

# BALTŲ KULTŪRA



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# Lithuanian and Prussian Sacrificial Offering Sites: The *Jauja*, or Grain Drying Room

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According to the written sources, a well-to-do peasant's farm in the 16th-18th centuries included from several to more than a dozen buildings of differing functions. Caspar Hennenberger wrote in 1595 that Prussian Lithuanians, besides older-style houses and a newer kind of house, also had several barns used as summer residences and for winter storage, as well as buildings for threshing and drying grains, baking bread, making beer, washing clothes, bathing, etc.<sup>1</sup>. It can only be regretted that Hennenberger didn't enumerate all of the buildings on the farm, and that he did not provide the names for many of them. About a century later, in 1690, Theodor Lepner, besides the aforementioned buildings (older and newer-style homes), also listed the following buildings which had a place on the farms: the mill (*maltuvė*, *Maltuwe*) with several hand-operated grindstones; the barn (*klėtis*, *Klete*, *Kleth*, *Klethe*); the *jauja* (*Jaugen*, *Jauge*) where grains were dried and threshed (the heated *jauja* building also served as a sauna); and the storage shed (*daržinė*, *Scheune*) for storing crops and fodder<sup>2</sup>. According to Praetorius, there were on average about 20 buildings on an affluent Nadrauvian peasant farm by the end of the 17th century. Besides those mentioned above, also noteworthy are the pens and stables (*tvartai*) and the flax/linen building (*lininė*, *Brachstube*)<sup>3</sup>.

**Keywords:** Paganism, sacrifices, rituals, customs, beliefs, folklore; grain drying room.

## Building Name and Function

Based on the aforementioned sources and other sources from the 16th–20th centuries,

the *jauja* is considered one of the most important functional buildings of that period, where grains brought in from the fields were dried and threshed, flax and hemp were dried and separated into fibers, hops were dried and where even saunas were taken<sup>4</sup>.

- 1 Hennenberger, C. *Der See, Ströme und Flüßer Namen, welche in d. Preuschen Mappen verzeichnet sind u. wie solche aufffürgehende weis leichtlich zu finden sein*. Königsberg: Osterberger, 1595, p. 161.
- 2 Lepneris, T. *Prūsų lietuvis*. Parengė Vilija Gerulaitienė. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2011, pp. 182–183.
- 3 Prätorius, M. *Deliciae Prussicae oder preussische Schaubühne, herg. Von Dr. Pierson*, Berlin, 1871, p. 107–110, 114.

- 4 In the *reja*, according to Daukantas, «... *jawus sausus isz doubos iszindamijs, ant klounu paklojusis kulę. Toie rejoie buo ketwirtajnis rentinys aukszesnis ož rejos sijnas doubu wadinams mažne posę rėjôs pžemous so kakalo, korioie jawus dziowino, qnt to doubu buo dôrys arba saliklinikas, koremi buo ląngalis garwilko wadinamas kame sałyklą dziowino, pažastiesi tôs doubos buo peludes kor pelus pylę. Pas*

The name of this building in different Lithuanian regions, and sometimes within the same region, varies: *kluonas*, *jauja*, *klojimas*, *klaimas*, *duoba*, *rėja*, *kisimas*, *skūnia*<sup>5</sup>. Izidorius Butkevičius proposes calling the building by the generic term *kluonas* [a barn for drying and storing crops], because, he says, “other names in different parts of Lithuania sometimes refer to only a separate section of a *kluonas*”<sup>6</sup>. But the opposite view may also be taken: the diversity of names partially reflects the evolution of the building and provides information about its primary function. Regarding this, the nouns *klojimas* and *kluonas* are related with the verb *kloti*, “to lay, to pave, to cover;”<sup>7</sup> and the noun *jauja* is connected with the verb *ja’uti*, “to rummage, grub, to mix up, to turn over” (compare *prijauti* with *pridžiauti*, “to place crops in the *jauja*”); the noun *duoba* is related to the verb *duobti*, “to make an

impression, pit, hole;” the noun *kisimas*<sup>8</sup> with *kisti*, *-a*, *-ė* “to hang up to dry in the *jauja* (to stick in the *jauja* for drying),” and *užkisti*, *užkisa*, *užkisė* “to dry the contents of the *jauja*”. Two more terms have been borrowed from neighboring languages: *rija*<sup>9</sup> from Latvian and *skūnė* from German.

Based on the linguistic data Konstantinas Jablonskis gathered from older texts,<sup>10</sup> we can say confidently that the *jauja* or *kluonas* existed in Lithuania by the 16th century<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, we cannot reject the possibility, or more likely probability, that there were prototypes for this building in Lithuania earlier. Daukantas, for example, writes: “Piteus garsos žvajsdžinys kelaudams po sziurę par pėnkis szimtus metu pirm gimimo Krystaus minwo jau tou trobesį sawo kelonęs rasztusi, kajpo stebuklingą ir negirdietą daktą” [... travelling in the north more than 500 years before the birth of Christ mentioned this barn building in their travelogue as a miraculous and unknown thing.]<sup>12</sup>.

