

Verification of mythological material
on celebrations as recorded by Matthaeus Praetorius:
The celebration of grain harvest
(*Samborios/Sqbarios*)

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Abstract. In analyzing the pre-Christian culture of the Balts, the nucleus of which consists of pagan religious logic and mythology, there is a problem of the value and reliability of the recorded writings concerning the former. The following article reviews and verifies the mythological information that directly relates to the grain harvest (*Samborios/Sqbarios*) celebration recorded by Matthaeus Praetorius (*Matthäus Prätorius*) in «*Deliciae Prussicae oder Preussische Schaubühne*» (*Deliciae Prussicae or Prussian Theater*, late 17th century). Thereon, the paper discusses the interpretations made by the researchers in the 19th – 21st centuries who analyzed the mythological material on grain harvest recorded by Praetorius (*Samborios/Sqbarios*). The context of the research conducted in the 19th – 21st centuries reveals that the scholars of earlier periods gave different assessments to the reliability of the aforementioned mythological material provided by Praetorius: they did not question authenticity, but considered the information to be quite reliable, and used it in their works; the scholars noticed the authenticity problem, but did not try to solve it. The analysis suggests to determine whether the mythological material related directly to the grain harvest (*Samborios/Sqbarios*) celebration recorded by Praetorius is to be considered authentic and reliable.

Keywords: Matthaeus Praetorius, grain harvest celebration, Samborios, Sqbarios, authenticity, Pre-Christian Baltic religion and mythology

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Верификация
зафиксированного Маттеусом Преторием
мифологического материала о праздниках:
праздник урожая зерновых
(*Санбориос/Сабариос*)

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Аннотация. Анализ дохристианской балтийской культуры, ядром которой является языческая религиозная логика, поднимает проблему достоверности ее письменности. В статье рассматривается мифологическая информация, связанная с праздником урожая зерновых (*Санбориос/Сабариос*), которая была записана Маттеусом Преторием в работе «*Deliciae Prussicae, или Прусский театр*» (конец XVII века), и производится ее верификация. Последовательно обсуждаются интерпретации, проведенные в XIX–XXI вв. учеными, исследовавшими зафиксированный М. Преторием мифологический материал о празднике урожая зерновых (*Санбориос/Сабариос*). Контекст проведенных в то время исследований показал, что ученые до сих пор давали разную оценку достоверности мифологического материала М. Претория: не ставили под сомнение его подлинность и использовали ее в своих работах; заметили проблему подлинности, но не пытались ее решить. Исследование показало, что мифологический материал, записанный М. Преторием и имеющий непосредственное отношение к празднику урожая зерновых (*Санбориос/Сабариос*), следует считать подлинным и достоверным.

Ключевые слова: Маттеус Преторий, праздник урожая зерновых, Санбориос, Сабариос, подлинность, дохристианская балтийская культура и мифология

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Introduction

The principal objective of this study is to verify the reliability of the mythological information about the grain harvest celebration (*Samborios/Sqbarios*) that Matthaëus Praetorius (*Matthäus Prätorius*)

recorded in his work “*Deliciae Prussicae or Prussian Theater*” (*Deliciae Prussicae, oder Preussische Schaubühne*, hereinafter referred to as the “*Deliciae Prussicae*”). The study will do that (1) by reviewing and assessing the interpretations made by scholars in the 19th – 21st centuries, who analyzed or employed the information that Praetorius provided (that is, the research context) and (2) by analyzing the material that Praetorius recorded and comparing it with ethnographic and verbal folklore materials (that is, verification). To accomplish the established objective, the study uses the following methods: analytical method, hermeneutic interpretation method, comparative method and text visualization method. It is noteworthy to mention that this is the fourth written work from the planned series of studies which aims to determine the reliability of Praetorius’ information on the celebration. The authenticity of Praetorius’ mythological information on sowing celebration, midsummer herb fest, and the celebration of driving the cattle to pasture, as well of rye harvest celebration, has already been disputed [Vičinskas 2018a, pp. 233–269; Vičinskas 2018b, pp. 110–132; Vičinskas 2019, pp. 17–41; Vičinskas 2018c, pp. 135–176]. Since the introductory part of the first publication in the series – the one on sowing – outlines the basic characteristics of the agricultural celebrations, captured by Praetorius, which potentially reflect or have preserved the relics of the Balts’ ancient religious behavior, the readers who seek a more detailed insight into the subject in question would also find it useful to familiarize themselves with that material as well [Vičinskas 2018a, pp. 233–269; Vičinskas 2018c, pp. 135–160].

*The context of research into mythological information
about the celebration of grain harvest (Samborios/Sqbarios)*

In order to actualize the problem of verifying the mythological information provided by Praetorius, we will first assess the context of previous research. Chronologically – from the earliest to the latest ones – we will present and describe the 19th to 21st centuries’ interpretations by the scholars who have studied (used) mythological material on the grain harvest celebration (*Samborios/Sqbarios*) that Praetorius described.

Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1847) writes that “Mother Earth was worshipped by Lithuanians until just recently, by holding a celebration dedicated to her in the autumn. For the celebration, they’d make a special drink from grains of various kinds that they tied into three sheaves and threshed all together, a certain kind of beer called *sambariu* (*Zembarys*) or *sambarinis* (*Zemberinis*). During the sacrificial feast, it was poured on the ground along with addressing the goddess as follows:

Žemynėlė ziedėklė, pakylek musū Ranku Darbus! (Lovely Žemyna, the blooming lady, elevate our hands' doings!)¹. It is noteworthy that it is Praetorius who, as the first chronicler of the ancient written sources, recorded the structure of the *Sambarios/Sqbarios* and the prayers to be said at this celebration to Žemyna in detail. Kraszewski manipulates the mythological material provided by Praetorius, but does not raise the issue of authenticity. According to August Schleicher (1853), the theonym *Žemberys* or *Žembarys* is “the one who sprinkles the land”, this is a correctly composed coinage of the Lithuanian words “žemė” (land, soil, ground) and “berti” (to pour, to strew, to sprinkle)². “In dialects, the hard vowel ‘e’ often alternates with ‘a’, so there is nothing one could reprove to the ‘žemberys’ form”³. Interestingly, according to Wilhelm Mannhardt (see below) – by the way, Norbertas Vėlius and Jonas Balys⁴ also agreed with that – the form of the theonym *Žemberys* emerged from the name of the *sambarios* celebration recorded by Praetorius⁵. Mannhardt notes that, according to the materials of “*Deliciae Prussicae*”, «Lithuanians had the custom of pouring a bit of beer or vodka on the ground <...> or *do žemynėliavimas* <...> on all the occasions before drinking”⁶. Along with that, he presents a formula for prayer to Žemyna, which was used before drinking on all occasions of agrarian festivities (sowing, harvesting, threshing, and the Feast of St. John)⁷. Mannhardt used Praetorius’ mythological material on the celebrations (including *Sambarios / Sqbarios*). He seemed to give it positive evaluation and did not question its credibility.

Pranė Dundulienė (1969), in her work “Senovės lietuvių religijos klausimu” (“On the issue of Ancient Lithuanian Religion”), in discussing the goddess Žemyna, operates Praetorius’ material about the celebration for which beer would be made from “<...> nine handfuls of grain crops from the first reaping, mixed with barley <...>”⁸.

