

VERBAL CHARM VS. PRAYER: AN EMIC APPROACH TO THE LITHUANIAN TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract: In 20th-century folkloristics, it was commonly held that prayer was a religious phenomenon, while verbal charms were associated with magic. However, this dichotomy formed by scholars is often not accurate or useful in practical terms when attempting to differentiate between these genres. In Lithuania, verbal charms and prayers form a common text corpus, and the *emic* terms *užkalbėjimas* “verbal charm” and *malda* “prayer” do not align with the *etic* system of folklore classification, which categorizes them as separate genres. In an *emic* perspective the Lithuanian word *malda* encompasses a broad category of texts, which includes prayers, verbal charms, and any other texts intended to establish communication with non-human entities such as gods, plants, animals, etc. This category also includes Christian prayers. The article reveals that in Lithuania the relationship between a prayer and a verbal charm is not binary (religion vs. magic), but complementary: *malda* is the text of the charm, while *užkalbėjimas* is a charming ritual that involves both the text and the process of its recitation, complemented by ritual actions and performed by a qualified person (a charmer).

Keywords: Lithuanian folkloristics, *emic* terminology, folklore genre, verbal charm, prayer, Lithuanian gods

INTRODUCTION

While scholars of verbal charms define them as a separate genre of oral literature and distinguish them from prayers, there is no consensus on the criteria for such differentiation. The term “magic” is often used

to define charms, but it is itself vaguely defined. Moreover, magic is often viewed in opposition to religion, with the latter being considered superior. As James Kapaló argues, the field of religious studies has established a tradition of viewing magic as a manipulative practice intended to fulfil practical needs, while religion is understood as a merging with the spiritual world that fulfils universal transcendental needs (Kapaló 2011: 88). Adopting the tradition of linking verbal charms with the world of magic, and prayers with religion, only further complicates the situation, as it encourages researchers of charms to view verbal charms with Christian content as prayers, while treating other verbal charms as magic (Fisher 2016: 138).

The search for universal models can sometimes lead to a dead end, which is why scholars today emphasize the importance of evaluating the local tradition and the terms derived from it (Kapaló 2011). Since the 1950s and 1960s, when the linguist Kenneth Pike (1954) introduced the theoretical concepts of *emic* and *etic*, and Alan Dundes (1962) and Dan Ben-Amos (1969) began discussing folklore genres from this perspective, the study of emic terminology in the field of verbal charms remains an underexplored domain. In 2011, Haralampos Passalis emphasized the need for “creating a European database that would mainly include the folk terminology of different types of verbal magic with an English translation”, which “could facilitate and enable a comparative study and the holistic examination of the phenomenon of verbal magic” (Passalis 2011: 33). In his research, Passalis discusses the difficulties of terminological categorisation of verbal charms, and, on the basis of Greek emic terms, gives an example of what the entries in such a database might look like (Passalis 2011: 39–41). However, this ambitious project still remains only as a set of theoretical guidelines. The root of the problem lies in the fact that in different countries the investigation of emic terminology is in different stages. Despite good examples of investigation of emic terminology in the manuscript tradition (Olsan 2013: 149–155; Timotin 2013: 242–243; Timotin 2015: 13–18), in many other cases a lot of preparatory work is required.

In this article I will employ an emic approach to examine the Lithuanian terms of verbal charm and prayer, which have not received enough scholarly attention, even though establishing their relationship is essential for understanding what was considered a verbal charm in Lithuania.

The history of research into prayer and verbal charm as separate genres in Lithuania is not lengthy. Although the term *užkalbėjimas*

(from Lith. *kalbėti* “to speak”) is now commonly used by Lithuanian folklorists to refer to verbal charms, it was only established as the name of a distinct folklore genre in the mid-20th century, following the publication of significant collections of verbal charms by Pranė Stukėnaitė-Decikienė (1941) and Jonas Balys (1951). The term became firmly established only in the 1960s, when the paremiologist Kazys Grigas defined verbal charms as a separate genre and published a large assortment of them in the academic publication *Lithuanian folklore* (Grigas 1968). In previous minor publications, the texts of verbal charms were titled in various ways and usually reflected either the different names of verbal charms used in the vernacular or the attitude of the collectors of folklore, e.g., they were called *burtai* “spells” (Wolter 1901a, 1901b; Augstkalns 1937), *prietarai* “superstitions” (Niemi, Sabaliauskas 1912: 338), *kėrai* “enchantments” (Krėvė-Mickevičius 1926). It is important to note that verbal charms were often referred to as *maldos* “prayers”; Jurgis Elisonas, a collector of folklore who published a large number of verbal charms against snake bite in the 1930s, provided several examples of such emic terminology, e.g., *malda nuo gyvatės įkirtimo* “a prayer against snake bite”, *buriamoji maldelė, kalbama nuo gyvatės įkandimo* “a spell-prayer, said against snake bite”, *malda nuo piktosios* “a prayer against the evil one”, and so on (Elisonas 1931: 91–92). Around the same time, Finnish folklorist Viljo Johannes Mansikka, who collected verbal charms in Lithuania, published them in a study *Litauische Zaubersprüche* with an elaborate introduction in German (Mansikka 1929). He also mentioned the variety of terms used to describe verbal charms. According to Mansikka, there was no common title for the texts he published, because people referred to them using various terms – *užkalbėjimai* “verbal charms”, *užžadėjimai* “verbal charms”, *maldos* “prayers” or just *žodžiai* “words” (Mansikka 1929: 29). Still, Mansikka did not seem to be interested in the differences between the terms he recorded. Only in 1941 did the ethnographer Pranė Stukėnaitė-Decikienė who begin to talk about the relationship between verbal charms and prayers (Stukėnaitė-Decikienė 1941: 122–123). The word *malda* “prayer”, as a term of folkloristics, was first introduced by Jonas Balys; in the system of folklore genres he employed this term to refer to texts that addressed the Lithuanian gods, such as the Goddess of Fire Gabija, the Earth Goddess Žemyna, the New Moon, and the Sun (Balys 1951). According to Balys, through such prayers, “a person expresses goodwill towards a deity, greets and honours it, offers it an offering, and in return, as is usual in relationships between people and

gods, requests and expects to receive from them that which is necessary for people, such as prosperity, good health, and beauty” (Balys 1951: 10). Balys was later followed by Grigas, who also published prayers to Lithuanian gods along with verbal charms, but he placed them in a separate chapter titled “Mythical beings” (Grigas 1968: 913–915). In Lithuanian folkloristics, the genre called *maldos* “prayers” or *maldelės* “little prayers” (a term that came into use of folkloristics in the second half of the twentieth century), is first and foremost regarded as a legacy of the old Lithuanian religion, while Christian prayers, unlike in other European countries, have not yet gained the attention of folklorists.

Folklorists have long noticed that some verbal charms bear a striking resemblance to Lithuanian prayers to the gods. There is a specific attitude of the speaker and stylistic peculiarities that connect them; according to Stukėnaitė-Decikienė (Stukėnaitė-Decikienė 1941: 123), “frequently the charmer addresses the culprit of the illness itself, and, in order to placate it, strives not to offend it and fondly calls it ‘little bird’, ‘sweet bee’, ‘flower’, ‘bright star’, ‘gold’, ‘silver’, ‘little earth’ and so on”. Grigas, who shared the same opinion, emphasized that “some charms are characterized by an abundance of terms of endearment [...] The influence is exerted through kindness, a quiet and gentle speaking tone, while also repeating the demand in an imperative manner” (Grigas 1968: 72). In 2022, when researching the connection of such verbal charms with prayers to the ancient Lithuanian gods, I defined such kind of charms as *soft* (Vaitkevičienė 2022). After conducting a detailed analysis, I discovered that prayers to the gods and soft charms share the same structural components: they both feature direct address, exaltation of the addressee, formulas for inviting the gods and making them offerings, good wishes for the addressee, and, lastly, requests for help or fortune. The investigation revealed that verbal charms and prayers to the gods constitute a common corpus that cannot be divided into two separate genres, as a part of it – soft charms – occupy an intermediary position, functioning as both prayers and verbal charms. The analytical or ethnic perspective does not provide tools to classify them correctly within the system of folklore genres used in the field of folkloristics. This raises the question of what the relationship is between verbal charms and prayers from an emic perspective and what differences, if any, are marked by these terms. The answer to this question requires a thorough investigation into the terms used by people and the circumstances of their use.