The *jauja* of the 16th–17th centuries, however, was more than merely a utilitarian building: for the peasant of that period it was a “church,” i.e., a place where offerings were made and other rites were performed for the elder gods. The reason for this was the decline of the pagan religion which began at the same

*netortingusius toie doubu pieries, nesgi qnt kakalu buo krosnes sokrauta*“ [...dry grain is taken from the *jauja* and threshed on the *kluonas*...]” followed by a gloss of archaic terms for different parts of the building and the equipment used there.] (*Ibid*, p. 25–26).

- 5 In this work the names of this farm building are used synonymously, avoiding the whole constellation of other meanings for the lexemes *kluonas*, *jauja*, *klojimas*, *duoba*, *rėja* and *kisimas*. For more information, see the Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language, available online at <http://www.lkz.lt> for the following and related entries: **jauja** – a heated portion of the *kluonas* where linen or grain is dried; a drying room; a *kluonas* (*klojimas*) with such a drying operation or capacity; a separate farm building in which linen is dried and crushed; a sauna; a building for storing and threshing grain... **kluonas** – a farm building for storing grain; **duoba** – a *jauja*; etc.
- 6 Butkevičius, I. *Lietuvos valstiečių gyvenvietės ir sodybos. Iš Lietuvos kultūros istorijos*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1971, p. 192.
- 7 Būga, K. *Raštai. T. II. Sudarė Zigmąs Zinkevičius*. Vilnius: Politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1959, p. 343.

8 *Ibid*, p. 355.

9 Compare Latvian *rija* and Lithuanian *jauja* (see: Balkevičius, J. Kabelka, J. *Latvių kalbos žodynas*. Vilnius: Mokslas, 1977, p. 558.

10 Jablonskis, K. *Lietuviški žodžiai senosios Lietuvos raštinių kalboje. D. 1. Tekstai*. Kaunas: Lietuvos istorijos draugija, 1941, p. 78–85.

11 Butkevičius, I. *Lietuvos valstiečių gyvenvietės ir sodybos. Iš Lietuvos kultūros istorijos*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1971, p. 193.

12 *Ibid*, p. 26.

time as the introduction of Christianity to Lithuania and Samogitia. Following the destruction of the old sacred sites, new venues for performing rituals had to be found.

### Offerings in the *Jauja* in the 16th–18th Centuries

1. The first information about offerings made in the *jauja* reach us from 16th century sources. The anonymous author of the Book of the Sūduvians writing in German in the first half of the 16th century presents a comprehensive view of the goat sacrifice ritual performed in the *jauja* (*in die scheuren*), which, judging from the description, took place twice per year, in the spring and fall:

“Darnach furen sie Inen in die sheuren,<sup>13</sup> da heben sie den Bock auff, gehhen alle vmbher. Der Wourschkaiti ruffet aber einmal alle götter an wie oben, vnd hat sich vmbeschurtz vnd spricht: das ist das lobliche heilige gedechtnis vnserer Veter, auff das wir versönen den zorn vnserer Götter, vnd Sticht den Bock...”<sup>14</sup>

The *jauja* is selected for this ritual for several reasons. First, a large space is required in which “four or six villages” could fit; second, the ability to light a fire, upon which the goat meat and small wheat-dough flat bread are cooked; third, the *jauja* is customarily built some distance away from other buildings, so rituals could be

conducted there without fear of interruption by passers-by and, more importantly, by visitors propagating Christianity and battling pagan rituals by all means possible; fourth, the *jauja* is where the main fruits of the annual toil of the farmer are kept: harvested grain, separated flax and hemp.

According to the Book of the Sūduvians, the *jauja* (*In Ire Scheuren, in der scheunen*) is also used for making offerings to the *markopoliai* and *barstukai*, the helpers of the god Puškaitis; and the sea god Bardaitis (*Bardoayts*). Offerings of “beer, bread, cheese, butter and boiled and cooked [food]” are laid on the table in the *jauja* for the *barstukai* and *markopoliai*, and boiled fish is placed there for Bardaitis<sup>15</sup>.

Pēteris Šmits describes similar offerings made by Latvians to the ancestors during the month of the dead in the *jauja* (and also in the sauna and stables). The head of the family carried in meat, porridge, cheese and beer for the spirits of the departed. After the table was set, the doors to the *jauja* were closed to prevent anyone bothering the ghosts as they ate. After some time, the living returned to take a look at how much of what was eaten, and by this they forecasted whether the coming year would be fruitful. The householders consumed the leftover food the ancestors did not eat<sup>16</sup>.

2. We find information about offerings made in the *jauja* in a letter Jan Malecki-Sandecki (aka Johannes Maletius, Ioannes Sandecensis, Hans von Sandaz) wrote in Latin in 1551 to Georg Sabinus (aka Georgius Sabinus, Georg Schüler) (generally called

13 German *Scheune*, «large barn» *jauja*.

14 «Then they conduct themselves into the *jauja*, where the goat is held... The Wourschkaiti (*viršaitis*) calls but once all the gods to come... and says: ‘this is in loving duty to our Father, and we are in fear of our gods,’ and then stabs the goat.” (See: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 132–133, 147–148*).