¹ *Lietuvių mitologija* / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995. T. 1. P. 204.

² Ibid. P. 235.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Balys J.* Lietuvių žemdirbystės papročiai ir tikėjimai: lietuvių liaudies tradicijos, Lietuvių tautosakos lobynas, Silver Spring, Maryland: Lietuvių tautosakos leidykla, 1986. T. 10. P. 200 (position 3001a).

⁵ *Mannhardt W.* Letto-Preussische Götterlehre. Riga: Herausgegeben von der Lettisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft, 1936. P. 472–473, 568–572; *Lietuvių mitologija...* T. 1. P. 526.

⁶ *Lietuvių mitologija...* T. 1. P. 285.

⁷ Ibid. P. 285–286.

⁸ *Lietuvių mitologija* / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius ir Gintaras Beresnevičius. Vilnius: Mintis, 2004. T. 3. P. 197–198; see also [Dundulienė 1963, p. 208].

Dundulienė reproduces quite precisely the mythological information of the source to be verified. On the other hand, it was not possible to avoid inaccuracies completely. The scholar refers incorrectly to the main character, or the performer of the sacrifice, in the celebration in question. Dundulienė says that it is “the eldest person (in the celebration. – Ž. V.)”⁹, although the original writes that it was the owner of the homestead who performed the ceremony¹⁰. The researcher gives Praetorius’ mythological information a positive evaluation, leaving the question of authenticity aside.

Žilvytis Šaknys (2000), in his article “Sambariai”, set the goal of revealing the traditions of the sambariai as the feast for the youth (first of all, shepherds) from the late 19th century to early 20th century [Šaknys 2000]. In presenting the context of the research, he retells Praetorius’ mythological information [Šaknys 2000, p. 2]. The result is precise, with references to the original. The scholar points out that Praetorius seems to have written a few times about sambariai (sambariai beer) in the work under research [Šaknys 2000, p. 2]. He suggests that “<...> either in those times, there were two celebrations called sambariai, or the word meant simply the brewing of communal beer” [Šaknys 2000, p. 2]. The author does not raise the problem of verification of Praetorius’ mythological material.

Vladimir Toporov (2000), in reconstructing the Baltic-Slavic mythological image of Mother Earth, gives a positive response to Praetorius’ mythological information. The scholar relies heavily on the information provided in “Deliciae Prussicae” about *Žemyna* [Toporov 2000, pp. 259–262]. According to Toporov, “<...> for the first time, the work by this author mentions *Žemyna* in a diagnostically significant context (which, by the way, demonstrates the authenticity of his reports), based on the studies of materials by authors who wrote about Prussians, as well as Praetorius’ own experience” [Toporov 2000, pp. 258–259]. In his opinion, “<...> in terms of information, we should consider <...> the descriptions of rituals devoted to *Žemyna* the most valuable, especially when they contain texts that are usually translated into German, but often, as a sign of reality, presented along with the Lithuanian version that was recorded in East Prussia” [Toporov 2000, p. 261]. Toporov also rewrites Praetorius’ information about the grain harvest celebration sambariai [Toporov 2000, p. 263–264]. Commenting on this fragment of the material, he compares it with a typologically close Slavic ritual tradition. In the scholar’s understanding, the method of sacrificing the rooster and the

⁹ *Lietuvių mitologija...* T. 3. P. 197.

¹⁰ *Pretorijus M. Prūsijos idomybės, arba Prūsijos regykla / Parengė I. Lukšaitė, bendradarbiaudama su M. Girdzijauskaite, S. Drevello, J. Kiliumi, M. Čiurinsku. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2006. P. 511.*

hen (sprinkling the ground with their blood in order to increase land fertility) at this ceremony is to be associated with “<...> the motif of the principal myth – that of fertilizing the Mother Earth with rain” [Toporov 2000, p. 264].

Nijolė Laurinkienė has prepared two publications (2009, 2012) dedicated to the analysis of the celebration of sambariai and / or three nonaries. She relied on Praetorius' source in both the first and the second ones. Interestingly, her first work (2009) employs the rather late testimony of Jacob Brodowskÿ, who mentions the god *Sambarys* (*Sambarijs*)¹¹. Laurinkienė tends to accept the statement that this is a deity related to the earth and its provided goods – grains [Laurinkienė 2009, p. 15]. Moreover, she puts forward a hypothesis that this is one of the names of *Žemėpatis* [Laurinkienė 2009, pp. 9, 14–15; see also Laurinkienė 2013, pp. 366–367]. The publication, based on written sources and the ethnographic data from the 19th to 20th centuries, argues that the sambariai celebration was organized several times (during one year cycle): for Easter and Pentecost – in the spring; after the grain harvest – at the end of summer; for the commemoration of the dead – in the late autumn [Laurinkienė 2009, pp. 9–10; Laurinkienė 2013, pp. 367–369].

As we have mentioned, the core of the article in question is Praetorius' mythological material, which the author tries to interpret [Laurinkienė 2009, pp. 10–14]. She raises the following question: who is the God who is being addressed during sambariai? It is doubtful that this was the object of Christian devotion. Because it is unlikely that poultry could be sacrificed to Christ. In the opinion of Laurinkienė, these offerings are more likely to be made in the honour of *Žemėpatis*, who is the brother of the goddess *Žemyna*. The author reasons that, during the housewarming celebration that Praetorius recorded, poultry are also sacrificed, and the prayer says: “Dear God (some say *Zemepatie*) <...>, I am giving these perky, healthy rooster and hen to You as a gift <...>”¹². As a result, the author assumes that the God to whom people appeal during sambariai is *Žemėpatis*, too [Laurinkienė 2009, p. 13; Laurinkienė 2013, pp. 365–366, 370–373]¹³. Interestingly,

¹¹ Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2005. T. 4. P. 29. See also the testimony by Philipp Ruhig – *Žembarys* (*Žembarys*) (P. 43) and the testimony by Christian Gottlieb Mielcke – *Žembarys* (*Žembarys*) (P. 82).

¹² *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 555.

¹³ True, Laurinkienė, in her somewhat newer study based on Pretorius' testimony, now states firmly: “<...> that the sambariai, which were performed at different times, were most often dedicated to *Žemyna* and *Žemėpatis*” [Laurinkienė 2013, p. 366].

the researcher, in her article dating from 2009, responds positively to the interpretation by the ethnologist Libertas Klimka [Klimka 1999, p. 122], who relates the meaning of the number twenty-seven and the combination of “three nonaries” with astronomical phenomena [Laurinkienė 2009, p. 15]. However, in her monograph dating from 2013, the scholar mentions the interpretation given by Klimka as a questionable concept, which requires a more extensive research in Baltic sacral numerology [Laurinkienė 2013, p. 368]. Laurinkienė attempts to explain the ritual number by the information provided in the report by the Jesuits of the College of Vilnius (1600) that offerings to goddesses (*Deyues*) worshiped in the form of stones in the granaries, the guardians of grain and animals, were twenty-seven pieces of bread [Laurinkienė 2013, p. 369]. The numbers – 3, 9, and 27 – were also used in incantations of snake bites and other illnesses¹⁴. Later on, in her article “Alus – apeiginis baltų gėrimas” (“Beer as the ritual drink of the Balts”) (2012) she attempts to discuss the importance of beer as a ritual drink in the pre-Christian tradition. The publication handles, plentifully, Praetorius’ mythological information about the celebration of sambarios, or “ant tryu dewinu” (“on the three nonaries”) [Laurinkienė 2012, pp. 21–22, 25, 28]. In summary, the researcher used Praetorius’ mythological material as a reliable source, but did not question its authenticity. Rimantas Balsys (2010) also uses the materials provided by Praetorius to reason that “during the process of desacralization of the ancient harvest deities, <...> the protection of crops is gradually taken over by the Christian God and some of the saints” [Balsys 2010, pp. 157–158]. Along with that, the author provides a detailed fragment of the description of celebrating sambarios, or the harvest reaping celebration (held in early January (?)¹⁵), where prayers are said to both God and lovely *Žemyna* [Balsys 2010, p. 158]. The scholar uses the mythological information of “Deliciae Prussiae” to prove his hypothesis and gives the mythological material by Praetorius a positive assessment.

