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The Image of the Black Book Sorcerer in Lithuanian Folklore

In Lithuanian folklore, one of the most prevalent figures are those who possess magical abilities, such as witches and sorcerers. Lithuanian folk tales and legends depict witches as malevolent figures who inflict harm upon people: they are known to steal milk from cows, damage crops, transform humans into animals, and disrupt people's everyday life in various other ways (Kerbelytė, 2002, pp. 206–238; Vėlius, 1977, pp. 218–232). In folklore, the character of the witch is presented as predominantly evil. This portrayal was strongly shaped by the influence of Christianity during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in numerous European countries (Laime, 2024, p. 141). By contrast, male sorcerers are more ambivalent figures, capable of both good and evil deeds. In Lithuanian folklore, sorcerers are depicted as healers and fortune tellers, as well as someone who can assist people in locating lost items or apprehending criminals. However, the most salient feature of the sorcerer in Lithuanian folklore is his malevolence. In folk legends, sorcerers or warlocks (I will explain different terms used to identify sorcerers later on in the article) are capable of bewitching entire households, causing illness, or transforming people into animals. Sorcerers often appear at weddings, where they are said to cause harm to

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the groom and bride. They could also be depicted as ones who control snakes, beggars, or travelling foreigners.

Lithuanian folk legends about sorcerers encompass many familiar legend types observed in the folklore of other European nations. One particular theme is common to folklore of many different countries around the world: the pact between the sorcerer and the devil. In Lithuanian folklore, this specific theme is closely intertwined with an entire separate category of folk legends concerning black book sorcerers. In the course of this research, I analysed 95 folkloric texts about black book sorcerers from the Lithuanian Folklore Archives (Lietuvių tautosakos rankraštynas). The majority of these texts were recorded between the mid-nineteenth century and 1982. All of these legends feature the use of a black book, which is a magical artefact that enables the user to perform magic or to gain control of the devil.

The folkloric concept of a black book of magic is connected with European grimoire tradition. Grimoire is a book of magical charms and incantations, accompanied by instructions on how to make amulets, potions and other magical artefacts. Grimoires included information on healing, love magic, treasure hunting, and even communication with demons. The origins of medieval and modern grimoires can be traced to ancient Egypt and Greece. Evidence indicates that such magical texts were in circulation as early as the fourth century BCE in Egypt and the first centuries CE in Greece (Davies, 2009, pp. 18–19). Subsequently, the dissemination of esoteric texts originating from the Arab world and of Jewish Kabbalah, made an influence on European writers and compilers of such books. In the early Middle Ages, the first medieval European grimoires were produced. However, it was only from the sixteenth century onwards that grimoires gained significant popularity in Europe, due to the invention of the printing press, the onset of the Reformation, and the Catholic Church's efforts to denounce and discredit those engaged in magic. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries grimoires were available for purchase in bookshops, and thus accessible to general public.

Magic books, whose authorship was attributed to Moses and Faustus, reached Scandinavia via Germany; they influenced the development of a distinct Northern European grimoire tradition, called *svarteboken*, which translates as "black books" in English. Most of these books, particularly in Norway, were associated with the legend of Saint Cyprian, ascribing the authorship of the books to him. The Norwegian example demonstrates how both printed grimoires and folk legends about black book sorcerers coexisted concurrently and influenced each other (Ohrvik, 2018, 2021). There is no evidence of grimoires being printed in Lithuania. Nevertheless, translations of Agrippa's books, along with other works such as *Clavicula Salomonis*, *Grand Grimoire* and *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, were highly popular across Europe. There is little doubt some of these texts were read in Lithuanian towns and among the nobility.

With regard to the peasants, it needs to be noted that most of the people in Lithuanian villages were illiterate, even at the beginning of the twentieth century. Books

in general, let alone ones that delved into magic, elicited a curious but cautious and, sometimes, even fearful response. This relationship with books had a significant impact on the portrayal of sorcerers as wise people using a book of spells, as represented in folklore. Furthermore, Davies suggests, and illustrates with numerous examples, that illiterate individuals in Europe sometimes owned grimoires despite their inability to read them. The mere ownership of the book was believed to offer protection, or even to enable them to perform magic (Davies, 2009, p. 107). There is no evidence of peasants in Lithuania who would own a magic book, and there is no mention of grimoires in Lithuanian witch trial records (Jablonskis & Jasas, 1987). Nonetheless, the general feeling towards books must have had a significant influence on the folklore about sorcerers.