15 *Ibid.*, p. 148–149.

16 Šmits, P. *Latvių mitologija. Iš latvių kalbos vertė Dainius Razauskas. Vilnius: Aidai, 2004, p. 94–95.*

the *Epistola ad Georgium Sabinum*). Malecki, we know, made use of the Book of the Sūdūvians, and his descriptions of the goat sacrifice ritual and the offerings made to the helper entities of Puškaitis are almost taken verbatim from that work. There are, however, inaccuracies. In translating the work written in German to Latin, the Latin word *horreum*, *ī* was used to translate German *Scheune*:

“His deamonibus inuocatis, quotquot adsunt **in horreo** [emphasis added here and elsewhere] omnes simul extollunt caprum, sublimemque tenent, donec canatur hymnus; quo finito, rursus demittunt ac sistunt caprum in terram. Tum sacrificulus admonet populum, ut solenne hoc sacrificium, a majoribus pie institutum, summa cum ueneratione faciant, eiusque memoriam religiose ad posteros conseruent. Hac conciuncula ad populum habita, ipse mactat uictimam, sanguinemque patina exoptum dispergit. Carnem uero tradit mulieribus eodem **in horreo** coquendam. Hae interea dum caro coquitur, parant e farina siliginea placentas, quas non imponunt in furnum, sed uiri focum circumstantes, hinc illinc per ignem iaciunt absquecessatione, tamdiu quoad illae indurescant et coquantur. His peractis, epulantur atque helluantur tota die ac nocte usque ad uomitum.”<sup>17</sup>

Eugenija Ulčainaitė translated this into Lithuanian more or less in this manner:

„After invoking all these demons, everyone in the [grain-storage] *svirnas* [barn] raises the goat, and holds it up until a hymn has been sung. After it is finished, they let the goat down again and set it upon the ground.

Then the supreme *žynys* admonishes the people to perform with the greatest respect this sacrifice begun by the ancestors and pleasing to the gods, and to preserve its memory religiously for posterity. After this brief speech, he himself cuts the animal, and the blood, collected on a plate, he sprinkles. The meat is given to the women to cook right there in the *svirnas* [barn]. While the meat is cooking, the women make small flat bread of wheat flour, which they don't place immediately in the bread-cooking oven; the men standing around the *aukuras* [fireplace] without pause throw them through the fire from one side to the other until they harden and are baked. Having done this, they feast and entertain themselves the entire day and night to the point of vomiting.”<sup>18</sup>

Offerings are made to the *barstukai* as well in the barn (*in horreo*), rather than in the *jauja*, according to the translation of Malecki's work into Lithuanian<sup>19</sup>.

It is obvious to Lithuanian speakers that “a crowd of people” could not fit inside a *svirnas* and even less likely that a fire could be made there or an *aukuras* (fire-altar) set up there. A *svirnas* (*Žemaitijan klėtis*) is a building with thick floorboards raised on wooden blocks or stones above the ground for storing grain, flour, meat, household items and farm equipment, and, in larger versions, for sleeping as well, in one or two specially-built chambers<sup>20</sup>. There could never have been an oven or fire-altar set up in a *svirnas* because of its specific construc-

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208–209.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>20</sup> Butkevičius, I. *Lietuvos valstiečių gyvenvietės ir sodybos. Iš Lietuvos kultūros istorijos*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1971, pp. 179–186.

<sup>17</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II*. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius, editor. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 204.

tion, so the sacrifice rituals described could not have been performed there. Thus the translation of Latin *horreum* into Lithuanian should not be considered very accurate (or, should be considered very inaccurate).

Kazimieras Kuzavinis's dictionary, which the translator apparently used, really does indicate *horre|um* as Lithuanian *sandėlis; klėtis, svirnas* [storage space; grain-storage barn]<sup>21</sup>. Yosif Kananovich Dvoretzky's dictionary has under the entry for *horreum*, *ī* several explanatory words, including *frūmentarius, ī* (grain storehouse); *penārī|us, a, um* food storehouse<sup>22</sup>, which to some extent raises doubts concerning the translation of *horeum* into Lithuanian. After all, in the 16th-19th centuries peasants considered a *jauja* as exactly that, a storehouse for grain (although unthreshed). Only after it was dried and threshed, i.e., the grain separated from the chaff, was it moved to another sort of "grain storehouse," i.e., to the *svirnas* (or *klėtis*). Here, distant from fire and safer from thieves and mice, a portion of the grain was usually poured into bins to be used for food later, and another portion was preserved carefully for the next sowing. Finally, solving the problem of the meaning of Latin *horeum* in the 16th century and its translation into Lithuanian is facilitated by consulting the Polish equivalent to Latin *horreum* provided in a 16th-century Latin-Polish dictionary: *gumno/stadoła*, meaning, threshing-barn, threshing-floor, *jauja*<sup>23</sup>.