I have used a variety of ethnographic, folkloric and linguistic sources for the research of Lithuanian emic terminology. First of all, ethnographic and folklore data of the 20th century from the Archive of Lithuanian Folklore, most of which in 2008 was published in the book *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, compiled by the author of the article (see LU). It was handwritten material from different folklore collectors, with very few audio recordings. The archival sources are expanded by publications from the late 19th to the 20th century and by the author's field research material collected between 2003 and 2020 (audio and video recordings). The lexicographical material was also of great importance for the research. *The Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language* (LKŽe), which contains a wealth of examples from the living language of the twentieth century, as well as from 16th- and 19th-century dictionaries and religious literature, provides a valuable source of information on the emic terminology of verbal charms.

UŽKALBĖJIMAS AND ITS VARIATIONS

There are several emic terms to designate verbal charms in Lithuania. The term *užkalbėjimas* “a verbal charm”, chosen by folklorists, is formed by adding the prefix *už-* to the word *kalbėjimas* “speaking”. The prefix *už-* usually means the direction of action behind or on top of something (LKŽe: *už-*). Adding the prefix *už-* to the verb *kalbėti* “to speak” links the action to the object being spoken about – a disease being charmed, a person, or a part of the body being treated (cf. *užkalbėti rožę* “to charm erysipelas”, *užkalbėti dantį* “to charm tooth”, etc.). However, there are more prefixed variants in vernacular usage, created by using prefixes *at-*, *nu-*, *ap-* (*atkalbėjimas*, *nukalbėjimas*, *apkalbėjimas*) or even without a prefix (*kalbėjimas*). All of these words can refer to charming both as a process (the act of reciting a charm) and as a text of a verbal charm. The corresponding prefixed nouns refer to a charmer who may be called *kalbėtojas*, *užkalbėtojas*, *atkalbėtojas*, *nukalbėtojas*, or *apkalbėtojas* (LU: 370, 397, 415, 490, LKŽe: *apkalbėtojas*).

The word *užkalbėjimas* and its variations are prevalent throughout Lithuania, particularly in the eastern part of the country where charms have survived for a long time; folklore collectors have documented more of them here than in other regions. Still, the oldest records that mention charms are from East Prussia which had a large Lithuanian population before World War II; this territory is also called Lithuania Minor. The word *užkalbėjimas* was mentioned in the *Decree to the Churches*

of Tilsit County in 1578 (BRMŠ 2: 230), and the verb *užkalbėti* “to charm” was used by Lutheran priest Simonas Vaišnoras in 1600 in his Lithuanian translation of the work *Articulus sive Locus de Sacramentis Veteris et Novi Testamenti* by Aegidius Hunnius (BRMŠ 3: 372). It can also be found in later sources, such as Jacob Brodowsky’s dictionary *Lexicon Germanico-Litvanicum et Litvanico-Germanicum* (circa 1740), cf. *užkalbėti Puczka* “Besprechen das Gewehr” (BRMŠ 4: 21).

Another emic term used to describe the act of charming is *žadėti* “to charm”; from this word, the nouns *žadėjimas* “verbal charm; charming” and *žadėtojas* “charmer” are derived. These words can be used with the same prefixes *už-*, *at-*, *nu-*, *ap-*, as in the previous case, e.g., *užžadėti*, *užžadėjimas*, *užžadėtojas* (see LKŽe: *žadėti*, *žadėjimas*, *žadėtojas*). The verb *žadėti* is related with the word *žadas* which once had meanings that are now almost forgotten: “voice, ability to speak”, “breathing”, “consciousness” (LKŽe: *žadas*). Yet the word *žadėti* has several other meanings: “to make a promise”, “to intend to do something”, “to announce future actions” and even “to fate”. Therefore, *žadėjimas* refers to a form of speaking that is directed towards achieving future results. Lithuanian words *įžadėti* “to give a vow, to swear”, *apžadas* “a vow to make a religious offering as a token of gratitude for recovery from an illness” are derived from the same verb.

The word *žadėjimas* is also attested in old Lithuanian writings. In a mid-17th century manuscript Lithuanian-German dictionary called *Lexicon Lithuanicum*, we can find the words *užžadėti* “beschwehren”, *apžadėti*, *užžadėti* “besprechen”, *užžadėtojas* “Beschwehrrer” (BRMŠ 3: 76). A manuscript dictionary of Friedrich Prätorius called *Clavis Germanico-Lithvana* (written circa 1680) includes the words *žadėti* and *žadėtojis* (BRMŠ 3: 98). The words *žadėti*, *apžadėti*, *užžadėti*, *užžadėtojas*, *apžadėtojas* have been included in later Lithuanian dictionaries compiled by Jacob Brodowsky, Friederich Wilhelm Haack (1730), Krause (the first half of the 18th century), Philipp Ruhig (1747), Christian Gottlieb Mielcke (1800), Georg Nesselmann (1853), Friedrich Kurschat (1870, 1884) (BRMŠ 4: 21, 35, 43, 81–82; Nesselmann 1851: 536; Kurschat 1870: 218, 221; LKŽe: *žadėti*, *žadėtojas*). In the 1760s–1770s, the word *užkalbėjimas* made its appearance in literature, as seen in the epic poem *Metai* (“The Seasons”) by Kristijonas Donelaitis from Lithuania Minor. In a vividly painted scene, women with healing ointments attempt to heal a peasant named Dočys, and when one of them “stood right beside the bed to say a charm” (*žadėt pas patalą stojos*),

the patient, who “dreaded old wives’ sorcery”, stood up from his bed and drove the women away (Donelaitis 2013: 114)¹.

Although old dictionaries attest the word *žadėjimas* only in Lithuania Minor, ethnographic data show that the verb *žadėti* and its prefix forms and derivatives are widely known in the south-western part of Lithuania and are particularly common in east Lithuania where they are still in use today (LU; LKŽe: *žadėti, žadėjimas, žadėtojas*). However, the term *žadėjimas* is not known in parts of Lithuanian territory such as central and north Lithuania and Samogitia. Here, another word was used to refer to verbal charms – *vardyti* “to charm”, while the charmer was called *vardininkas*, and the process of charming and the text of a charm were referred to as *vardijimas*. This makes it the third important term used to designate verbal charms. Its forms vary considerably, as is the case with the previous terms. The *Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language* (LKŽe) offers a great variety of words that are formed by adding prefixes *ap-, at-, nu-, į-, pa-, pra-, už-* to the verbs *vardyti, vardijimas, vardininkas*, or by changing suffixes (e.g., *vardininkas / vardytojas / varduotojas*). These terms are attested in old dictionaries of Lithuanian language as well. From the end of the 17th century, we have evidence of the words *wardyti, užwardyti, wardytojis* (*Clavis Germanico-Lithvana*, BRMŠ 3: 93), and in the first half of the 18th century the word *wardininkas* “Seegen Sprecher” was included in the so-called Krause’s dictionary (BRMŠ 4: 37). The *Christian Catholic Catechism*, published in 1770, includes a didactic warning that a sin is committed by *Žyniai ir višfi vardininkai bey tie žmones, kurrie pas juos eina* “sorcerers and charmers and the people who visit them” (BRMŠ 4: 148). Therefore *vardijimas* “charming; a verbal charm”, is another ancient word that existed alongside other terms such as *žadėjimas* and *užkalbėjimas*.

The origin of the word *vardyti* is undoubtedly linked to the word *vardas*, which in contemporary Lithuanian means “the name of a person, object, or species”, but once had a broader meaning of “a word”, as in the Latvian language, where *vārds* means “a word, name, speaking”. Similarly, Old Prussian *wīrds* meant “word” (LKŽe: *vardas*; LLVV: *vārds*; Mažiulis 1997: 245). These Baltic words are derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **uer-* “to speak”, and have many equivalents in related languages, cf. Gothic *waúrd*, German *wort*, English *word*, Latin *verbum*. In certain Indo-European languages, this word acquired particular meanings that denote magical or ritualistic speech, e.g. Hittite *hu(wa)rt-* “a swear, a curse”, Old Indian *vratá* “a vow, an oath”, Old Prussian *wertemai* “we swear”, Old Slavic *rota* “an oath”, *vračī* “a

wizard, sorcerer, warlock” (Karulis 1992: 487; Puhvel 1991: 433–437). In Latvian, as in Lithuanian, words derived from this root are used to describe verbal charms, e.g., Latv. *vārdi* “verbal charms”, *uguns vārdi* “a verbal charm against fire”, *vārdot* “to charm”, *vārdotājs* “a charmer”, *vārdošana* “the act of charming” (LLVV: *vārds*, *vārdot*, etc.). It can be noted that some of these Latvian words are almost identical to their Lithuanian counterparts, cf. Lith. *varduoti* “to charm”, *varduotojas* “a charmer”. Therefore, this term is shared by both Lithuanians and Latvians.