Although folk legends concerning witches and sorcerers are an important part of Lithuanian folklore, they remain relatively understudied. Similarly, there has been no significant research on the topic of black book sorcerers, which concerns one particular type of witch/sorcerer legends. It is touched upon in the works of the Lithuanian folklorist Norbertas Vėlius (1977, 1989), but in a broader context of mythical figures in Lithuanian folklore, with little attention given to black book sorcerers. The present article will demonstrate that Lithuanian folk legends about black book sorcerers exhibit numerous similarities to those in other Baltic countries as well as Northern European and Slavic ones. Along with the Lithuanian material, I will be discussing examples from Poland (Krzyżanowski, 1963; Wróblewska, 2017), Finland (Jauhiainen, 1998), Sweden (Klintberg, 2010) and Norway (Christiansen, 1958; Ohrvik, 2018, 2021).

This article suggests that the legends about black book sorcerers in Lithuanian folklore constitute a separate legend type, exhibiting characteristics that are prevalent in the broader North-Central European region. I argue that cultural interactions with neighbouring countries, in particular Poland and Belarus, contributed to the widespread dissemination of this migratory legend type in certain parts of Lithuania. In this article I intend to: (1) identify and contextualise the main features of sorcerers and their books in Lithuanian folk legends; (2) discuss the relationship between the black book sorcerer and the devil; (3) demonstrate how the "Rebellious Apprentice" folk tale type is adopted in the legends about black book sorcerers. The article is structured according to these three features and narrative plots, which are integral to the black book sorcerer legend type in Lithuanian folklore.

Names and topography

Before examining the folk narratives and legend types concerning black book sorcerers, it is necessary to address the matter of names and topography. The overwhelming majority of individuals engaged with black books in Lithuanian folklore are male. In

what follows, I will be using two different English terms to refer to these individuals: sorcerer (*burtininkas*) and warlock (*raganius*). The term *burtininkas* is derived from the Lithuanian word *burti*, meaning 'to enchant', 'to bewitch'. In English, it is typically translated as "sorcerer" or "wizard". However, the Lithuanian word *burtininkas* does not have a connection with the word *išmintis* 'wisdom'. Therefore, I have chosen the word "sorcerer" (instead of "wizard") as a more appropriate translation. The word *raganius* is a masculine form of *ragana* 'witch', and therefore the most accurate translation would be "warlock". In Lithuanian folklore, both of these terms, sorcerer and warlock, are used interchangeably and often appear as synonyms in folk tales.

It is also important to note the term *juodaknygiai*, which is more commonly referred to as *černaknyžnikai* in folk legends. These are two different versions of the same compound word, the first one of Lithuanian, and the second one of Slavic origin. The term *juodaknygis* is derived from the Lithuanian words *juoda* 'black' and *knyga* 'book', and thus can be translated literally as "blackbooker". The term *černaknyžnikas* (or *černaknyžninkas*, *černaknižninkas*) is a loanword from Belarusian *чарнакніжнік*, meaning 'sorcerer', derived from the same two words that mean 'black' and 'book'. It was documented as early as 1600 in *Postilla Lietvwiszka* [Lithuanian Postil] by Jokūbas Morkūnas ("Černaknyžninkas", 2018). However, within the context of Lithuanian folklore, the term *černaknyžnikas* is seldom used as a general word for "sorcerer". Rather, it is specifically used to describe people who do magic with the aid of a magic book. They constitute a distinct group within the broader category of sorcerers and warlocks in Lithuanian folklore, which has its own terminology. In this article, I will be translating the terms *juodaknygiai* and *černaknyžnikai* as "black book sorcerers".