Mangirdas Bumblauskas (2012), in his publication “Žemaitijos virsmo iš pagoniškos į krikščionišką visuomenę klausimu” (“On the

¹⁴ Lietuvių užkalbėjimų šaltiniai: elektroninis sąvadas [The Sources of Lithuanian Incantations] / parengė Daiva Vaitkevičienė, CD-ROM, Vilnius, 2005. P. 79, 80–82, 84, 85, 705, 831.

¹⁵ The researcher seems to have followed the translation of Volume 3 of the “Baltic Religion and Mythology Sources” (see Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003. T. 3. P. 292) (Dominykas Urbas), and therefore misrepresented the time of the celebration. The original says that the *Sambariai* / *Sqbarios* celebration was held at the end of December (see: *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 510).

Issue of Transformation of Samogitia from a Pagan to a Christian Society”), bases on Praetorius’ testimony of a poultry sacrifice during the ceremony [Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123]. Strangely enough, Bumblauskas, in quoting the text of the work under verification – for example, rewriting the prayer by the master of the house to both God and *Žemyna* during the *Sambarios* celebration – gives no references [Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123]¹⁶. Judging by the structure of the transcript¹⁷, this is assumed to be a Lithuanian translation taken from volume 3 of “Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai” (“Baltic Religion and Mythology Sources”)¹⁸. To the knowledge of the historian, during the celebration of grain harvest, people said “Lord’s Prayer” and other Christian prayers (“Credo”, the Ten Commandments, etc.) for several times [Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123]. Unfortunately, this time, the author does not give the reader any exact references to the source retold either. Bumblauskas states that Praetorius’ mythological material in question reveals a ritual synchronicity, because offerings are made to both the Christian God and lovely *Žemyna* (Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123). He relies upon Praetorius’ mythological information about the offering made during grain harvest celebration and does not raise the problem of authenticity.

An overview and analysis of the interpretations of mythological material about grain harvest (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*) celebration that Praetorius provided has revealed that the scholars of the 19th to 21st centuries can be divided into two groups based on their use and evaluation of his information. The first one did not discuss over the question of the authenticity of Matthaueus Praetorius’ mythological information on grain harvest (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*) celebration, but still considered it sufficiently reliable, and used them in their scientific works (Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, August Schleicher, Wilhelm Mannhardt, Pranė Dundulienė, Žilvytis Šaknys, Nijolė Laurinkienė, Rimantas Balsys, Mangirdas Bumblauskas). The second group of the scholars felt the problem of authenticity of the mythological material provided by Praetorius, but hesitated to commit to making it subject to verification (Vladimir Toporov).

¹⁶ Bumblauskas also briefly mentions Praetorius’ testimony of offering poultry: “<...> a rooster is offered <...> to Gabjaujis (*Gabjaugis*) during a celebration dedicated to this god, after finishing to thresh the grain <...>” [Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123]. However, the historian does not provide an exact reference to the source that he relies on.

¹⁷ “God and you, lovely *Žemyna*, please, consider that we are giving you these rooster and hen as a gift, accept them as an offering that we are making to you from our pure heart” [Bumblauskas 2012, p. 123].

¹⁸ Baltų religijos... T. 3. P. 293.

Verification of mythological information on the celebration of grain harvest (Samborios/Sqbarios)

The whole seventh chapter of the fifth book of “*Deliciae Prussicae*” is dedicated to the grain harvest celebration (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*). After reviewing and structuring the material in the chapter, we can reconstruct four (0, 1, 2, 3)¹⁹ major plotlines of grain harvest celebration (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*) or “on the three nonaries” (*ant tryu dewinu*): 0. Preparing for the grain harvest celebration, 1. The first part of the grain harvest celebration – blessing of the beer (led by the master of the house), 2. The second part of grain harvest celebration – offerings of poultry (led by the master of the house). 3. The third part of the grain harvest celebration – the family giving thanks for the harvest brought in (led by the master of the house). It should be noted that the introduction of plotlines into the field of study should be seen as a methodological tool to summarize the diversity of Praetorius’ materials. For example, in some cases, the plotlines indicate that there may be several different versions of the same action. Praetorius has repeatedly described celebrations of agrarian nature, where variations of the plotline “X” are possible. Let us say, if it is the owner of the homestead that leads the ceremony, the participants of the latter act one way, and if it is the priest – another way (see also [Vičinskas 2018c, pp. 148–160]). Dividing the action described by Praetorius into plotlines is useful, because therefore, we can split the plot into separate aspects (timing, location, main / secondary characters, types of offering, etc.), which makes it easier to prove or disprove the authenticity of the material.

0 plotline²⁰. The master of the house’s part consists of several actions: specific mixing of grains; brewing²¹. Initially, he pours the first grains²² of all the sorts that have been sown and now reaped,

¹⁹ The plotlines of the “X” celebrations will be marked with Arabic numerals starting with zero. In this context, zero shall mark the stage of preparation for the “X” celebration recorded by Praetorius. Although preparation for making offerings is an important matter, however, judging from the source of Praetorius, it is not yet a ritual. Due to this, to mark the preparing for the celebration with a zero appears to be a rational solution; zero is a number, too, but it is not as specific as, for example, number one or two.

²⁰ *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 511, 513.

²¹ Beer and vodka are associated with the mythological world, because “In ancient religions, the plants and drinks that induce intoxication or hallucinations were considered to be particularly mythologically important in helping to communicate with the gods” [Vélius 1987, p. 40].