3. Lucas David's Prussian Chronicle written 1573–1583 and the Book of the Sūduvians previously mentioned retell information about the rituals performed in the *jauja* or barn (*Gurben oder Sheunen*) for the sea god Gardaitis (*Gardoaitis*)<sup>24</sup> and the helpers of the god Puškaitis called *markopoliai* and *barstukai*<sup>25</sup>. The mistranslation in Lithuanian of the name of the sacrifice site was avoided because both the Book of the Sūduvians and Lucas David's Prussian Chronicle were written in German.

Besides the aforementioned retellings, Lucas David was also the first to record a story never written down before about other sacrifices also made in the *jauja*: "...the *vaidila* (*Waideler*) doesn't perform the sacrifice in his house, but goes to the patient or the afflicted ... Furthermore, he doesn't perform this in the house where the patient lives with his wife, children and servants, and not in the animal stables, but in the *jauja* (*im Gorben*); this is a building which the Prussian peasants build to dry grain therein, and where there is no *jauja* (*Gorben*), the offering is made in the grain storage barn (*die Sheunen*). To these distant buildings, where he performs this work of the devil, several males assemble, for neither the wife nor the servants are admitted there. Before it starts, a large bonfire must be lit; then the master of the house must bring that which he has decided to sacrifice to the gods"<sup>26</sup>.

21 Internet webpage <http://www.flf.vu.lt/index.php?id=874>. Accessed February 10, 2012.

22 Дворецкий, И. Х. *Латинско-Русский словарь*. Москва: Издательство „Русский язык“, 1976, p. 480.

23 Maczinsky I. *Lexicon LatinoPolonicum ex optimis Latinae Lingvae scriptoribus concinnatum*. Re-

giomonti Borvssiae: Typographus Ioannes Daubmannus, 1564, p. 158.

24 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II*. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 255, 287.

25 *Ibid*, p. 293.

26 *Ibid*, p. 250, 282–283.

4. Strykowski, utilizing the Book of the Sūduvians, recounts rituals during which Puškaitis's helpers the *barstukai* are honored and fed. Strykowski says the table with the food intended as an offering is prepared and set in the *jauja* (*w gumnie*)<sup>27</sup>.

5. From a fragment of a work by Jan Łasicki, one guesses the ritual dedicated to Gabija was also held in the *jauja*: “Cum autem nimia aestatis breuitas, fruges demesses, plane siccarum non sinat, fit hoc sub tectis ad ignem”<sup>28</sup>. In truth we know neither what was sacrificed nor how the sacrifice was made to Gabija, because Łasicki only recorded a fragment of a prayer from the entire ritual<sup>29</sup>, but the place where it was possible to dry the grain which had been brought inside, “in the shelter next to the fire,” could only mean one place on the peasant farm in that period: the aforementioned *jauja*.

A fragment of a Latvian folk song beseeching St. Laurynas to protect the *jauja* from fire and help thresh the grain confirms this:

Palīdzi, Labrenci, rijiņu kult,  
Cel augstu dūmiņus, zemu dzirkstelītes  
[Help, Laurynas, to thresh the grain  
Raise the smoke high and [keep]  
the sparks low)]

28774<sup>30</sup>.

Pēteris Šmits reports that at the beginning of the 20th century in Latvia “rituals

from pagan times were still being performed in very many villages to protect the farmhouses from fire,” and that these rituals were performed nowhere else but in the *jauja*: “In the morning before sunrise the head of the family, without anyone seeing, goes to the *jauja*, in one hand carrying a vessel of water, in the other a rock and a handful of ‘iron nettles.’ He sets the water upon the stove in the *jauja*, and after a certain ceremony places the nettles on the window, below, and places the rock on top of them. This supposedly protects the house from all danger of fire”<sup>31</sup>.

6. The annual reports by the Vilnius Jesuit Collegium written at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century are considered original works, i.e., they reflect real events of the time. At least two episodes from these reports (in 1600 and 1605) are very significant to this discussion. Here's what the report from 1600 says:

“*Alibi lapides nonparui in horeeis, in terra defossi, superficie plana sursum versus, non terra sed stramine contecti asseruantur, quos Deyues appellant, atque vt custodes frumentorum et pecorum religiose colunt...*” [“In certain places in the *svirnai* [grain stores] there are not insignificant stones dug into the earth, with a broad surface upturned, not buried in the earth, but covered with straw; they call them *deivės* (*Deyues*) and worship them religiously as the guardians of grain and livestock” (translated to Lithuanian by Eugenija Ulčinaitė)]<sup>32</sup>.

Later in this text there is a detailed description of what was sacrificed to these

27 *Ibid.*, p. 514, 547.

28 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II.* Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 584, 597.

29 „*Gabie deuaite, pokiėlki garumuleiski kibirxtu*” (see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II.* Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 584, 597.

30 Internet webpage: <http://www.dainuskapis.lv/daina/28774-o-Rija-labibas-kulsana>. Accessed March 21, 2012.

31 Šmitas, P. *Latvių mitologija. Iš latvių kalbos vertė Dainius Razauskas*. Vilnius: Aidai, 2004, p. 38.

32 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. II.* Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2001, p. 620, 628.

goddesses, how it was done and by whom, and what punishments awaited those who did not show proper respect to the stones<sup>33</sup>.

