the first lexeme arises the hybrid word *diedaduonė*: 1) the time for passing out bread to beggars; 2) alms. Incidentally, the spirit of the growth of rye, concealed in the last swath, and later either the first or last sheaf of rye, was also called *diedas* (*Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*, t. II. Atsak. redaktorius J. Kruopas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1969, p. 496–497). From the meaning of *diedas* as the last sheaf probably also derives its meaning of scarecrow, to scare birds away.

66 Jonas Balys. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės. Tautosakinė medžiaga ir aiškinimai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 285.

67 Bronislava Kerbelytė. *Lietuvių pasakojamosios tautosakos katalogas*, t. IV. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2009, 62; *Lietuvių folkloro chrestomatija*. Parengė Bronislava Kerbelytė ir Bronė Stundzienė. Vilnius: Regnum fondas, 1996, p. 90.

68 *Paparčių ir Žaslių apylinkės*. Sudarė Judita Mačiokienė. Kaišiadorys: Kaišiadorių etninės kultūros centras, 1997, p. 134.

during All Saints the farmers brought bread and meat...⁶⁹

The examples cited, as we have seen, confirm the idea that this contribution, these alms to beggars were a new form of the former sacrifice made to the ancestors. This is further confirmed by the belief of the people of Dieveniškės concerning the spirits of the dead visiting the earth on the night of All Saints Day. They say that spirits whose family members have not given alms to beggars enter the church in sadness, but those whose families have given are happy.⁷⁰ For the same reason beggars are fed and given drink immediately after a burial, and the belongings of the deceased are donated to beggars who in turn obligate themselves to pray for the dead. Sometimes, in exchange for an especially valuable item, the beggar was asked “to say the rosary every day for a year,” and “to walk the stations [of the cross] on Sundays.”⁷¹

The association of the beggar with the ancestors can also be found in fragments of traditions concerning birth, baptism and marriage. If baptized newborn dies, then the

godparents must be replaced for the next child. In such cases even people encountered randomly were asked to become the child's godparents.⁷² In Belarus random beggars were even asked to become godparents.⁷³ This tradition is also known among the Russians.⁷⁴ It existed in Lithuania, as folk beliefs recorded by Juozas Mickevičius and Jonas Balys show: “Beggars are recruited as godparents only if it is really necessary, namely, if all the children of a set of parents die;”⁷⁵ „If someone's child dies, then you need to invite a beggar to be a godparent, and then they won't die.”⁷⁶ There are explanations according to which this is done in order to confuse the spirits,⁷⁷ but it's much more likely that it represents an attempt to win support from the spirits of the ancestors, or that the expectation is for help from the god.

This is probably also the goal of the bride on her wedding day who gives honor to the beggars in the churchyard. Regarding this, Balys Buračas in 1935 published wedding traditions collected from elderly people in the Kupiškis region which include this fragment:

69 *Nuo Punsko iki Seinų. Iš Juozo Vainos rinkinių.*

Sudarė ir parengė Danutė Krištopaitienė. Punsko „Aušros“ leidykla, 1998, p. 54. Incidentally, Nijolė Marcinkevičienė points out further the fact that food during Dziedai was not given exclusively to beggars, but also to the butcher and shepherds, Jews and even completely random people. This might show that all these people could have performed a communicative function at the mythological level between this and the world of the dead (Nijolė Marcinkevičienė. *Dziedai. Šiaurės Atėnai. Nr. 42.* 1997, p. 8–10).

70 Norbertas Vėlius. *Baltų mitologija iš sakalo skrydžio.* Parengė Pranas Vildžiūnas. Vilnius: Aidai, 2012, p. 365.

71 Marija Čilvinaitė. Sarginimo, marinimo ir laidotuvių papročiai. *Gimtasai kraštas. No. 31.* Šiauliai, 1943, 187; Norbertas Vėlius. *Baltų mitologija iš sakalo skrydžio.* Parengė Pranas Vildžiūnas. Vilnius: Aidai, 2012, 468.