²² Rye, wheat, flaxseed, barley, peas, beans, lentils, etc.

together, comprising an overall amount of nine handfuls of grain. Praetorius explains that the first grains are the ones that were the first to be threshed and winnowed. By winnowing, they are separated from other grains, and if the first ones mix with other grains, they are no longer suitable for further rituals (*i n h i b i t i o n I*)²³. As we will see below, the text of the *Sambarios* celebration contains a number of inhibitions that are likely to reflect the earlier model of Baltic religion and mythology. We can identify the above-mentioned restrictions more precisely, basing on the guidelines of Lithuanian and Prussian religious inhibitions that Balsys has proposed [Balsys 2017, pp. 139–140]. In his opinion, ancient religious inhibitions can be measured by using the following two parameters: by their time of application (chronologically) and by type. Chronologically, Lithuanian and Prussian religious inhibitions are to be classified into three groups: 1) unconditionally functioning religious inhibition (until the christening and over at least two centuries after the christening); 2) declining religious inhibition (the late 16th century to early 17th century); 3) faded inhibition, which has become part of a custom, a belief or a superstition [Balsys 2017, p. 139]. In parallel, Balsys distinguishes by character between the following two types of Lithuanian and Prussian religious inhibitions: a) inhibition in contact with objects, places, persons, etc. in seeking to protect the contacting person from their harmful impact (punishment, illness, disaster, death); b) inhibition in seeking to protect the sacred place, object, person, etc., so as these would not lose their sacredness [Balsys 2017, p. 139]. In the subsequent text of the publication, when we notice an inhibition in the description of *Sambarios* provided by Praetorius, we shall identify it according to the system discussed above (both chronologically and typologically). Based on the classification of Lithuanian and Prussian inhibitions, the involuntary (self-) mixing of first grains with non-first ones is chronologically close to the subgroup of the declining religious inhibition. The purpose of this restriction is to protect the sacred object (i.e., the grain that was the very first to be threshed and winnowed), so that it does not lose its sacredness.

According to “*Deliciae Prussicae*”, each handful is gathered from three parts, or three different grains. This means that the master of the house gathers the grain crop for three times each, until it makes one handful; he does that for as many as twenty-seven times in total ($3 \times 9 = 27$). Significantly, the combination of “three nonaries” is witnessed in the traditions of the Feast of St. John. For example,

²³ Such belief (in the form of insurance) has probably developed from a former religious taboo.

“Before the sun rises, one has to run through nine fields three times, collect nine herbs for three times (the three nonaries), pick up from each field a small stone, give cows water with the herbs, make lovely pots steam with the small stones, which will result in a lot of sour cream, and the witches will not take the milk (Tverečius)” [Balys 2013, pp. 231, 233]. The master of the house then uses the grain gathered in this (3 × 9) manner to brew beer. If the malt made from the poured grain is not sufficient for sprouting, then he adds some barley or oats. Later, the malt in the homestead is sprouted, dried, ground and malted, and the mash is separated. Finally, the master of the house brews the beer, which is then stored in barrels. Brewing cannot be done at a neighbor’s place or at somebody else’s place (inhibition II). The latter behavioral restriction is to be chronologically attributable to the subgroup of declining religious inhibitions that aim to protect the sacred object²⁴ so that it does not lose its sacredness.

In the author’s opinion, inhibition is, in principle, an ambivalent phenomenon that can simultaneously show “both sides of the coin”. It is assumed that one or another inhibition exists only when it is possible to behave in the opposite manner (which is usually done). For example, if object “X” is inhibited to use during the ceremony, we can assume that there are (or will be) those who break the inhibition. Hence, the fact that Praetorius emphasizes particularly that the *Sambarios* beer is not to be brewed “<...> at a neighbor’s place or at somebody else’s place <...>”²⁵, allows for a cautious assumption that he had information about similar behavior. Hypothetically, there existed two different groups of people in the Praetorius’ period, whose religious practices he had information on. One group celebrated *Sambariai* in a relatively private manner, inside one’s family. The other group, on the contrary, invited their close acquaintances (let us say, neighbors) to the meeting. Such a contextual prediction is reinforced by a specific statement that Praetorius makes. He emphasizes that, while the hired workers will be able to drink the *Sambariai* beer (see below), they cannot invite any guests (inhibition III, although the owner is left with the freedom to wave his hand in saying: “Pas mus?”, i.e. “to our place”? (*Zu uns?*)²⁶. This fragment contains two important things: the restriction of hired workers’ freedom and the rights of the master of the house. The fact that the owner of the homestead described by Praetorius has, in theory, the right to invite outsiders (guests) to *Sambariai*, reinforces the hypothesis that we have suggested earlier.

²⁴ Beer, and more generally, the whole brewing process, i.e. starting from grain sprouting to mash separation.

²⁵ *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 511–513.

²⁶ *Ibid.* P. 513.

In succession, the third inhibition captured here traces the declining religious inhibition which seeks to protect the sacredness of the sacred object²⁷.

The first mash, a quarter or half of the barrel²⁸, is to be separated and fermented by the master of the house. The drink made from the first mash is special, because only the owners of the homestead and their children will be entitled to it – others are not allowed to drink it (i n h i b i t i o n I V). According to the author of the publication, the fourth inhibition also responds to the declining religious inhibition that seeks to protect the sacredness of the sacred object (beer brewed from the primary mash). Beer brewed from the secondary mash will be available for regale by the hired workers and outsiders. On the one hand, the primary mash, in terms of quality, is worse than secondary, as it may contain malt dregs, which, at the time of malting, do not turn into sugar. The secondary mash is more transparent and of higher quality. On the other hand, the primary mash is m o r e a u t h e n t i c (closer to the farmer's environment) because it – as a kind of “beer inclusion” – has conserved the results of the farmer's labor of that period of time.

In written sources, we can distinguish more cases in which communal beer that has been brewed / brought / gathered from different grains appears. According to the “Sudovian Book” (~1520–1530), tribute money is collected for beer brewing (where appropriate) at the celebration that is held after the harvest reaping. It should be noted that there are two possible sequences of the event from that point. The first variant is a good harvest of grains. In that case, beer is purchased from the total income from the land plot, i.e., the harvest reaped from that plot is sold and the money received is used to pay for the beer²⁹. The second is a bad harvest of grains. If there is no grain crop on the communal land plot, it means that the gods have been wrathful. In this case, a «communal tribute» is set by the households³⁰. “Each one has to give half quarter of barley for the beer, sometimes, the whole

²⁷ Beer, and more generally, the whole brewing process, i.e. starting from grain sprouting to mash separation.

²⁸ “<...> depending on the wealth of the master of the house”. *Pretorijus M. Op. cit.* P. 513. The remark makes a presupposition that, during *Sambarius*, the wealthy behaved in one way, while the struggling behaved in another way. This allows us to consider that Praetorius either observed the action described here more than once or had some information about it from his helpers and/or intermediaries.

²⁹ Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001. T. 2. P. 146.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 146–147.

quarter”³¹. Judging by the context, the communal collection of beer and tribute could symbolize not only the gratitude for the good harvest, but also collective apology of the people, which was meant to reduce the gods’ disgrace. The material provided by Maciej Strykowski (1582) says that in the area of Courland and Sambia, as well as in Prussia, people “<...> go directly from the church to an alehouse or to some house where communal beer is brewed <...>”³². By the knowledge of Strykowski, in Lithuania and Samogitia, people also prepared their friends’ commemoration events by holding particular ceremonies – «the chief owner, when everyone has to start eating, takes a ladle full of all kinds of grains, salt and other things, along with some incense, and, having smudged it, says: “A za wissumos priatelos musu!” <...> (“And for all our buddies!”)³³. Finally, Jacobus Lavinius (1583) writes that “For the day of Pentecost, families would bring each a certain amount of grain and, having made a drink from them, would gather together on a holy day <...>”³⁴.