The report for 1605 says that after the grain is brought in from the fields, they hold a feast, during which they kill a rooster and roast it on the fire, and later forecast the coming year's harvest, while under the eaves of the *svirnas* (*ad aliorum vicinorum horrea*) wagon wheels are hung, to stop evil spirits from "stealing away the harvest to the *svirnai* [plural] of neighbors" (translated by Eugenija Ulčinaite)<sup>34</sup>.

It would appear that the translations of these fragments into Lithuanian also need corrections. Both cases (for the reasons stated earlier) revolve around rituals performed in *jaujas*, i.e., in peasant farmers' buildings which have neither dirt floors covered with boards nor ceilings covered with the same sort of boards or poles. Only the *jauja*, as stated earlier, had the facilities for lighting a fire for sacrifice, and only here was there a permanent offering site (a home altar) set up, and only here could a broad stone be dug into the earth (into the threshing floor) to be dressed with straw on holy days<sup>35</sup>.

7. Kristupas Sapūnas's Lithuanian grammar, published in 1673 on the initiative of Theodor Schultz, was the first source to mention the god Gabjaujis: "...Gabjaujis, Deus horreorum." Kazimieras Eigminas's translation to Lithuanian is "...Gabjaujis (klėčių dievas)" ["...Gabjaujis (god of the

granaries)"]<sup>36</sup>. The inaccuracy of the translation is obvious<sup>37</sup>. This is shown painfully by the very word-construction and etymology of the theonym Gabjaujis. Following Būga, it should be considered a compound word consisting of the root *gab-*, "to veil, to cover," and the word *jauja*<sup>38</sup>.

8. Praetorius at the end of the 17th century provides much information about sacrifices to the elder gods performed in the *jauja* and also about other rituals performed there. Besides retelling information about sacrifices made to *kaukučiai* (*bezdukai* and *markopoliai*) [household spirits]<sup>39</sup> in the *jauja* from earlier authors, Praetorius also reports on customs still practiced in the 17th century and even rituals he himself had witnessed.

Praetorius's description of the ritual for receiving a new wife into her husband's household following a wedding, during which the bride must give gifts to all the buildings, should also be considered authentic. It states that the bride "throws a cake hard" into the *jauja* (Jawja)<sup>40</sup>. Another

33 *Ibid*, p. 628.

34 *Ibid*, p. 624, 632.

35 On the ritual use of hay, see also: Balsys, R. „Dievo stalas“ XVI–XVII a. rašytinių šaltinių duomenimis. *Logos*. Nr. 69. Vilnius, 2011, p. 150–162.

36 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*. T. III. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2003, p. 49.

37 Most likely this translation also caused error among the compilers of the Lithuanian dictionary, because along with the other meanings of *gabjaujas* is "god of the *klėtis*, *kaukas* [a spirit similar to a leprechaun], *gabvartas* [apparently a synonym for Gabjauja from Praetorius]," see: Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language, <http://www.lkz.lt>.

38 Būga, K. *Raštai*. T. I. Sudarė Zigmas Zinkevičius. Vilnius: Politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1958, pp. 210–211.

39 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*. T. III. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2003, p. 259.

40 *Ibid*, p. 317.



episode described by Praetorius answers the questions of why, for whom and to what end this ritual is performed. Having learned that a woman sometimes spoke “with her devil” in the *jauja*, Praetorius and a friend spied upon a woman and saw how she “said many prayers and performed strange rituals, until finally she called upon Žemeliukas (Zemeluks) to tell her where she could find the thief”<sup>41</sup>. From this description it is clear that rituals to the elder gods, who were nothing more than devils in Christian eyes, were still being performed in secret in the 17th century.

Praetorius’s story about the feast of Gabjaujis is also significant to this discussion. He says Gabjaujis (*Gabjaugis*) is: a) “is like the threshing in the *jauja*, where grains are dried and threshed, this sort of barn is called a *jauja*,” b) “is a sort of *jauja* holy day, held for the god Gabjaujis (*Gabjaugia*),” c) “is the god of the *jauja*, cereals and fire, at least according to their prayers, which are recited during that holy day”<sup>42</sup>. From the foregoing observations it is clear Praetorius himself ascribed to Gabjaujis the functions of *jauja*, grain and fire, based, as he himself says, on the prayers recited during the holy day<sup>43</sup>.

9. We find information about the gods resident in the *jauja* in Jakob Brodowski’s dictionary (1713–1744): Gabjaujis and Ja-

gaubis (“Divitarium. Gabjauja” and “Vulkanus. Jagaubis, Ugnis šwenta. Feuer Goot,” i.e., Gabjaujis, god of wealth and plenty; and Jagaubis, holy fire, god of fire)<sup>44</sup>. It is almost certain that Brodowski, based on the work by Praetorius and perhaps also Sapūnas’s grammar, made two gods of one simply by segregating their functions.