Comparing the various names for verbal charms reveals differences in their geographic distribution. The word *vardijimas* is shared by both Lithuanians and Latvians, while *žadėjimas* and *užkalbėjimas* were only used within the Lithuanian context. The word *vardijimas* was more commonly used in the western and northern regions of Lithuania, while *žadėjimas* was more prevalent in the eastern and southern areas. The term *užkalbėjimas* has been documented in various regions, although it is very rare in Samogitia. The widespread use of the latter term could be due to the fact that folklorists popularized it in the 20th century.

MALDA

As already mentioned above, sometimes people use the word *malda* “prayer” (or the diminutive form *maldele*) to refer to verbal charms. Although in Lithuanian, this word is also a church term that designates canonical Christian prayers, people use it to refer to verbal charms that have no Christian names or Biblical content, e.g.:

Ancient people knew a *malda* for when a snake bit, such as this:

Oi tu kirmel, gelaž, šaltavuodeg, kad įleidai [nuodus] margai karvei, prašo [prašau] atlaisti!

(Oh, you worm, metal, cold-tailed thing, you have let your [poison] into a mottled cow, please take it out!)² (LU: 203)

The informant refers to a verbal charm that is addressed to a snake as *malda*, even though the text does not include any Christian content. Furthermore, *malda* may even refer to a harmful charm. A folk-story, documented by Lithuanian writer Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė in 1904, tells that

In Paežeriai (a village located in the Šeduva parish, near Tolstoy's manor of the same name), there was a herdswoman who knew a certain *maldele*. Whenever she said the *maldele* to an animal, the animal would collapse. Afterwards she said another *maldele* and the animal would immediately rise again. (BsTB 12: 114)

The use of the word *malda* in a similar context can also be observed in other folklore genres. The fairy tale ATU 675 "The Lazy Boy" tells the story of a marvellous pike that grants wishes; when the fisherman had to overcome the king's army, he recited the following *maldele*: "In the name of the Lord God, at the command of the pike, let the entire army turn into goats and gnaw off those osiers"³ (SIŠLP: 375).

The word *malda* was also used to refer to prayers to the ancient Lithuanian gods; these oral texts survived for a long time after the conversion to Christianity in Lithuania. An outstanding example are the short prayers to the goddess of fire called Gabija or Gabieta, recited in the morning while starting a fire and in the evening when the live coals were raked up to be used to reignite the fire the following day. Folklore collectors documented abundant numbers of such prayers in the 1920s and 1930s, and even in the 1970s, they were still found in the Samogitia region. There is no doubt that people referred to them using the same word as for Christian prayers, as evidenced by the following examples:

Švinta Gabieta, užkaupta gulieta, užkurta žibieta. Kaip numirsma, uždek mums žvakele, pasiremti lazdele ir eiti namučio. (Saint Gabieta, you lie down when raked up, and you glow when lit. When we die, light a candle for us, so we may go home leaning on a staff.)

Informant Zosė Buivydienė, aged 50, from the village of Vyto-gala in the Upyna area, documented in 1974. Her mother, who was descended from Varniai, used to recite this prayer as the very first prayer (*malda*) in the morning, even before saying the Lord's Prayer⁴. (Lovčikas 2010: 20)

When the fire is started, the following prayer (*maldele*) is cited:

Švinta Gabija, švinta Gabieta, neik iš šitas vietas, būk un šitas vietas.

(Saint Gabija, Saint Gabieta, do not leave this place, stay in this place.)⁵ (Balys 1951: 46)

Gabieta, užguobta mygok, atguobta žibiek.

(Saint Gabieta, sleep, when raked up, glow, when spread out.)⁶

This is how people prayed (*melsdavosi*) when the fire was put out in the evening. (Lovčikas 2010: 21)

People did not distinguish such prayers from Christian ones in terms of terminology. However, sometimes these prayers were Christianized by replacing the name of the goddess Gabija with the Christian protectress against fire Saint Agatha, or even both names were mentioned together, for instance, “Gabija, Agatha, glow, when kindled, sleep, when covered” (Balys 1951: 49).

The texts that addressed the other ancient gods (the New Moon, the God of Thunder Perkūnas, the Goddess Žemyna) were also called prayers (Balys 1951: 53–54). Besides, people used the words *malda* or *maldele* to refer to texts by which they addressed plants or animals to request or to wish something. For instance, a prominent folklore informant from Varėna district Ieva Turonienė used to recite a particular prayer when going to pick mushrooms:

One needs to learn to recite a prayer (*maldele*) so that you will always find mushrooms. He [my brother – D.V.] taught me to pluck a mushroom, spit on it, and say:

Grybuli, būk laimingas, kad rastau daug – ir brolius, ir seseris, ir visą giminę.

(Mushroom, be happy so that I find a lot of you, your brothers, sisters, and the whole family)⁷. (Turonienė 2019: 68)

Given such a broad context for the use of *malda*, it becomes clear that its meaning is much broader than that of other emic terms – *užkalbėjimas*, *žadėjimas*, or *vardijimas*. Today it is difficult to say if this word had this broad a meaning for a long time, although we know that Lithuanian words *malda* “prayer”, *melsti* “to pray, to request”, *maldyti* “to request” come from the same root as the Old Slavic *moliti*, Polish *modlić się* (< **modliti* “to pray; to make a vow by offering a sacrifice”⁸). Linguists have proposed several different versions regarding the origin of these words, two of which are relevant to mention. According to Émile Benveniste’s version, which was later followed by other Indo-European

language researchers, these words are linked to Hittite *mald-*, *maltāi* “to recite prayers, to make a vow, to swear”, Armenian *matt'em* “I pray, I call upon”, Old English *meldan* “to address”, from which we may reconstruct Indo-European **meld(th)* “to say ritualistic words while addressing a deity” (Benveniste 1932: 133). According to another version proposed by Lithuanian linguist Kazimieras Būga, and later developed by Balticists Ernst Fraenkel and Vytautas Mažiulis, Lith. *malda* “a prayer”, *melsti* “to request, to pray” and Prussian *maddla* “a prayer”, *madlit* “to request, to supplicate” originate from Proto-Balto-Slavic root **meld-* “to soften”, the meaning of which was broadened to “*to try to soften (incline) someone for someone’s benefit” > “to request, to pray” (Mažiulis 1996: 95–96, 100–101). Lithuanian lexicographical sources of the 16th–19th centuries attest that the word *malda* meant not only “prayer” but also “request”. This meaning can also be found in fairy tales that were written down in the late 19th century to the early 20th century and published by Jonas Basanavičius (Ambrasas 1980: 67). The verb *melsti* has retained both the meanings “to request” and “to pray” even until the present day. Linguist Saulius Ambrasas suggests that the now extinct meaning of “request” for the word *malda* “is, apparently, the primary one, which laid the foundation for the later meaning of ‘addressing supernatural beings; the text of such address’” (Ambrasas 1980: 67). Also consider *maldauti* “to request meekly”, “to pray”, “to say a prayer” and *maldyti* “to request earnestly, to supplicate”, “to placate” (LKŽe: *maldauti*, *maldyti*).

However, Benveniste’s hypothesis that Lithuanian *malda* is inherited from Indo-European religious vocabulary is also worth considering. It is possible that the meaning evolved in the opposite direction, from the sacred to the profane: from *melsti* “pray, request something from gods” to “request, supplicate”, likewise from *maldyti* “appease the gods” to “soften, placate” (see LKŽe: *melsti*, *maldyti*).

It should be noted that the Lithuanian dictionary also provides another meaning for the word *maldyti*: “to enchant, to charm”. However, it is unclear how widely this meaning was used, as only one example is provided: “You could hear her charming (*ka maldo*), having made a cross sign over a cow’s horns” (LKŽe: *maldyti*)⁹.

Finally, it is worth discussing the word *maldininkas*, which in contemporary Lithuanian means “a visitor of a place of worship or of sacred places” but had more diverse meanings in the past. Matthäus Prätorius, writing in German in the 17th century, used this Lithuanian word to refer to priests of the old religion who were still present on the border of

East Prussia and Samogitia at the time, and who were invited by Prussian Lithuanians to conduct family and village community ceremonies including prayers, offerings, and ritualistic drinking with libations to the gods. According to Prätorius, *maldininkai* engaged in a variety of activities beyond prayers and offerings, including, for instance, healing, charming, stopping bleeding, predicting future based on foam, beeswax, or bird flights, locating stolen or lost items, predicting a baby's destiny and so on (Pretorijus 2006: 409, 411, 435, 495, 533, 657). It should be emphasised that these individuals, unlike the charmers documented in ethnographic studies, were not solely concerned with healing or divining, but also played a vital role in leading community and family ceremonies. Hence the word *maldininkas*, similarly to the word *malda*, once had a considerably broader meaning which encompassed priests, charmers, and simply devout people.