Alongside with that, we should remember the complaint that Lukas Stanislovaitis Kolotovas (*Лукаш Станиславович Колотов*) (1593) made to the Samogitian Land Court. Kolotovas asserts that his servant Baltramiejus Petraitis (*Балтромей Петрович*), while staying as a guest at the house of Baltramiejus Teodoraitis (*Балтромей Федорович*), a clerk of Vilkija district of the Samogitian Land, and drinking communal sambariai beer (*пиво самборы*), on June 29th, was hurt by the stick used by Urbonas Baltramiejaitis (*Урбан Балтромеевич*), the son of the district clerk³⁵. The Jesuit annual reports (1600) state that in Lithuanian villages, people “<...> at the set time of the year, having gathered the harvest from the fields, make offerings to the gods or, more fairly, to the demons. Then, having brought the grains together to the priest or the offerings maker – who is a little older than the others, and supposedly surpasses others in the knowledge of divine things, – they brew some beer and bake some bread”³⁶.

Another quite significant piece of information is the testimony of Paul Einhorn (1636) that Latvians, during a plague attack, “<...> would make offerings that they called sambariai (sobar); it was a communal offering made by many people, and everyone would give as

³¹ Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai / Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001. T. 2. P. 147.

³² Ibid. P. 551.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. P. 609.

³⁵ Ibid. P. 643; see also: *Jablonskis K.* Archyvinės smulkmenos, Iš Praeitis. Issue 2. Kaunas: Varpas, 1933. P. 412–414.

³⁶ Baltų religijos... T. 2. P. 627.

much money as the other and buy a piece of meat for the sum collected for that offering and sacrifice it, and whatever was left from it, they themselves would eat it. In the same manner of equality, they would pour together flour from which they cooked and baked meals, and then performed their pagan rituals together, and called out to God so that he would chase away the plague <...> many still appreciate this custom even nowadays, and although it cannot be followed publicly, people follow it secretly; as they told me for themselves <...>³⁷.

It should be noted that the mythological material by Einhorn correlates partially with the “Sudovian Book”. In both cases, we can interpret the sambariai beer as people’s symbolic apology³⁸ to the gods meant to divert their wrath. The believers pray to give them better grain harvest in the coming year(s), or to protect them from the plague epidemic. The time of the *Sambarios* gatherings that the ancient written sources mention varies: after reaping the harvest (two times); during commemoration of the dead (one time); during Pentecost (two times); in case of plague (one time). It seems that one part of the documents speaks about the spring, the second – about the autumn, and the third – about variable time. Nevertheless, grains (in the form of a beverage, flour, or baked goods) play a particularly important role in all the offerings. This allows a suggestion that the mythological information provided by Praetorius is typologically close to that of previous authors.

Getting back to the “*Deliciae Prussicae*”, we should mention the preparations that the lady of the house makes – the thermal conditioning of the poultry used in the ceremony. She must prepare the hen and/or the rooster for the offering as follows: to disembowel it, clean it, and boil it (in the second part of the celebration). According to the source to be verified, direct exposure to fire (for example, meat baking) is not permitted during the cooking of poultry (i n h i b i t i o n V). In the latter process, the hired workers in the homestead are not allowed to either participate or taste the meal that is being cooked (i n h i b i t i o n VI). Basing on the classification of the Lithuanian and Prussian inhibitions, both the fifth and the sixth inhibitions are to be chronologically attributable to the subgroup of declining religious inhibitions aimed at protecting the sacred object (poultry meat) so that it does not lose its sacredness. The lady of the house serves the poultry ready to be offered in a bowl, which she puts on a *puspūris*³⁹ covered with a tablecloth, sitting

³⁷ Baltų religijos... T. 3. P. 614.

³⁸ In the first case, for the inappropriate behavior that led to an infertile year. The second is the inappropriate behavior that may have prompted the plague.

³⁹ *Puspūris* is a dry measure, but in this specific case it is an improvised altar (on *puspūrē* (*pūras*) as home altar, see [Balsys 2017, pp. 86–87, 90–91].

(bottom upwards) in the middle of the room (in the second part of the celebration). The cover (tablecloths, table linen, table napkin) is laid on an improvised ritual altar (the table, the *puspūris* bottom upwards), which mythologists regard as a reliable attribute that has replaced the straw, hay, or a mixture of hay and straw previously used on these occasions [Balsys 2011, pp. 157–158].

Next to the chicken, the lady of the house puts other food – round bread loaves and butter. “*Deliciae Prussicae*” do not say who bakes the round breads – we assume that the lady of the house of the homestead does. The round breads are baked from the grains that the master of the house has poured together, most of which are rye and wheat⁴⁰. The breads are shaped in accordance with the bread-eater: a bigger one for the adult and smaller one for the child, so that everyone can eat theirs at one go⁴¹. On the day of blessing the grains, the two owners of the homestead are not to quarrel with those around them, especially the hired workers (*inhibition VII*). Praetorius testifies that at that time, the master of the houses treat them as kindly as possible. The seventh inhibition corresponds chronologically to the declining religious inhibition which restricts contact with persons in seeking to protect the contacting person from their harmful impact.

1 plotline⁴².

1.1. TIMING. At the beginning of December, when the grains that have been brought in after harvesting are started to be threshed, and rye has been sown (the time of day is evening).

1.2. LOCATION. The text does not specify it, but judging by the context, it is the room where beer barrels are stored.

1.3. PERSON(-S) WHO MAKE(S) THE OFFERING. The owner of the homestead begins the ceremony, having consciously become separated from the rest of the household.

1.4. INANIMATE OFFERING (-S). Before pulling the plug out of the barrel, the master of the house, having got down on his knees in front of the beer quarter or beer barrel, prays to God as follows: “You gracious God, you have given me this gift of yours, bless it out of your loving-kindness, let me continue to use Your custody further

One *puspūris* corresponds to 24 *gorčius* (1 *gorčius* equals 2 litres) [Martinkėnas 1966, pp. 123–127].

⁴⁰ In the traditional era, a similar intent («so that the harvest is good») was being expressed at Bloviščiai, or Storks’ Day (April 1) by baking cakes from mixed grains of different kinds. Balys J. Lietuvių žemdirbystės papročiai ir tikėjimai... P. 19–20 (positions 299–302).

⁴¹ Cf. the offering of a goat in the “Sudovian Book” (Baltų religijos... T. 2. P. 148).

⁴² *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 511, 513.

on”⁴³). Then, he pulls the plug out of the barrel and pours some of the drink into a small flagon, and before drinking, he pours some off onto the barrel plug *to lovely Žemyna* [lith. *Žemynėlei*. – *Ž. V.*], saying the following words, see Table 1.

Table 1

Authentic information by Matthaëus Praetorius

AUTHENTIC INFORMATION
<i>Zemyne, zedkellei, zydek / ruggeis, mezais ir wissais jauweis, buk linksmas, Diewe, ant / musu, pri tu musu darbu Szwents Angelas pributu ir piktū / zmozgu priszalin nukraipyk, kad mus ne apioktu // Lovely Žemyna, the one who brings out blossom, bloom / in the rye, barley and all the grains, be cheerful, God, upon /us, so that the Holy Angel stays beside our works and divert an evil/ person away from us so that (s)he does not ridicule us</i> ⁴⁴ .

2 plotline⁴⁵.