10. Following Brodowski, Gabjaujis and Jagaubis are treated in almost exactly the same manner in Philipp Ruhig’s dictionary (Gabjauja, os – die Göttin des Reichthums; Jagaubis, bjo – Vulcanus der Heyden, i.e. Gabjauja, os – goddess of wealth; Jagaubis – the pagan Vulcan, i.e., the god of fire) and in the dictionary by Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus (Christian Gottlieb Mielcke), who copied mythological information from Ruhig (Gabjauja, jos – die Göttin des Reichthums der alten Littauer; Jagaubis, bjo – Gott des Feuers der Heiden, [Gabjauja, jos – die Göttin des Reichthums der alten Littauer; Jagaubis, bjo – Gott des Feuers der Heiden, i.e. Gabjauja, jos – the goddess of wealth of the ancient Lithuanians; Jagaubis – the god of fire of the pagans])<sup>45</sup>.

In summarizing the information from the written sources of the 16th–18th centuries, it is to be noted that there is much more information about sacrifices made to the elder gods in the *jauja* than previously thought (due to mistranslation, some of rituals actually performed in the *jauja* were previously transferred to the *svirna*). We may state that sacrifices in *jaujas* during the period under discussion were widely practiced. The

41 *Ibid*, p. 241.

42 *Ibid*, p. 295–296.

43 Praetorius wrote down a prayer dedicated to Gabjaujis: “Lord God Gabjaujis, these good gifts [we offer] to honor the God, you have given us the power to accomplish this. You protect us from many dangers, especially so that fire would do us no harm. We pray you, in the coming year give us more, not less, and better, not worse.”

44 *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai. T. IV. Sudarė Norbertas Vėlius. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2005, p. 29.*

45 *Ibid*, p. 41, 79.

information from the written sources is confirmed by legends and beliefs recorded in the 19th and early 20th centuries reflecting the tradition of sacrifice in the *jauja*.

### The *Jauja* in 19th-20th Century Folklore and Folk Beliefs

The first matter to address here is the corpus of legends and popular beliefs about *aitvarai* (for Latvians, the master of the *jauja*, spirits). Stories about the *aitvaras* (singular) who threshes (or increases) the grain and delivers grain stolen from the neighbors' *jaujas*, and is therefore fed by the woman of the farmstead, are especially popular<sup>46</sup>. Attention should be brought to bear on two important things: the offering (food) made to the *aitvaras*, and the image or appearance of the *aitvaras*. Most frequently it takes the form of rooster or a fire snake. Both these images are connected with rituals performed in the *jauja* in the 16th and 17th centuries. It should be recalled that the rooster (chicken) is most frequently sacrificed to those gods responsible for the success of (especially) agricultural crops. The second (fiery) form of the *aitvaras* is intimately connected with the oven in the *jauja* and the fire kindled there. There are legends in which food for the *aitvaras* must be placed on the oven of the *jauja* by the master of the house<sup>47</sup>. The legends also contain stories of revenge by

the *aitvaras* for intentional or unintentional substitutions of food (manure placed instead of eggs), namely, the burning down of the *jauja*. There are also stories of the *jauja* fire itself exacting revenge. In both cases we see reflections of the god Gabjaujis, the god of the *jauja* fire, in the folklore of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This is confirmed partially by Latvian folk beliefs: "In the fall, lighting the fire in the *jauja* for the first time, [you] need to cut the head off a rooster and sprinkle its blood on the door to the *jauja*, so there won't be a [destructive barn] fire;"<sup>48</sup> in the fall, lighting the fire for the first time in the *jauja*, you were supposed to throw a hen's egg into the oven to ensure the grain would be round (large)<sup>49</sup>; during the ceremony concluding the threshing, one was supposed to place food and drink in the *jauja* oven for the man of the *jauja* (or the lord of the *jauja*). The food and drink was to be in abundant portions, so that this abundance might hold true throughout the home<sup>50</sup>. Stories recorded in the 20th century indicate sacrifices were to be made at the appointed time to the spirits of the ancestors as well as the lord of the *jauja*. Beer was brought

46 Balys, J. *Raštai. T. IV. Parengė Rita Repšienė*. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2003, No. 68, 86, 90, 91.

47 Vėlius, N. *Mitinės lietuvių sakmių būtybės. Laimos. Laumės. Aitvarai, kaukai. Raganos. Burtininkai. Vilkolakiai*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1977, p. 168.

48 Rudenī pirmo reizi riju kurot, jānokauj gailis un rijas durvis jānotraipa ar gaiļa asinīm, tad neizcelsies ugunsgrēks (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).

49 Rudenī, kad labiba jau ir rijā un kad pirmo reiz iet kurt krāsni, tad vajag ielikt veselu vistas olu krāsns bedrē. Tad būšot apaļi graudi (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).

50 Apkūlibu ēšana un dzeršana uz rijas krāsns tikusi rikota Rijas kungam par godu, kas vienmēr dzīvojojt rijā. Tādas viesības varēja būt arī lielākas un no rijas pāriet uz istabu. Parasti vārijuši biezputru, lai nākošā gadā attiecīgā raža būtu biezāka (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).

to them in the swept and clean *jauja* on Vēlinēs eve (or Ilgēs, the pagan precursor of All Saints' Day)<sup>51</sup>.