WHEN A PRAYER BECOMES A VERBAL CHARM

Inasmuch as the word *malda* had a more general sense than *užkalbėjimas* and its synonyms *žadėjimas* and *vardijimas*, any verbal charm could have been referred to as *malda*. On the contrary, not all prayers were considered verbal charms, hence it should be investigated in what cases it might have happened.

Firstly, we should examine which prayers are not referred to as *užkalbėjimai*. Understandably, in the first place these are canonical Christian prayers. Yet prayers to the old Lithuanian gods were also not referred to as verbal charms. Informants referred to texts which addressed Gabija, Žemyna or Perkūnas only as *maldos*, *maldelės* or *žodžiai* “words” but they were not called verbal charms once (see Balys 1951: 46–49, 53–54). The situation with prayers to the New Moon is more diverse. I will examine two types of these prayers, published in the book *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms* (LU). The first of them, “New Moon, a full turn for you, for me my health” (LU: 226–268) can be illustrated by the following text:

Say this when you see a new moon:

*Jaunas jaunikaitis,
Dieva karalaitis,
Tau auksa karūna,
Man sveikata.*

(A youthful youth,
God's prince,
A gold crown for you,
For me my health.)¹⁰
(LU: 226)

An abundance of such texts was documented in Lithuania; in the book *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms* (LU) even 169 variants are presented. An inquiry into the terms adopted by informants and folklore collectors to denote these texts is worth exploring. 38 variants are called *malda* (out of which, the diminutive *maldele* is used in 20 cases), 5 are called *žodžiai*, and only one is called *užkalbėjimas*:

A verbal charm (*užkalbėjimas*) for all sorts of diseases and to clot blood in a wound

*Mėnuo, Mėnuo, Mėnulėli,
Dungaus šviesus Dievaitėli!
Duok jam ratų, man sveikatų,
Duok jam pilnystį – man Perkūno karalystį!*

(Moon, Moon, Moon,
Bright God of the heavens!
Give him a full turn, me vigour,
Make him full – and give me Perkūnas' kingdom!)

Most of the people in my village know this prayer (*malda*) and believe that it will help them. The person telling the story says that he has seen many times how after someone said the prayer (*maldele*) blood ceased flowing from their wound. Having seen many facts like that, they say: "You must believe." (LU: 758)¹¹

The latter case is an exception because there is no data indicating that this prayer was used by anyone else to stop bleeding; moreover, given that the Moon is greeted only when it is seen as a new moon for the first time, it may not have been applicable in specific situations. Edvardas Vaikšnoras, descended from the village Šeimatis (Utena region), who delivered the text, calls it a prayer (*maldele*). According to Aleksandras Urbonas, the teacher who documented the text, the narrator of the

charm had personally witnessed the successful recitation of *maldele* on numerous occasions, where it had effectively stopped bleeding from wounds. It is possible that the folklore collector may have conflated two separate elements, namely a prayer to the New Moon and a story about a verbal charm to stop bleeding. It should be noted that none of the 169 variants includes the verb *užkalbėti* “to charm”. This suggests that this particular type was not considered a verbal charm in the local tradition.

An investigation into the other prayer, “New Moon, shine on my body” (LU: 307–324), which consists of 61 variants, reveals a slightly different situation. With this prayer, the Moon was requested to shine on and cleanse the body (and sometimes the soul) in the same way it shines on the heavens and the earth, e.g.:

*Jaunas Mėnulaiti,
Dangaus karalaiti,
Koks tu esi čystas:
Apčystijai dangų ir žemę,
Apčystik ir mane jauną (seną).*

(New Moon,
King of the heavens,
You are so clean:
You have cleansed the heavens and the earth,
Cleanse me, a young (old) one, too.)¹² (LU: 313)

When they saw a new moon for the first time, people said:

*Jauno Mėno, seno Tėvo,
Apčystyk kūną ir kraują mano!*

(New Moon, old Father,
Cleanse my body and my blood!)

And if that person had any wounds or warts, he took some soil and rubbed them with it. Ancient people had various enchantments ¹³. (LU: 317)

Unlike the previous case, this prayer was said not only to request health in general, but also when a person sought to heal themselves. Out of

the 61 variants, 25 identify a specific goal. Typically, the goal is to heal skin illnesses (warts, herpes, spots, scabs), occasionally – toothache.

The informants more frequently refer to these texts as *malda* (5 cases) than *užkalbėjimas* (1 case). One variant uses the verb *užkalbėti*:

I myself only know how to charm (*užkalbėti*) warts. You need to say:

Mėnuli, mėnuli,

Tu iščystini dangų ir žemę,

Iščystink ir mano kūną.

(Moon, moon,

You cleanse the heavens and the earth,

Cleanse my body too.) Then take a pinch of soil and throw it behind yourself three times with a backward hand ¹⁴. (LU: 316)

Since collectors of folklore often face the challenge of how to label such texts, one of them even used both terms *užkalbėjimas-maldelė* to refer to the prayer to the New Moon and added that his informant “recited this charm-prayer alongside religious prayers whenever she saw a new moon in the sky” (LU: 312).

The text under discussion can be considered as a transitional text from prayer to verbal charm: a prayer to the New Moon gradually takes on the features of a healing charm for skin illnesses. However, the fact that this text may and even should be recited not by a charmer but by a sick person himself, addressing the Moon directly without an intermediary, prevents it from being considered a regular verbal charm. Half of the written texts are therefore nothing more than prayers, in which people address the god of the New Moon, honouring him and seeking his blessings, e.g.:

– Did you do anything when you saw a new moon?

– Yes, we did. We used to say:

Jaunas Mėnulaicis,

Dangaus karalaicis,

Apčystinai dangų ir žaį,

Apčystyk mano griešnų kūnų.

(Young Moon,

King of the heavens,

You have cleansed the heavens and the earth,
Cleanse my sinful body too.)

We used to say it like that whenever we saw a new moon.

– Why did you say it like that?

– Because it was a prayer (*maldele*). It was like a prayer (*maldele*). When you left your house and saw the New Moon, you would put your hands together and recite this prayer. [...] When you finished this prayer, it seemed like you have fulfilled your obligation to the Moon until the next month, and you felt happier¹⁵. (LU: 318)

The text “New Moon, shine on my body” is a relevant example that illustrates how a prayer text can become more similar to a healing charm, although it does not fully become a regular charm due to the need to maintain a personal relationship with the deity.

Finally, it is time to examine the texts that are indisputably regarded as verbal charms, but people may call them prayers. What distinctions do people make between them, apart from the fact that *užkalbėjimas* is a narrower term than *malda*? Let us examine the verbal charms that were documented by Antanas Šerėnas¹⁶, an organist and composer, in 1937 in his native village of Linkmenys (Ignalina region) and were recited to him by likely close relatives Jonas Šerėnas (aged 53) and Uršulė Šerėnienė (aged 49). The collector used the questionnaire from *A Folklore Collector's Handbook* (TVR), published in 1936, which provides the word *nukalbėjimas* “verbal charm”, but the word *malda* “prayer” is not included in the questionnaire (TRV: 49). In the folk medicine material collected by Šerėnas, 5 verbal healing charms are found (for snake bite, erysipelas, *grižas* (swollen joints), *gumbas* (problems with digestion and the genitals), and rabid dog bite). Three of the documented charms incorporate both terms relevant to this investigation, namely *malda* and *užkalbėjimas*. We shall examine a verbal charm for snake bite:

There exists a verbal charm (*užkalbėjimas*) for snake bite. When an animal is bitten by a snake, it is necessary to wash it with St. Agatha's water and give it for the animal to drink, after which the animal will no longer swell. Then you have to charm (*užkalbėti*). These are the words of this prayer (*malda*). At first, ask what colour the animal is, and then say:

Šalta geležis! (3x9=27) Šaltu geležiu prikišk ir vėl atitrauk!
(3x9=27.) Gyvatė kirto juodą gyvulį, bet Dievo Motina sako, kad
gyvatės kirtimas nieko nemačys!