2.1. TIMING, see plotline 1.

2.2. LOCATION. Farmhouse.

2.3. PERSON(-S) WHO MAKE(S) THE OFFERING. Central one: the master of the house; minor one(-s) – the lady of the house, the children of the master of the houses, other relatives (brothers and their children) of the master of the houses.

2.4. INANIMATE OFFERING (-S). Holding the flagon in his hand, the master of the house kneels down and thanks God as follows: “God almighty, through your grace we have brought your gifts from the field, you have given us health so that we can do all things and can thresh and use your gifts for our own needs, and for that, we are saying thank you”⁴⁶. He prays for the sown rye to be guarded and says the “Lord’s Prayer” (in the opinion of the author of this publication, this is to be treated as *r e l i g i o u s s y n c r e t i s m*)⁴⁷. Alongside with that, he asks God for grace in the year(s) to come, for God to give them more, no less, and to protect him and his family (cattle) from all misfortunes. Finally, after asking to bless the bread (in the oven and basement), he drinks from the bowl, but leaves 2/3 of the drink.

⁴³ *Pretorijus M. P.* 513.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Op. cit. P. 513.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* P. 511, 513, 515.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* P. 513.

⁴⁷ Similar cases of religious syncretism (or intermixture of Christian and pagan religious tradition) in the subsequent text of the publication will also be marked in brackets.

In the room where the action in question is taking place, there is poultry lying on the table separately and tied up: a rooster and a hen. There is a strict canon that governs the colour and age of the sacrificed animals. The bird to be suitable for that purpose must be one year old – white⁴⁸ or speckled, but not red. Praetorius, both here and in other recorded ceremonies, systematically emphasizes the colour of the poultry used for the offering. It may be that it reiterates the pre-Christian mode of thinking, in which the color canon was of particular importance. Scholars have found that in the incantations and, generally, folklore texts of the Slavs, who were close neighbours of the Balts, the main role is shared by three colors: white, black, and red [Radenkovich 1989, p. 126]. Birutė Jasiūnaitė, who has studied the names of the devil used in Lithuanian dialects and folklore texts, writes that “Being bright, <...> the red color particularly often performs a protective <...> function, and dissipates evil spirits” [Jasiūnaitė 2012, p. 111]⁴⁹. On the other hand, the red color also brings negative associations to the representatives of traditional ethnic culture. “In the folklore of Lithuania Minor, the wicked one always dresses up in bright red clothes: ‘[Someone] saw a black man wearing a red cloak, a red hat <...>; A chappie <...> wearing all clothes red, also wearing a red hat <...>’” [Jasiūnaitė 2012, p. 109]. True, such apparel of the devil (and, at the same time, the negative connotation of red colour) can be associated with the influence of Christianity [Jasiūnaitė 2012, p. 109] and desacralization of the ancient worldview and perspective.

The importance of the color canon in the old Baltic religion and mythology is also confirmed by the beliefs retained in ethnography. For example, “If the owner is born in the morning, he will fare in the

⁴⁸ Strykowski (1582), in mentioning the god of the road, or *Kelio Dievas* (*Kielu Dziewos*) for the first time in the source, states that Lithuanians “<...> would make him offerings of white hens, while holding a stick in the hand, they would be belted and wearing bast shoes, similarly to Jews in performing their Easter rituals; and they would pray to him to condescend to accompanying people, so that they would travel happily from one house to another” (*Baltų religijos... T. 2. P. 547*). He also writes that to *Lietuwanis* (*Lituwanis*), “<...> who gives them rain, <...> they would make offerings of hens of various colours – white, black, speckled and others” (*Ibid. P. 546*). According to the sources, *Gausinančiąją Deivę* (*Aukie*) (*the Augmenting Goddess*), “who stimulated the swarming of bees and their labour, would be made benevolent by an offering of a white she-goat or white hen” [Ališauskas 2012, pp. 101–102].

⁴⁹ Lithuanians and many other nations are quite familiar with the protective function of the rowan tree, which is compared to the colour of its berries [Agapkina 2010, p. 249].

following – cattle of rufous speckled hair will come along with him; if at noon, he will succeed in breeding cattle of white hair. The one born in the evening will succeed in breeding cattle of black hair” or “What color is the hair of weasel who multiplies [in the homestead], the same hair colour will be the cattle that one is to succeed in breeding”; “What colour of hair are the small kittens you’ve drowned, such colour will be the hair of cattle you’ll not succeed in breeding” [Dulaitienė-Glemžaitė 1958, p. 121]. The theatricalized behavior of young shepherds is also worthy of attention, as through said behaviour they make attempt to change the weather. “When the shepherds do not get snow for a long time in the autumn, they catch a white goat and drive it around a birch – this is done to make snow come quicker»; «May God give us, like this goat is white, so he will cover the land white with snow, so that we don’t have to herd any longer”⁵⁰. In the cases listed above, the color of the animal is determined by its hair (feathers, bristles), which is used in attempt to predict the future, or to manipulate the natural element (cycle). Considering the above information, one should believe that Praetorius recorded the mythological material from a living folk tradition.

The master of the house takes the ladle that has been crafted specifically for that purpose and, having knelt down, kills the rooster. Without changing his body position, he tucks the dead creature under his left armpit, and prays to God just as he did before – he pours off some beer so that 1/3 of it still remains. The owner, then, kills the hen, who is from the same brood as the rooster; he drinks for the third time, down to the dregs. It should be noted that during the action described above, the remaining participants of the ceremony raise both hands up, saying, «God and you, *lovely Žemyna*, look, we are giving you this rooster and hen as a gift, accept them as our offering (gift) that we present you from our kind heart» (religious syncretism)⁵¹. Finally, the birds are handed over to the female hired worker, who scalds and plucks them; the rest of the work is carried out by the lady of the house of the homestead (for more details, see plot line 0 of the grain harvest celebration).

⁵⁰ *Balys J.* Lietuvių tautosakos lobynas. USA: Bloomington, 1951. T. 1–2. P. 38–39. Latvians also believed that driving a white goat around the birch will soon make the winter come; with the same intent, a white goat is driven backwards three times around a stone. Latviešu tautas ticējumi, [sēj.] 1–4 / sakrājis un sakārtojis Prof. Pēteris Šmits, Rīgā: Latviešu folkloras krātuve, 1940–1941. Positions 13330, 13331, available at: <https://goo.gl/byvHuL> (Accessed 15 Feb. 2018); see also [Merkiene 1999, pp. 208–222; Vaiškūnas 2014].

⁵¹ *Pretorijus M.* Op. cit. P. 515.

3 plotline⁵².

3.1. TIMING, see 1 plotline.

3.2. LOCATION and 3.3. PERSON(-S) WHO MAKE(S) THE OFFERING, see 2 plotline.

3.4. INANIMATE OFFERING (-S). “*Deliciae Prussicae*” does not specify it, but the action is probably moved to another room in the farmhouse, in the middle of which, there is the above-mentioned *puspūris* (bottom-up), onto which the lady of the house places the cooked poultry and the baked round breads. She also brings in three small consecrated scoops (*Szwenczamus*). To Praetorius’ knowledge, these vessels are only used for specific occasions, and are usually kept safe, so that they do not become dilapidated and that no one, except the family members, drinks from them (i n h i b i t i o n V I I I). It seems to be a declining inhibition that had previously had a religious foundation to protect a sacred object (special small scoops – *szwenczamus*) so that it would not lose its sacredness.