72 Jonas Balys. Raštai. T. V. Parengė Rita Repšienė. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2004, p. 203; Zenonas Slaviūnas. Liaudies papročiai ir mitiniai įvaizdžiai Mažvydo raštuose. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. VI–VII (XIII–XIV). Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 1997, p. 337.

73 Dmitrii Zelenin. *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde.* Berlin-Leipzig, 1927, p. 295.

74 Jan Stanislaw Bystron. *Slowianskie obrzędy rodzinne.* Kraków, 1916, p. 89.

75 Juozas Mickevičius. Žemaičių krikštynos. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. I. Kaunas: Lietuvių tautosakos archyvas, 1935, p. 96.

76 Jonas Balys. *Raštai*, t. V. Parengė Rita Repšienė. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2004, p. 203.

77 George Frederick Abbott. *Macedonian Folklore.* Cambridge, 1903, p. 138.

“As 60-year-old grandmother M. Šerelytė of the town of Kupiškis remembers it, in former times the maiden as she entered the church used to separate herself from the gaggle of bridesmaids and go to kiss the hands of the beggars. As many beggars as there were sitting around the church, the young bride bent down and kissed the hands of all of them. Occasionally she would also give a bit of money to the beggars which she had received in the morning during toasts and the removal of her garland of rue. After, the bride would rejoin the group of bridesmaids and enter the church.”⁷⁸

Along with the establishment of Christianity the parallel between the beggar and the priest (or monk) arose. Algirdas Greimas says two shared functions connect these two social classes: 1) mediation between “this side” of humanity and the sacred “other side;” 2) the right to collect offerings.⁷⁹ This analogy between functions is seen in stories, legends and sayings: “The beggar and the priest live on a prayer,” “That one prayed to the priests and beggars to pray, that is, he gave them alms;” “And I both asked the beggars and paid for the mass, nothing helped,”⁸⁰ “Real Christmas celebrants are only priests and beggars,” “The priest and the beggar: both live from their service.”⁸¹

78 Balys Buračas. Kupiškėnų vestuvės. *Tautosakos darbai*, t. I. Kaunas: Lietuvių tautosakos archyvas, 1935, p. 227.

79 Algirdas Julijus Greimas. *Lietuvių mitologijos studijos*. Sudarė Kęstutis Nastopka. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2005, p. 406–407.

80 *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*, t. VII. Atsak. redaktorius J. Kruopas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1966, p. 793.

81 *Lietuvių tautosaka*, t. V. *Smulkioji tautosaka*. Žaidimai ir šokiai. Paruošė Kazys Grigas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1968, p. 177.

The connections between beggars and the priestly class are also recorded in the language. The Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language provides four different meanings for the word *kalėda*: 1) a Christmas present, 2) a Christmas present especially for a servant who has served throughout the year and is going home (usually after Christmas, usually a loaf of bread, a piece of meat or something of that nature), 3) alms, 4) a tithe given to priests and servants of the church visiting around Christmas time. The same holds for the word *kalėdininkas*: 1) a collector of gifts, 2) a beggar, 3) a cleric or servant of the church who collects tithes from believers while visiting them, 4) a celebrant of Christmas, 5) someone arriving at the home of the master during Christmas to take a servant home; and the word *kalėdoti*: 1) to choose Christmas gifts, 2) to go begging.⁸²

It appears that a negative attitude towards beggars arose during the traditional period because of the extremely large numbers of charlatans, for whom the life of the beggar was a lifestyle choice and a craft.⁸³ These types of beggars were the target of harsh criticism by A. Fromas-Gužutis: “Of all those associations of beggars only perhaps a quarter is constituted by those who cannot work at all, while three quarters, although they could feed themselves cheaply by taking on various jobs and herding cattle, are good-for-nothings, lazy, often drunks, debauched and thieves, and do not want to work, but pretend to have

82 *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*. T V. Atsak. redaktorius K. Ulvydas. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1959, p. 130, 131.