(Cold metal! (3x9=27) Push your cold metal and pull it away!
(3x9=27). A snake bit a black animal, but Mother of God says
that the snake bite will not work!) (And repeat those sentences
again 3x9=27.)

You must charm (*užkalbinėti*) when standing in the wind and
the animal must be outside of the stable¹⁷. (LU: 201)

The term *užkalbėjimas* begins the description, yet the text of the verbal
charm is referred to as *malda*. A similar situation can be observed in
another text documented by Šerėnas. The collector (and, presumably,
his informants) referred to the verbal charm for erysipelas as *malda*;
however, they used the word *užkalbėjimas* to emphasize that the entire
charming process consisted of 3, 6, 9, or 12 repetitions:

People say that one can charm erysipelas, warts, and teeth.
When the foot swells, or the hand or other place begins to itch,
that is erysipelas. The wound should then be dressed with male
hemp and sprinkled with rye flour, and the area should not be
washed with water. And then you have to charm (*užkalbėti*).
Here is the way of charming (*užkalbėjimo būdas*).

You have to make the sign of the cross and say three times, “In
the name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy
Spirit, Amen”. And the sick person is told to say 5 *poteriai* [the
daily Catholic prayers as Pater Noster – D.V.] at the wounds of
the Lord Jesus. And the charmer says a prayer (*malda*):

Ėjo Viešpats Jezus Kristus per žvyrių, per žemę, per vandenį.
Nešė rankoje 3 rožes: viena plyšo, antra prapuolė. Duok, Viešpatie
Jezau Kristau, kad šito[ji] trečia rožė prapultų. Šventas Mykolai
arkangelai, šv. Jonai Krikštytojau, visi šv. apaštalai: šventas
Petrai ir Povilai, keturi evangelistai, devyni chorai angelų ir
Tu, Marija, Motina Sopulingoji, melsk Viešpatį Jėzų Kristų,
kad jis pagydytų šitų rožę! Todėl, šventas Mykolai arkangelai,
šv. Jonai Krikštytojau, visi šv. apaštalai, šv. Petrai ir Povilai,
keturi evangelistai, devyni chorai angelų ir Tu, Marija, Motina
Sopulingoji, melskis už jo sveikatą (arba jos)!

The Lord Jesus Christ walked on the gravel, on the earth, on the water. He carried 3 roses in his hand: one flower was broken, another had disappeared. Grant, Lord Jesus Christ, that this third rose may perish. Saint Michael the Archangel, St. John the Baptist, all the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, the four Evangelists, the nine choirs of angels, and you, Mary, Mother of Sorrows, pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to heal this rose! Therefore, Saint Michael the Archangel, St. John the Baptist, all the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and Paul, the four Evangelists, the nine choirs of angels, and you, Mary, Mother of Sorrows, pray (*melskis*) for his (or her) health!

This must be done in detail. If the illness was new, it was enough to charm (*užkalbėti*) three times, if it was older, then six or nine times. Twelve times was the entire charming (*visas užkalbėjimas*). The time of charming (*užkalbėjimo laikas*) is the rising and setting of the sun¹⁸. (LU: 370)

In the third case, Šerėnas used the term prayer (*maldelė*) to refer to the palindrome SOTOR. However, he began the description with the word *užkalbėjimas*, the meaning of which encompasses the process of writing down the formula:

There is a way of charming (*užkalbėjimas*) for a rabid dog. You have to write down a certain prayer (*maldelė*) on a card and then give it to the dog to eat. These are the words of that prayer (*maldelė*):

Sotor
Opero
tenet
Orepo
Rotas

This prayer (*maldelė*), when written down, must be fed to the dog in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, and continue for the entire week until the dog recovers¹⁹. (LU: 564–565)

Here the word *užkalbėjimas* does not refer to the text of a verbal charm but indicates charming as a process, an integral part of which is writing the prayer down on a card.

A close look at the texts published in the book *Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms* (LU) reveals that in a number of cases the word *užkalbėjimas* is used to refer to the process of charming, while the texts themselves tend to be called prayers. Consider the following examples:

Prayer (*maldelė*) against snake

Žeme žemybe, dangaus aukštybe! Motina mūsų, pykčių karaliene! Buvai piktybė ir nueik piktybe!

Lowness of the earth, highness of the heavens! Our mother, queen of anger, you have been an angry thing, go away an angry thing!

You must charm (*užkalbėti*) outside. Before and after charming (*užkalbėjimas*) you have to cross yourself three times. The prayer (*maldelė*) is to be recited three times. Recorded around 1930²⁰. (LU: 219)

Snake bite

Ancient people knew a prayer (*malda*) for when a snake bit, such as this:

Oi tu kirmel, gelaž, šaltavuodeg, kad įleidai [nuodus] margai karvei, prašo [prašau] atlaisti!

Oh you worm, metal, cold-tailed thing, you have let your [poison] into a mottled cow, please take it out!

If the animal is mottled, then [say] “mottled”, if it is black, then say “black” according to its colour. If a person is bitten, say “a fair-haired person”, and if a horse is bitten, you must mention the colour of the animal. Moreover, if a pregnant snake has bitten, the number of charmers (*kalbėtojai*) must be equal to the possible number of the snake’s offspring. However, if you have killed the snake, the charming (*kalbėjimas*) will not work because there is no one to address.

Recorded by Ratkus-Ratkevičius around 1920 in Papilė, Akmenė region²¹. (LU: 203)

The texts recorded in the 1920s and the 1930s attest that *malda* was the common name of a verbal charm’s text, whereas *užkalbėjimas* encompassed the process of its recitation. The same trend is observed

in the fieldwork data collected in the early 21st century. The informants usually refer to verbal charms as prayers, but they use the words *užkalbėti* or *žadėti* to describe the act of reciting the charm, e.g., “I know how to charm (*žadinėti*) against snake but I am not able to do it myself. You need to recite the prayer (*maldetė*) and the Hail Mary three times in one breath”²². It becomes particularly noticeable during longer conversations with the charmers. In 2010, in the Lithuanian village of Girios in Gervėčiai area, Belarus (situated approximately 60 km from Lithuanian border and approximately 80 km from Vilnius) I had a conversation with a woman (aged 76), who charms for erysipelas, fright, swollen joints, and “for wind” (i.e., illness caused by wind)²³. During one and a half hour, she used the word *malda* in the meaning “the text of a verbal charm” even 21 times, e.g.:

“these are such prayers (*maldos*) that are used for charming (*užkalba*)”;

“there are prayers (*maldos*) specifically for these illnesses”;

“that is a special prayer (*malda*), not *poteriai* [= the daily Catholic prayers said in the morning and evening, usually the Our Father, the Hail Mary, Glory be, and Apostles Creed; *poteriai* < Polish *pacierz* < Latin *Pater noster* – D.V.], but a special prayer (*malda*)”;

“there are such words (*žodžiai*), they are not the Hail Mary, there are such prayers (*maldos*)”;

“Janiula, I will teach you to charm (*kalbėcie*) for erysipelas. When I die, you will mention my prayers (*maldelas*), the ones I taught you”;

“she [a charmer – D. V.] left me her prayers (*maldas*).”²⁴

Meanwhile, the word *užkalbėjimas* “verbal charm” was not used in her narration once. Even though she mentioned the word *kalbėjimai* a couple of times, it meant not the text but the action – recitation of a verbal charm. In the conversation, the word *kalbėjimai* surfaced for the first time when the charmer mused about men who do not wish to engage in charming for illnesses (“they have no time for charming (*kalbėjimus*), they would rather drink, not charm (*kalbėcie*)!”), and for the second time, when she emphasized that she heals not with herbs but by charming (“I do not know any herbs to be used for healing, I only help by charming (*kalbėjimais*) for erysipelas and wind [...]”)²⁵

When talking about charming as a process, the charmer used the verbs *užkalbėti* (14 times) and *kalbėti* (26 times). In Gervėčiai area, this verb is frequently used without the prefix *už-*, e.g., “I know how to charm (*kalbėcie*)”, “only the ones who are born first and last, the youngest one, should charm (*kalbėcie*)”, etc.