It is well known from folklore sources from the latter half of the 19th and early 20th century, heavily influenced by the Christian worldview, that a rarely visited *jauja* or sauna was the playground of evil spirits ("and in the *jauja* the devils had stolen in," "at midnight the devils enter the sauna," "at the usual time at night the little Germans crowded the *jauja*")<sup>52</sup>. Worthy of mention as well are the stories in which a boy (or girl) makes a wager he will enter the *jauja*, knowing that devils visit or reside there permanently, and bring back a pole used for drying sheaves of grain, eggs, a whip or a wooden plank<sup>53</sup>; stories about devils threshing and visiting the *jauja* at night who ask travellers to come in and spend the night<sup>54</sup>; and stories about *laumēs* (female deities and elementals in Baltic mythology taking a variety of forms) who visit or spend the night in the *jauja*<sup>55</sup>.

Hence appear all sorts of bans or beliefs that one should not enter the *jauja* at

night, and if one is compelled to do so by necessity, then one is to take the necessary measures for self-protection. According to one such belief, "Early Christmas Eve they had to bring back the livestock from pasture because at night it was forbidden to enter the barn: the spirits were threshing the grain and beat the backs of those who entered with sticks"<sup>56</sup>. Balys Buračas recalled small crosses were cut into the wooden flax crushers to prevent the *laumēs* in the *jauja* from crushing the flax to make linen at night, and the wooden flax crushers were nailed shut with pegs made from ash-tree wood, tied with herbs collected on Midsummer's Eve, and the *jauja* was consecrated by priests numerous times, but all for nought: "there is no way to drive those evil horrible creatures out"<sup>57</sup>. Latvians had similar taboos and beliefs. It was said a devil lived in the *jauja* so children weren't allowed to enter alone<sup>58</sup>. It was also said that if you heard a noise in the *jauja*, you had to make the sign of the cross before entering<sup>59</sup>, and that when lighting the fire in the *jauja*, you were not to fall asleep, or the devil might cast you into the flames<sup>60</sup>.

From this, it seems, there arose various epithets for the devil connected with the

- 51 Kerbelytė, B. *Lietuvių pasakojamosios tautosakos katalogas. T. IV. Pasakojimai. Anekdota. Oracijos*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2009, p. 62; *Lietuvių folkloro chrestomatija*. Parengė Bronislava Kerbelytė, Bronė Stundžienė. Vilnius: Regnum fondas, 1996, p. 89.
- 52 Jasiūnaitė, B. Velnio pavadinimai pagal gyvenamąją vietą lietuvių tarmėse ir tautosakoje. *Baltistica. Vol. XLVI(1)*. Vilnius, 2011, p. 20.
- 53 Balys, J. *Raštai. T. III*. Parengė Rita Repšienė. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2002, No. 578–580.
- 54 *Ibid*, No. 688–690.
- 55 Balys J. *Raštai. T. IV*. Parengė Rita Repšienė. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2003, p. 140 (No. 17), p. 145 (No. 34).

- 56 Balys, J. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės. Tautosakinė medžiaga ir aiškinimai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 23.
- 57 Buračas, B. *Lietuvos kaimo papročiai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 110.
- 58 Rijā mēdz uzturēties velns; bērni vieni tāpēc bīstas rijā iet (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).
- 59 Ja, rijā kuļot, dzird kādu troksni, tad papriekšu vajaga pārmest krustu un tad tikai iet apskatīties (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).
- 60 Rijā pie kurošās krāsns nedrīkst gulēt, jo tad velns iemet krāsni (Internet webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folkloraticejumi/>).

everyday environment and farm buildings (the most popular being *jaujinis*, *pirtinis*, from the nouns *jauja* and *pirtis* “sauna”), discussed in the works of Norbertas Vėlius<sup>61</sup> and Birutė Jasiūnaitė<sup>62</sup>. The same may be said of phrases such as “like the devil in the *jauja*,”<sup>63</sup> “the devils are going to the sauna,”<sup>64</sup> “to burn like the devil of the *jauja*”<sup>65</sup>, “blowing like the devil in the sauna”<sup>66</sup>, “scurrying about like *laumės* in the *jauja*”<sup>67</sup>, the *lord of the zembė* (the devil)<sup>68</sup>, and so on. Analogous is the origin of proverbs such as “Don’t go to the sauna with the devil,” “In the *jauja* or the sauna, just like in the devil’s palm,” “If you let the devil into the sauna, he’ll soon climb upon the upper benches”<sup>69</sup>.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact priests in their sermons called *jaujas* the nests of Satan and places of dissipation

and immorality, *jaujas* remained the venue for various activities, including dramatized ceremonies to mark the completion of tasks, Lithuanian evening events, skits and plays, right up into the second half of the 20th century. Worth mentioning is the carrying of an anthropomorphic effigy called the *kuršis*<sup>70</sup> from a ceremony to mark the end of the crushing of the flax to the *jauja* of the neighbors who had not yet completed their flax crushing, known from descriptions by ethnographers in the early 20th century (this custom was much more widespread in Žemaitija<sup>71</sup>); as well as the carrying of “the radish” after finishing threshing<sup>72</sup>; and the making of, and pro-

61 Vėlius, N. *Chtoniškas lietuvių mitologijos pasaulis. Folklorinio velnio analizė*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1987, p. 34, 40.