83 Rima Praspaliauskienė. *Nereikalingi ir pavojingi. XVI-II a. pabaigos – XIX a. pirmosios pusės elgetos, valkatos ir plėšikai Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Žara, 2000, p. 48.

a disease and take to the craft of begging, and wander the towns, villages and fairs.”⁸⁴

It was for this reason that the majority of sayings, proverbs, comparisons and curses associated with begging and tramps have a negative connotation: “The bread of the beggar is easy, but not tasty,” “You can feed a beggar but you won’t fill his basket,” “The eyes of the glutton and the beggar’s bag are sewn of a single thread,” “They go and they go like beggars towards redemption,” “Searching like a beggar for the way to salvation,” “Walking like a beggar with head down,” “Screaming like a beggar with a whip,” “Arguing like the beggar of Pivašiūnai with God,” “Cry like a beggar who spilled the grain,” “Passed from conversation like a beggar from a prayer,” “You can’t fill the pockets of a beggar,” “The prayers of the beggar are like the fasting of the wolf;” and the following phraseology: *driven to a beggar* “ruined,” *the beggar’s rag-shoes* “disheveled,” *the beggars pokes his stick out* “mucus, snot dripping from the nose;” and curses: “a piece of the beggar,” “the beggar’s navel,” “the beggar’s cloak,” “the beggar’s bit [for horses],” “the beggar’s nail,” “follow the hobble of the beggar,”⁸⁵ “stallion of God,”⁸⁶ and many others.

Stories and tales contain similar views of beggars, but, according to B. Kerbelytė, are characterized by a more rational attitude towards them and engage in polemic with

ancient folk beliefs. In these stories beggars are often pictured as charlatans, confidence men, frauds, playboys, ruffians, debauchers and so on.⁸⁷

It was most likely for this reason that beggars (tramps) became objects of derision in Lithuanian Shrovetide carnival processions. The person playing the part of the tramp didn’t just copy the common village beggar, as A. Vaicekuskas claims, but imitated much more the classic beggar charlatan, dressed in ragged clothing, using a walking stick, limping and carrying a huge hat for the collection of alms.⁸⁸ This is true as well of the songs and hymns of the Shrovetide tramp character.⁸⁹

Conclusions

1. In the 16th and 17th centuries the supplicant was already performing sacrifices in secret from the ecclesiastical and temporal powers, and was forced to wander about and hide his calling, thus becoming the original supplicant-beggar, whom, according to tradition, the community continued to maintain and support.

⁸⁷ Bronislava Kerbelytė. *Lietuvių pasakojamosios tautosakos katalogas*, t. IV. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2009, p. 130–131; *Pasakos, sakmės, oracijos*. Surinko Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis. Vilnius: Vaga, p. 298–300; *Nuo Punsko iki Seinų. Iš Juozo Vainos rinkinių*. Sudarė ir parengė Danutė Krištopaitė. Punska „Aušros“ leidykla, 1998, p. 54.

⁸⁸ Arūnas Vaicekuskas. *Lietuvių žiemos šventės*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2005, p. 135.

⁸⁹ For more see *Žemaičių kalendorinė tautosaka: Užgavėnių dainos*. Sudarė Lina Petrošienė ir Jonas Bukantis. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2010; *Lingu palingu balti suoleliai. Kalendorinės dainos*. Parengė Jurgita Ūsaitytė (tekstus), Aušra Žičkienė (melodijas). Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2009.

⁸⁴ Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis. *Baisioji gadynė*. Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1955, p. 102.

⁸⁵ *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*, t. XVII. Vyr. redaktorius Vytautas Vitkauskas. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1996, p. 344–349; *Frazeologijos žodynas*. Redaktorių kolegija: Jonas Paulauskas [et. al.]. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos institutas, 2001, p. 758–759.

⁸⁶ Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis. *Baisioji gadynė*. Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1955, p. 10.

2. From the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 18th century the beggar had become a syncretic figure of two religions (pre-Christian and Christian) made up of equal parts Christian charity and honor for the remains of the old hierophantic class.

3. The differentiation of the image of the beggar in the traditional period (to negative and positive) is connected with the appearance of the so-called charlatan beggars.

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