The conversation with the charmer from Gervėčiai area confirms that the word *malda* is used to refer to the text of a verbal charm, whereas the words (*už*)*kalbėjimas* and (*už*)*kalbėti* first and foremost refer to the process of charming. The Lithuanian terms *užkalbėjimas*, *žadėjimas*, *vardijimas* are made from these verbs by adding the suffix *-imas*, which can mean both an action and the result of an action, however, the first meaning is more prevalent in spoken Lithuanian. This tendency brings attention to the importance of recitation of a verbal charm. It should be noted that in Lithuania charms are recited in a particular way – holding one’s breath. Before reciting the charm, the charmer breathes in and recites the text while holding their breath, and after finishing the charm, exhales in the direction of the sick person or an object that will be later used for healing (see LU: 89–90). Moreover, text repetitions, divided in certain series (e.g., 3 x 3, 3 x 9) are of great importance. Having fulfilled the specific requirements of charming, even such texts which are never called *užkalbėjimas*, *žadėjimas*, or *vardijimas*, e.g., canonical Christian prayers, may become a verbal charm. In Lithuania, the prayer Hail Mary is quite often added to verbal charms, however, sometimes it can be used as a verbal charm on its own, without any other formulas, if it is recited in the same way as a verbal charm, e.g.:

Erysipelas is healed in this way: at sunset and at sunrise, (the charmer) uncovers the wound and recites Hail Mary three times without exhaling. After finishing the recitation, he exhales into the wound, and the “sacred air” blows away the pain and charms it.²⁶ (LU: 605)

Charm against evil eyes

Eyes may harm both big and small. Then you need to make the sign of the cross and [recite] Hail Mary three times without exhaling over some salt. Then dissolve the salt in water and wash yourself with it.²⁷ (LU: 592)

How to make *mikcius* (a knotted thread for a sprained foot)

Take a linen thread and tie knots on it, necessarily while sitting on a threshold. When making each knot, hold your breath and recite the Hail Mary, and after finishing making the knots, say Amen. Tie knots using the thumbs and fourth fingers of both hands.²⁸ (LU: 604)

Although charmers do not refer to the prayer Hail Mary as a verbal charm, the specific process of its recitation and fulfilment of additional requirements typical to charming can turn the prayer into one. In addition to holding one's breath, another distinctive way to recite the prayer is to recite it in reverse order, e.g.:

For a snake bite, you have to recite the Hail Mary in reverse order, as follows:

Amen death our of hour the at and now sinners us for pray God of Mother Mary Holy Jesus womb thy of fruit the is blessed and women amongst thou art blessed thee with is Lord the grace of full Mary Hail.

This was taught to me by my grandmother. (LU: 596)²⁹

When uncharmed (*neažkalbėta*), erysipelas (*rožė*) gets angry and spreads. It is charmed (*ažkalba*) by reciting the Hail Mary backwards and by sprinkling it with rye flour. The charming (*kalbėte*) must take place at sunrise or at sunset. (LU: 607)³⁰

When a canonical prayer is recited in a specific way, other requirements associated with verbal charms are also imposed on its recitation (e.g., specific time and surroundings). The reciting person must in their turn be a qualified charmer who has taken over the charming practice directly from another charmer and fulfils certain innate conditions (is the first or the last child in the family, etc.), otherwise their prayer will be ineffective:

My father's father and my mother knew a charming prayer (*užkalbėjimo maldą*) for erysipelas, but my mother could not pass it down to us. I was the second daughter, and it could only be passed down to the firstborn or youngest child, but my youngest sister was only twelve years old when mother died. Later, as we sorted through documents, we found the charming prayer (*užkalbėjimo maldą*). The charming (*užkalbėjimas*) took place early in the morning, so we were able to see people coming to

our mother to have it performed (*užkalbėti*). The instructions said to perform it “early in the morning, at sunrise, or late in the evening, at sunset, at this specific time. You need to make the sign of the cross, breath in, and recite the Hail Mary without exhaling. Repeat this three times.”

But we could not use it, neither me nor my younger sister. We only knew about this charm (*užkalbėjimą*), but it was not passed down to us. (LU: 606)³¹

When narrating the story about her mother, the informant used the words *užkalbėjimas* and *malda* alongside each other: “my mother knew a charming prayer (*užkalbėjimo malda*) for erysipelas”, “we found the charming prayer (*užkalbėjimo malda*)”. However, she makes a clear distinction in the meaning of these words: the Hail Mary is the prayer, whereas the charm is the thing that was not passed down to her, therefore, the charming cannot be performed. Verbal charm is much more than a prayer: it encompasses a specific process of recitation, ritual actions and charmer’s qualification, which is acquired in traditionally established way. The text of a verbal charm is only one component, which in Lithuania was called *malda*, the same term used for religious prayers addressed to Christian saints, old gods, or non-human beings. Yet, in order for *malda* to affect reality as a charm, additional components that are unique to it are required.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted investigation revealed four emic Lithuanian terms used to refer to verbal charms: *užkalbėjimas*, *užžadėjimas*, *užvardijimas*, and *malda*. The first three words have several morphological forms each, which can be formed by adding prefixes such as *už-*, *nu-*, *at-*, *ap-*, or can be used without any prefixes. These three terms should be considered as synonyms that are unevenly distributed throughout different regions of Lithuania. The word *užvardijimas* was used in northern and western Lithuania, while *žadėjimas* was more common in eastern and southern regions; both terms were also used in Lithuania Minor. Meanwhile, the word *užkalbėjimas* is known throughout Lithuania but is rare in western Lithuania (Samogitia); similar to the first two words, it was known in Lithuania Minor. All three words have verbs that denote the action of charming (*užkalbėti*, *žadėti*, *vardinti*), as well as nouns that denote charmers (*užkalbėtojas*, *žadėtojas*, *vardininkas*), which are derived

from the same root. The words *varduoti* “to charm” and *varduotojas* “a charmer” exhibit similarities with Latvian *vārdot* “to charm” and *vārdotājs* “a charmer” in terms of lexicon and semantics; this suggests the possibility of an ancient common term or an expression of substrate from extinct Baltic languages (possibly Curonian or Semigallian).

The word *malda* “prayer”, which frequently refers to verbal charms in Lithuanian emic terminology, differs from the three previously discussed terms. This word encompasses a broad category of prayers that includes not only verbal charms, but also any texts intended to communicate with non-human beings (gods, plants, or animals). This category also encompasses canonical and non-canonical Christian prayers. Therefore, the word *malda*, which is considered by some linguists to be a common Indo-European heritage and by others to be a heritage of Proto-Balto-Slavic language, is not a specific term used to define verbal charms. It denotes verbal charm only as a text, while the specific terms *užkalbėjimas*, *žadėjimas*, and *vardijimas* also encompass the meaning of charming as a process.

From an emic perspective, the relationship between prayer and verbal charm in Lithuania differs from the binary opposition *religion* vs. *magic* formulated by scholars. Lithuanian terms are connected by a complementary relationship, rather than a binary one: *malda* is the text, and *užkalbėjimas* is first and foremost the process consisting of reciting the text according to specific rules, complemented by ritual actions, and performed by a qualified person (a charmer). Only when recited according to the standards of the charming tradition, a prayer can become a verbal charm. Therefore, Lithuanian emic terminology does not distinguish between prayers and verbal charms as two distinct genres of oral literature; instead, their difference lies not in the textual, but in the performative level.

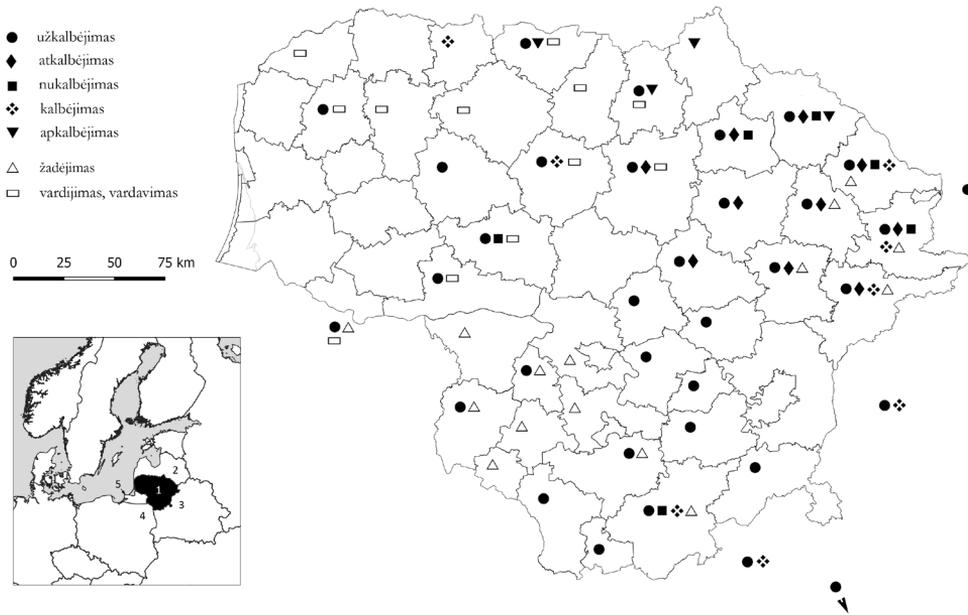


Figure 1. Distribution of Lithuanian emic terms for verbal charms in Lithuania (1), Belarus (Lithuanian-inhabited territories) (3) and former Lithuania Minor (now Kaliningrad region, Russia) (5). Number 2 indicates Latvia, 4 – Poland.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATU – Uther, Hans-Jörg 2004. *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, part I: Animal Tales, Tales of Magic, Religious Tales, and Realistic Tales, with an Introduction; part II: Tales of the Stupid Ogre, Anecdotes and Jokes, and Formula Tales; part III: Appendices, FF Communications, No. 284–286.