The owner, having poured some beer into a vessel (a small bucket), kneels down next to the *puspūris*. All the other participants in the ceremony follow his example⁵³. Praetorius describes separately their way of kneeling: it is important that in the kneeling position, the body remains tense. The lower part of the body should not come down on the calves or heels, that is, one should remain like in a semi-sitting position (see Figure 1). The wife must be kneeling on the left from her husband, while the children and/or other relatives – next to the owner and the lady of the house by age (from the seniors to the juniors). The master of the house kneels down so that his face is directed towards the door. He invites his wife to drink by saluting to her from right to left (see Figure 2). In this context, we should remember that the behavior of the Lithuanian people who lived the traditional village lifestyle of that period was also strictly regulated. Here we can see the remains of both physical and metaphysical eating as sharing the food and/or offering with the gods. The members of the household would take their seats at the table in accordance with a certain scheme, that is, each family member had their regular, permanent seat. Their position at the table also responded to the hierarchical division in the family. For example, it indicated one’s relation to other family members (men – women – children) and reflected the relations between the owners of the homestead and the hired workers. The head of the family was seated at the most honorable seat, in the front corner, while the other men sat

⁵² *Pretorijus M.* P. 517, 519, 521.

⁵³ Attending the meeting is a must for all members of the family, even breastfed babies. If the child is so little that (s)he can neither drink nor kneel, then his/her father and/or mother drink for/instead of him/her (see below).

along the wall; women were seated on the opposite side – with the lady of the house closest to the cooking room⁵⁴. All of this prompts us that Praetorius prepared the description of *Sambarios/Sqbarios* celebration according to his personal experience of witnessing it.



Fig. 1. A – the «right» way of kneeling, B – the «wrong» way⁵⁵

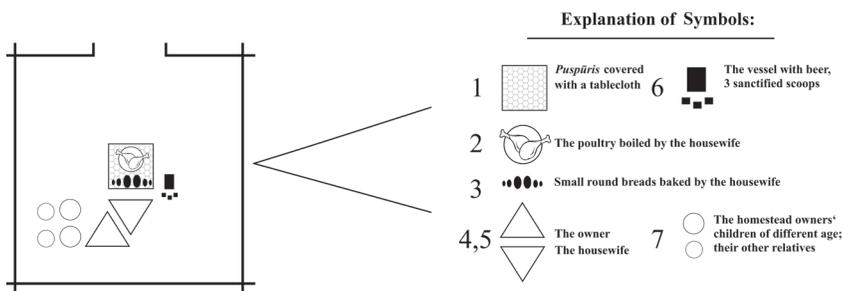


Fig. 2. Visualization of the ceremony described by Matthaeus Praetorius (left), the legend (right)⁵⁶

The master of the house, remaining in the kneeling position, draws some beer by using a ladle or spoon that have been consecrated specifically for that purpose, to fill three scoops. He does it so that one scoop is filled with three ladles ($3 \times 3 = 9$). In doing so, he says the

⁵⁴ See Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai/red. Angelė Vyšniauskaitė. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1964. P. 399.

⁵⁵ The author of the ways of kneeling (“A”, “B”) depicted in the Figure is Ž. V., the image has been produced by using the computer: February 16, 2017 02 16. The silhouettes of the kneeling persons are to be considered an interpretation of the information that Matthaeus Praetorius wrote down, which allows a visualization of (supplement to) the structure of the ceremony recorded in “*Deliciae Prussicae*”.

⁵⁶ Visualization of the *Sambariai* ceremony (with image projected from above) made by Ž. V.; the image has been produced digitally: February 17, 2017.

“Lord’s Prayer”, “Credo”, the Ten Commandments, and other prayers, by which he asks God for more, not less (religious syncretism). The remaining members of the ceremony are praying alongside with him. The master of the house then, having drunk three scoops, hands them over to his wife, then to his eldest brother or children, who are standing on his left, and so on. The master’s brother or child must receive the scoop with both hands, and, having done *žemynėliavimas*, address God as follows: “Thank God for the good gifts, dearest God, give us no less, but more next year”⁵⁷. He also drinks three scoops; the vessels are going around in circles – the participants also drink for three times each – until they come back to the master of the house. He takes the scoops over with both hands. If there is space on the *puspūris*, he places them on the top of it, and if not, he puts them on the ground next to himself. Then, with both hands, he takes the small round bread that he raises up, and, looking up at the sky, he says the following prayer: “Oh God, thank you for this gift of yours, give us a bigger and better one in the year(s) to come”⁵⁸. All the other participants in the ceremony follow his lead of the actions. The owner begins to eat with his closest family, saying, “Satiating us, dear God”. After eating, he takes the three scoops again, and fills them from “three ladles”. Holding one scoop in his hand, he thanks God for the gifts he has given, and prays him for health and patronage – for his wife, children, and the cattle that he usually names.

Then, the master of the house pours off from each scoop to the lovely *Žemyna*, saying the words mentioned above (see above), and drinks the rest of the beer in the scoop. All the other participants in the celebration do so, so that the scoops – with each drunk in one gulp – are sent around the circle for nine times ($3 \times 9 = 27$). One person drinks at least⁵⁹ twenty-seven vessels. During the ceremony, beer is no longer drunk, and if a participant wants to drink for their own pleasure, (s) he must do so in a sitting position. Finally, the master of the house with the scoop in his hands says the following words, “Now, God full of grace, we have held this celebration as we could afford, we have slaughtered in Your honor, and have had these meals, and drunk these drinks. Keep looking at us with your gracious eyes and bless our grains so that we can make do with them, and pay our fare to each one, protect us”⁶⁰. Then he sings a chant (it is not clear which one) and sends the vessel to go round the circle.

⁵⁷ Pretorijus M. Op. cit. P. 517.

⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 517.

⁵⁹ As mentioned above, the parents, additionally, must drink for/instead of their breastfed baby.

⁶⁰ Pretorijus M. Op. cit. P. 521.

The lady of the house collects the food that has not been finished at the ceremony, and serves it for breakfast the next morning, in the same way as the day before. According to Praetorius, then everyone eats and drinks in the same way as before. True, it is not necessary – if, by consensus, they no longer wish to do so – to send the consecrated scoops around the circle again for nine times. “<...> But if the owner does so, others have to follow his example even if they are not willing to”⁶¹. The last lines presuppose a few insights: the full-fledged social status of the master of the house (patriarchy); multiple (carried out more than once) observations of the ceremony held during the grain harvest celebration. Finally, the remaining bones, in the owner’s eyes, are eaten by the dog. If even the dog fails to finish them, then they place the bones onto a plate, which the farmer digs into the ground inside his barn under the manure.