62 Jasiūnaitė, B. Velnio pavadinimai pagal gyvenamąją vietą lietuvių tarmėse ir tautosakoje. *Baltistica. Vol. XLVI(1)*. Vilnius, 2011, p. 92.

63 So said of a noisy person (see: *Frazeologijos žodynas*. Redaktorius Jonas Paulauskas. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos instituto leidykla, 2001, p. 824).

64 *Ibid*, p. 815.

65 Said of someone in a hurry (see: *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas. T. XVIII*. Redaktorius Vytautas Vitkauskas. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos instituto leidykla, 1997, p. 647).

66 *Ibid*, p. 647.

67 Buračas, B. *Lietuvos kaimo papročiai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 109.

68 According to the Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language, a *zembė* is: a) the wall between the *jauja* and the oven; b) the oven used for drying linen in the *jauja* (*Lietuvių kalbos žodynas. T. XXX*. Redaktorius Vytautas Vitkauskas, editor. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos instituto leidykla, 2002, p. 304).

69 *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas. T. XVIII*. Redaktorius Vytautas Vitkauskas. Vilnius: Lietuvių kalbos instituto leidykla, 1997, p. 648.

70 For more, see: Buračas, B. *Lietuvos kaimo papročiai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 103; Merkienė, R. Žemaičių ir klaipėdiškių linamynio talkos. *Kraštotyra*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1967, p. 147; Vyšniauskaitė, A. Lietuvių linininkystės papročiai. *Valstiečių verslai. Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos. T. XII*, Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1983, p. 158–159.

71 “The characteristic tradition of the completion of the crushing of the linen, called the decoration and carrying of the *kuršis* effigy, has survived until today in Plungė, Rietavas, Tverai and other districts of Telšiai. ... Some maudlin boy’s pants are stuffed with straw. A long jacket of rough material is placed upon the body. The face is made of wood and the nose is a red beet, the tongue a long sock. The effigy’s head is covered in a fur cap, and he is given to hand a flax crusher. ...” (Buračas, B. *Lietuvos kaimo papročiai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 103).

72 Those who finish their flax first announce the fact to their neighbors by blowing through the hole of a wooden wheel, and carry the “radish” to the *jauja* where the work is still going on (see: Trinkas, Vl. Baigtuvių papročiai. *Gimtasai kraštas*. No. 5. 1935, p. 243–244.); Balys Buračas says the “radish” is some sort of heavy object (usually a rock or a tree stump) which is placed upon the separated straw so that those carrying it aren’t able to lift their loads (see Buračas, Balys. *Lietuvos kaimo papročiai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 113).

tection of the Morė (a straw effigy in the shape of a woman)<sup>73</sup> and swinging during Easter<sup>74</sup>; as well as evenings of theatrical entertainment which gradually acquired the appellation of “the barn theater”<sup>75</sup>.

In summary it is worth noting that the *jauja*, according to the written sources from the 16th and 17th centuries, was not only

one of the most important utility buildings at that time, but was also the peasant farmer’s sacrifice site, where offerings were made and other rituals performed for the elder gods. The *jauja* was chosen for this ritual usage for several different reasons. First, a large space was needed which would accommodate “four or six villages;” second, its ability to host a fire upon which the meat of the goat sacrificed and flatbread made of wheat dough could be cooked; third, *jaujas* were commonly built at some distance away from other buildings, so rituals could be held there without fear of interruption by passers-by and all the more without fear of visitors propagating Christianity and battling paganism by all means available to them; fourth, the *jauja* was the place where the most important fruits of the farmer’s yearly labors were kept, including harvested grain, flax and hemp. The exceptionality of the *jauja* in the 16th and 17th centuries is pointed up in the folklore and folk beliefs of the 19th and 20th centuries, preserving traces of the tradition of making sacrificial offerings in the *jaujas*.

- 73 Žemaičių Kalvarija regional historian Konstantinas Bružas reported the Morė was made and kept in the *klojimas* until Shrovetide. Morė returned to the same place after the fun and games of Shrovetide: “After a day of fun ‘the little old lady’ returned to the *kluonas* and stayed there until the following year. When the time arrived, they fixed her up again and even improved her.” The date of birth of the informant and his notification that his father made the Morė show that this tradition recorded was from the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. (see: Bružas, K. *Apie senovines žiemos (Užgavėnių) tradicijas Varduvo apylinkėse. Kraštotyra*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1979, p. 128).
- 74 Winging during Easter was especially popular in Eastern Lithuania, the idea being to make the linen grow higher. The swings were usually set up in the *jaujas* or storage barns (see: Balys, J. *Lietuvių kalendorinės šventės. Tautosakinė medžiaga ir aiškinimai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, p. 153).
- 75 Bielskis, P. *Lietuvos klojimo teatras*. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 1999, p. 11–13.

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