BRMŠ – *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 2: XVI amžius; t. 3: XVII amžius; t. 4: XVIII amžius [Sources of the Baltic Religion and Mythology, Vol. 2: 16th century; Vol. 3: 17th century; Vol. 4: 18th century]. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001–2005.

BsTB – *Jono Basanavičiaus tautosakos biblioteka, t. 12: Juodoji knyga* [The Jonas Basanavičius Folklore Library. The Black Book]. Surinko Jonas Basanavičius. Sudarė Kostas Aleksynas. Parengė Kostas Aleksynas, Leonardas Sauka. Įvadą ir paaiškinimus parašė Leonardas Sauka. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2004.

LKŽe – *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* (t. I–XX, 1941–2002). *Elektroninis variantas (2005)* [The Dictionary of the Lithuanian language (vol. (t. I–XX, 1941–2002)). Electronic version (2005)]. Redaktorių kolegija: Gertrūda Naktinienė (vyriausioji redaktorė), Jonas Paulauskas, Ritutė Petrokienė, Vytautas Vitkauskas, Jolanta Zabarskaitė, available online: www.lkz.lt. (In the quotations, dictionary entries are referenced).

LLVV – *Latviešu literārās valodas vārdnīca* [Latvian Literary Language Dictionary]. Rīga: Zinātne, 1972–1996. available online: <http://www.tezaurs.lv/llvv/> [viewed 2023-02-15].

LTR – Lithuanian Folklore Archives at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, manuscripts.

LTRF – Lithuanian Folklore Archives, sound recordings.

LU – *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai: gydymo formulės = Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*, sudarė, parengė ir įvadą parašė Daiva Vaitkevičienė = compiled, edited and introduction by Daiva Vaitkevičienė, Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2008.

SIŠLP – Šiaurės Lietuvos pasakos [Fairy Tales of Northern Lithuania]. Surinko Matas Slančiauskas, parengė Norbertas Vėlius ir Adelė Seselskytė. Vilnius: 1974.

TRV – *Tautosakos rinkėjo vadovas* [A Folklore Collector's Handbook]. Kaunas: Lietuvių tautosakos archyvas, 1936.

NOTES

¹ „Pimė, jo moteriškė, su kitoms moteriškėms / Džiaugės ir Dočiuką su gatavais tepalėliais / Mostyt tuo ir jo žaizdas aptvert susirinko; / Bet Pakulienė jį žadėt pas patalą stojos. / Štai Dočys tuojaus, tepalų smarkumą suuodęs / Ir žynavimo bobiško baisumą pajutęs, / Su sykiu nei koks Perkūns iš patalo šoko / Ir, iš papykio nusitvėręs didelį strampą, / Bobas su visokiais bobiškais tepalėliais / Iš stubos prismirdytos tuo išmušė lauka“. („His wife, Pimė, the other women too, / Were overjoyed and eager to apply / Their special ointments and to dress his wounds. / Pakulis' wife stood right beside the bed / To say a charm. Dočys though, who could smell / The herbs and dreaded old wives' sorcery, 765 Leapt out of bed just like a thunderbolt / And, grabbing in his wrath a heavy stick, / That instant drove the wives with all their gear / Out of the stinking room into the street“. (Donelaitis 2013: 104–105; Donelaitis 1985: 114, translation by Peter Tempest).

² „Senovės žmonis, kad įkūsdava, tai jie mokedavo tokių maldų, kaip antai: „Oi tu kirmel, gelaž, šaltavuodeg, kad įleidai [nuodus] margai karvei, prašo [prašau] atlaisti!“. Jei margas gyvulys, tai [sakyti] margam, jei juodas, tai juodam (taip sakyti valug plauko)“.

³ „[Jis] tuoj pakalbėjęs savo maldelį: ‘Par pono dievo vardą, par lydeko įsakymą kad tas visas vaiskas į ožius pavirstų ir tuos karklus nugriaužtų’“.

⁴ „Švinta Gabieta, užkaupta gulieta, užkurta žibieta. Kaip numirisma, uždek mums žvakele, pasiremti lazdele ir eiti namučio“. Pateikėja Zosė Buivydienė, 50 m., gyv. Vytogalos k., Upynos apyl., užrašyta 1974 m. Jos motina, kilusi nuo Varnių, sakydavusi, kad tai pati pirmoji malda rytmetį, ją reikia sukalbėti dar prieš „Tėve mūsų“.

⁵ „Kuriant ugnį, kalbama tokia maldelė: ‘Švinta Gabija, švinta Gabieta, neik iš šitas vietas, būk un šitas vietas“.

⁶ „‘Gabieta, užguobta mygok, atguobta žibiek’. Taip meldavosi užgesinant ugnį vakare. Pateikėja Kazė Petkienė, 80 m. iš Obelyno k. (kilusi iš Laukuvos), užrašyta 1985 m.“

⁷ „[R]eikia maldelį išmoka kalbėc, tai visada rasi [grybų]. Jis [mano brolis – D. V.] mane mokino: kai išlups grybą, tai paspjaudyk ant jo ir pasakyk: ‘Grybuli, būk laimingas, kad rastau daug – ir brolius, ir seseris, ir visą giminę’“.

⁸ Cf. the word maldyti at Vilnius University Lithuanian Etymological Dictionary database. Website: <https://etimologija.balt nexus.lt/?w=maldyti> [accessed 2 January 2022].

⁹ „Liuob i girdės, ka maldo, kryžių sudėjus an karvės ragų“.

¹⁰ „Kai pamatai jauną mėnesį, kalbėk: ‘Jaunas jaunikaitis, Dieva karalaitis, tau auksa karūna, man sveikata’ “.

¹¹ „Užkalbėjimas nuo visokių ligų ir suturėjimui kraujo iš žaizdos. ‘Mėnuo, Mėnuo, Mėnulėli, dungaus šviesus Dievaitėli Duok jam ratų, man sveikatų, duok jam pilnystį – man Perkūno karalystį!’ Šią maldą mano tėviškėj daugumas gaspadorių moka ir tiki, kad padeda. Pasakotojas daug kartų yra matęs, kad sukalba maldele, ir kraujas nustoja iš žaizdos bėgti. Tokių faktų daug matęs, todėl sako: ‘Reikia tikėt!’ “ LU: 252.

¹² „Jaunas Mėnulaiti, Dangaus karalaiti,

Koks tu esi čystas:

Apčystijai dangų ir žemę,

Apčystik ir mane jauną (seną)“.

¹³ „Kai pirmą kartą jauną mėnulį, būdavo, pamatys, tai sako: ‘Jauno Mėno, seno Tėvo, Apčystyk kūną ir kraują mano!’ Ir jei žaizdos kokios ar karpas, paima žemės, patrina. Senoviniai žmonės tai visokius varažbitus turėdavo“.

¹⁴ „Karpas tik pati moku užkalbėti. Sakyti: ‘Mėnuli, mėnuli, tu iščystini dangų ir žemę, iščystink ir mano kūną’“. Po to reikia triskart paimt ir mest žemės per save atbula ranka“.

¹⁵ „[Kai pamato jauną mėnulį, ar nieko nedarydavo?] Darydavom. Sako: ‘Jaunas Mėnulaicis, dangaus karalaicis, apčystinai dangų ir žamį, apčystyk mano griešnų kūnų’. Tai šitaip kalbėjo, kap jaunų mėnulukų užmatai. [Dėl ko taip kalbėdavo?] Va tep ka maldele jau cia buvo. Tep ka maldele. Išaini ant kiemo ir matai jau jaunų mėnulaicį, ir rankas jau sudedzi, ir tadu šitų maldeļi kalbi. <...> Nu, jau atkalbi tu šitų maldeļi, ir, kap rodos, atlinki jau tį tam jau, mėnuliui, pareigas iki kito mėnesio pradžiai, jaucies jau laimingesnė“.