A similar type of burying items of animal origin (bones) has been certified by ethnographers. For example, one has to bury the bones, left from the Easter ham on St. George’s Day, at the boundary of one’s field or in a rye field, so that rye would grow better; so that the wind would not twist it; so that the mice would not gnaw at the grains sowed; so that hail would not hit them; so that the thistles would not grow among them; so that moles would not make their molehills among them [Balys 2013, pp. 141–143]. “At Easter, the upper lip of the piglet sacrificed must be dug into the fallow where pigs graze in the summer, so that they will eat well, and will not nuzzle over there, either” [Balys 2013, p. 142]. We can see a reflection of the offering made by burying in the rituals that are performed in building a new homestead building. “In laying foundations for a new log house, one needs to dig a chicken’s head underneath them, and in doing so, say the following words: «Guardian spirit of the walls, take care of this house, guard my friends, my children who will be born in this log house, who will be living in it, so that they would not lead a wretched life, know any diseases, be sick, or have any trouble. Guardian spirit of the walls hear me. Listen to me, keep this house in your custody. Amen, amen, amen”⁶². Another example of an offering by burial is as follows: “If in a family, children die often, then, when a baby is being born, one should chop off the head of a rooster, and when the baby is brought to be baptized, one should carry the rooster’s head to the graveyard and bury it up, so that babies would not die anymore (Kalesninkai) <...> also, they say, when a girl is born, one has to bury a living hen in the ground, and if it’s a boy, bury a rooster, then the children will grow up healthy (Benekainys)” [Balys 2000, p. 167].

⁶¹ *Praetorius M.* P. 519.

⁶² *Krėvė-Mickevičius V.* Kėrai // Tauta ir žodis. 1926. Issue 4. P. 507–508.

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the term *Sambariai* traditionally refers to the gathering of shepherds and partly farmers that was celebrated at Pentecost, i.e., on the seventh week after Easter. The main obstacle to the identification of *Sambariai*, described by Praetorius, with the subsequent *Sambariai* of a later period, is the time of performing the rituals. Pentecost is celebrated in the spring, while Praetorius' *Sambariai* – at the end of December. Nonetheless, these fragments have many similarities, the essential one of which is the brewing and consumption of communal beer (the social aspect of the celebration). For example, “Hired workers are brewing the sambariai (communal) beer in seeking to treat the farmers. Women farmers, when going to sambariai, bring their own treats (food). Everyone drinks beer, eats snacks that the farmers have brought together, young people dance and sing” (Pakruojis) [Balys 2013, p. 189]. “For the Pentecost, the villagers or neighbors bring together sambariai: the men bring food and the agreed amount of malt to some one of them, this one brews some beer, women bring some food, and in this way, they spend the Pentecost holidays (Šiauliai)” [Balys 2013, p. 189]. “The sambaris of the Pentecost was held on the first day of Pentecost. Farmers would put together some barley each, brew beer, bring together some food each, and celebrate. Only the ones who had contributed their part would go there. On that day, they would also invite a priest and, along with him, go to consecrate the fields (Pasvalys district)” [Laurinkienė 2013, p. 365].

Balys Buračas writes that in Kupiškis, “Older villagers, men and women, always went to the fields to ‘visit the lovely rye’ on Pentecost. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, farmers walk around, inspecting their own rye and that of their neighbors. Afterwards, everyone gathers into groups and falls down in a beautiful meadow next to the rye field for some rest. The elders get along without having a lot of fun. They talk about the day-to-day matters of the farmers, mostly the grains that they have seen. They tell each other at what time and in what kind of weather they ploughed and fertilized the land and sowed the rye. To cheer up, sometimes they start a song or two. Many farmers have some sweet beer brewed for the Pentecost. To treat others with sweet beer, they appeal to a good neighbor or two, so it grows into a sort of Pentecost feast for the farmers. On that occasion, the neighbors who usually don't get along with each other, or women who wag their tongues about each other, would make peace. If you visit the rye on the Pentecost, they say, the grains grow happier and mature better. Some would even bring the priest to go around their fields and consecrate them” [Buračas 1993, pp. 264–265]. Vincas Vaitiekūnas also mentions the sambariai, where “everyone in the homestead would participate. They'd decide upon

exactly how many outsiders (not the dwellers of that village) each family could invite. They'd decorate the inside of the house, the yard, and the garden with flowers and wreaths, and would invite musicians (the accordion, the violin, the clarinet), and the celebration would begin. In every respect. In every corner. The old. The young. The healthy. The humpbacked. Everyone. Everyone. The worries of the day – works, troubles, duties – are postponed, and forgotten. Even the shepherds, having flocked the herd, would come together for the feast in the evening. It was only to take care of the cattle that the women would drift apart for a while..." [Vaitiekūnas 1935, pp. 212–222; Vaitiekūnas 1998, p. 82]. "Sometimes the lads with the gals, dissatisfied with the sambariai of the old people, would prepare their own sambariai. Again, joy and fun would run high! Sometimes they'd end up in orgies. The priests would frown upon the young people's sambariai. Usually, for the youth's sambariai, a selection of young people from the wider neighborhood would gather, or, to be more exact, would get invited" [Vaitiekūnas 1935, pp. 212–222].

The examples listed above enable us to say that in the late 19th century and early 20th century, the sambariai celebration had retained some aspects of the archaic worldview (the blessing of the grains, visiting them in groups or with the priest (religious syncretism); as well as brewing and drinking of the communal beer; the ones at quarrel would make peace, hence they avoid disagreement and quarrels with each other). On the other hand, there are also many differences (it is not just masters of the house who brew the communal beer, but also shepherds, who are more interested in having fun by drinking beer than in blessing the maturity of the grains; the "social openness" of the celebration, i.e. it is attended by men, women, neighbours and hired workers of different families. On the other hand, Praetorius also stated that the master retains the freedom to invite some guests to *Sambariai/Sqbariai* by saying, "To our place?"

Conclusions

1. An overview and analysis of the interpretations of mythological material about the grain harvest (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*) celebration that Praetorius provided has revealed that the scholars from the 19th to the 21st centuries can be divided into two groups based on the use and evaluation of his information. One part did not discuss over the question of the authenticity of Matthaeus Praetorius' mythological information on the grain harvest (*Sambarios/Sqbarios*) celebration, but still considered it sufficiently reliable, and used it in their academic works (Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, August Schleicher, Wilhelm

Mannhardt, Pranė Dundulienė, Žilvytis Šaknys, Nijolė Laurinkienė, Rimantas Balsys, Mangirdas Bumblauskas). The second group of the scholars noted the problem of authenticity of the mythological material provided by Praetorius, but still, hesitated to commit to making it subject to verification (Vladimir Toporov). This confirms once again that the question of reliability of the mythological material of Matthaëus Praetorius' "Deliciae Prussicae or Prussian Theater" has not been solved so far, or has been dealt with only fragmentarily. The latter conclusion encourages the continuation of research into reliability of mythological information about celebrations recorded by Praetorius.

2. The review and analysis of the late 19th century to early 20th century ethnographic data regarding Matthaëus Praetorius' mythological materials, albeit implicitly, still testify to typologically close behavior. This reveals the transmission and continuity of the tradition, the insularity of the rural community, and the inertness of the peasant worldview. It goes to show that one can rely on the Praetorius' mythological information discussed above. In addition, we have indicated eight inhibitions in total in the text of "Deliciae Prussicae". All of them show a decline in religious restrictions that aim to: a) protect the sacred object so that it does not lose its sacredness (seven cases); or b) avoid contact with certain persons in an attempt to protect the contacting person from their harmful impact (one case). The abundant number of inhibitions that have probably emerged from a pre-existing religious taboo also prompts for the reliability of the mythological material.

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