¹⁶ The materials documented by Šerėnas are archived in a collection that was compiled by Stasys Biziuėvičius (LTR 1253).

¹⁷ „Nuo gyvatės įkirtimo yra užkalbėjimas. Kai gyvulį įkanda gyvatė, tai reikia šv. Agotos vandeniui apiprausti ir duoti gerti, tai daugiau nekels gyvulio. Ir tada reikia užkalbėti. Štai tos maldos žodžiai. Pirmiau pasiklausti, kokio plauko gyvulys, ir kalbėti: ‘Šalta geležis! (3x9=27) Šaltu geležiu prikišk ir vėl atitrauk! (3x9=27.) Gyvatė kirtu juodą gyvulį, bet Dievo Motina sako, kad gyvatės kirtimas nieko nemačys!’ (Ir vėl tuos sakinius kartoti 3x9=27). Užkalbinėti reikia ant vėjo, kad būtų gyvulys išvestas iš tvarto“.

¹⁸ „Žmonės kalba, kad galima užkalbėti rožę, votis ir dantis, kai kada koja sutinsta arba rankų ar kitų vietų ir pradeda niežti – tada būna rožė. Tuomet tą vietą reikia aprišti kanapių plaiskaniais ir apibarstyti ruginiais miltais ir tuomet nereikia tą vietą vandeniui plauti. Ir tuomet reikia užkalbėti. Štai vieno užkalbėjimo būdas. Reikia peržegnoti triskart sakydamas „Vardan Dievo Tėvo, ir Sūnaus, ir Dvasios Šventosios, amen“. O tam ligoniui liepiama kalbėti 5 poterius prie Viešpaties Jezaus žaizdų. O tas užkalbėtojas po to žegnojimo kalba maldą: ‘Ėjo Viešpats Jezus Kristus per žvyrių, per žemę, per vandenį. Nešė rankoje 3 rožes: viena plyšo, antra prapuolė. Duok, Viešpatie Jezau Kristau, kad šito[ji] trečia rožė prapultų. Šventas Mykolai arkangelai, šv. Jonai Krikštytojau, visi šv. apaštalai: šventas Petrai ir Povilai, keturi evangelistai, devyni chorai angelų ir Tu, Marija, Motina Sopulingoji, melsk Viešpatį Jezų Kristų, kad jis pagydytų šitų rožę! Todėl, šventas Mykolai arkangelai, šv. Jonai Krikštytojau, visi šv. apaštalai, šv. Petrai ir Povilai, keturi evangelistai, devyni chorai angelų ir Tu, Marija, Motina Sopulingoji, melskis už jo sveikatą (arba jos)!’

Taip reikia smulkiai atlikti, kad dar tik šviežiai, tai užtenka trijų kartų užkalbėt, o jei jau seniau, tai šešiskart ar devyniskart. O dvylikakart – tai jau visas užkalbėjimas. Kalbėjimo laikas – saulės tekėjimas ir nusileidimas”.

¹⁹ „Nuo pasiutusio šunio yra užkalbėjimas. Reikia nurašyti tokia maldelė ant kortelės ir tada tas lapelis reikia duoti suėsti. Štai tos maldelės žodžiai:

Sotor

Opero

tenet

Orepo

rotas

Šią maldelę reikia išrašius supenėt šuniui, duoti rytais, pietumis ir vakarais, taip per visą savaitę, kol pasveiks“.

²⁰ „Maldelė nuo gyvatės. ‘Žeme žemybe, dangaus aukštybe! Motina mūsų, pykčių karaliene, buvai piktybė ir nueik piktybe!’ Užkalbėti reikia ore. Prieš ir po užkalbėjimo tris kartus persižegnoti. Maldelė kalbama tris kartus. Užrašyta apie 1930 m.“

²¹ „Gyvatės gėlimas. Senovės žmonis, kad įkūsdava, tai jie mokedavo tokių maldų, kaip antai: ‘Oi tu kirmel, gelaž, šaltavuodeg, kad įleidai margai karvei, prašo [prašau] atlaisti!’

Jei margas gyvulys, tai margam, jei juodas, tai juodam taip sakyti valug plauko. Jei žmogus, tam žmogui geltonplaukiui, o jei arkliui, tai teip sakyti, koks gyvulio yr plauks, tai tep ir kalbėti. Toliau, jei įkando vaikinga, tai reikia surinkti tiek kalbėtojų, kiek galėjo būt jai vaikų. Teip jei užmušei, tai kalbėjims nenumačis, bo nebėr kam beprašyti.

Užrašė Ratkus-Ratkevičius apie 1920 m. Papilė, Akmenės r. sav.“

²² „Aš moku žadinėt no gyvatės, bet aš negaliu – raikia nekvėpavus iškalbėt to maldelė, i „Sveika, Marija“ tris kartus“. Told by a woman, aged 87, from the village of Vosiūnai in Adutiškis elder-ship, Švenčionys region. Documented by Daiva Vaitkevičienė in 2010. LTRF cd 437.

²³ The audio recording LTRF cd 740.

²⁴ „Čia jau yr maldos tokios ir užkalba“; „specialiai nuo tų ligų yr maldos“; „ten malda jau, ne poteriai, ten jau malda“;

„tokie jau žodžiai yra, tį jau nė „Sveika, Marija“, tį maldos tokios“; „Janiula, aš tav išmokysiu nuo rožės kalbėcie. Kap aš pamirsiu, taip koc mano maldelas minėsi, kų aš tau išmokiau“; „ana jau man paliko tas savo maldas“.

²⁵ „Į kalbėjimus jiem nēr laiko, [geriau] kad išgercie, ne kalbėcie!“; „žolių nē kokių nežinau, nuo ko kokių žolių gydzycis, nu va tai kalbėjimais nuo rožės ir nuo vėjo...“

²⁶ „Nuo rožės šitaip gydo: saulei tekant ir leidžiantis atidengia (burtininkas) žeidą ir kalba tris „Sveika, Marija“ neatsidusdamas. Sukalbėjis atsidūsta ir tuo oru pučia žeidą – ir „šventu oru“ nupučia skaudėjimą, užkalba“.

²⁷ „Užkalbėjimas nuo akių. Akys ir dideliam, ir mažam iškadija. Tadu reikia persižegnoti ir [kalbėti] triskart „Sveika, Marija“ neatsidusus an druskos. Tadu druska vandenin ir apsipraust“.

²⁸ „Kaip daryti mikčių. Paimti lininį siūlą ir rišti mazgelius, būtinai sėdint ant slenksčio. Kiekvieną mazgą rišant sulaikius kvapą kalbėti „Sveika, Marija“, o baigus rišti – „Amen“. Rišti abiejų rankų nykščiais ir bevardžiais pirštais“.

²⁹ „Nuo gyvatės įkirtimo reikia kalbėti sveikamariją atbulai, būtent: ‘Amen mirties mūsų valandoje ir dabar griešnus mus už melskis Motina Dievo Marija Švinta Jezus iščius vaisius Tava pagirtas ir moterų tarp Tu pagirta pilnoji malonės Marija Sveika’. Taip mane mokė mano senelė“.

³⁰ „Neažkalbėta rože ažpyksta ir plečias. Ažkalba kalbėdami atažagariai „Sveika, Marija“ ir barsta ruginiais miltais. Kalbėte reikia saulai tekant ar leidžiantis“.

³¹ „Tėtės tėvelis ir mano mama žinojo rožės užkalbėjimo maldą, tačiau mums negalėjo perduoti jos. Aš buvau antroji dukra, o galima perduoti pirmagimei arba pagrandukui, tačiau jaunėlė teturėjo tik dvylika metų, kai mirė mama. Vėliau mes, tvarkydami dokumentus, atradome užkalbėjimo maldą. Užkalbėjimas vykdavo anksti ryte, tai mes matydavome, kai atvažiuodavo pas mamą žmonės užkalbėti. Ten ir buvo taip parašyta: ‘Anksti ryte saulei tekant arba vėlai vakare, kai saulė tik leidžiasi, šituo laiku. Reikia persižegnoti, įkvėpti oro ir vienu įkvėpimu sukalbėti „Sveika, Marija“. Ir taip padaryti tris kartus.’

Bet mes negalėjome juo naudotis – nei aš, nei jaunoji sesuo. Tik žinojome šitą užkalbėjimą, bet jis yra neperduotas.“

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