When talking about topographical distribution and mapping of folklore, it is important to note some preliminary points. It should first be noted that this data does not represent the actual distribution of folklore. Some areas of Lithuania were visited by ethnographers more frequently than others, and with different objectives in mind. In particular, folklore expeditions conducted during the interwar and early Soviet periods were primarily focused on documenting folk songs and folk tales. The second challenge with mapping folklore is the fact that people move. Geographical distribution of a legend represents circumstances under which folklorists met the person who told them the story: the informant often did not mention where they were originally from. Additionally, some regions may be overrepresented due to subjective factors, such as the focus of a particular folklorist or the presence of strong local tradition (as in the case of the Gervėčiai region, referred to later on in the article).

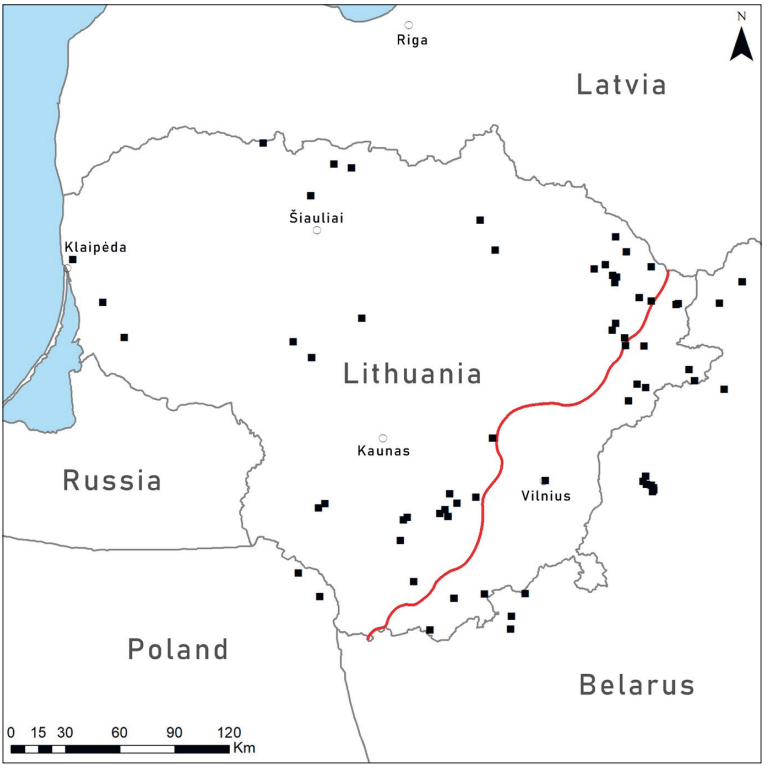


Fig. 1. Map of locations where folk legends about black book sorcerers were recorded. The red line marks the Lithuanian-Polish border in 1922–1939. Map by the author.

With these notes in mind, the mapping of a specific legend type can be a valuable addition. It can display topographical distribution and tendencies that are otherwise excluded from traditional folkloristic research. Following the mapping of 90 out of 95 legends[1] about black book sorcerers recorded in Lithuania and in the regions across the border (see Fig. 1), several noteworthy findings emerged. (1) Over half (55) of the legends about black book sorcerers were recorded in either the region of Lithuania that was part of Poland between 1919 and 1939, or in the neighbouring areas along the Lithuanian-Polish border during that period. Of the 55 texts, 10 were recorded between 1926 and 1945, while the remainder were recorded no later than 1977. (2) Three smaller areas with records of folklore about black book sorcerers can be distinguished:

[1] The archival data of the five remaining legends which are included in my research do not specify the location where they were recorded.

the area around Gervėčiai in present-day Belarus, the region around Aukštadvaris in the southern part of central Lithuania, and a broader region in north-eastern Lithuania (Aukštaitija) are notable for their folkloric traditions related to black book sorcerers. (3) It is also noteworthy that western Lithuania, and particularly Samogitia, has very few texts about black book sorcerers, despite numerous expeditions conducted in these regions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The sorcerers and their books

In Lithuanian folklore, sorcerers are frequently depicted as foreigners, predominantly Latvians, Hungarians, Russians, Jews and Gypsies. Nevertheless, only four folkloric texts describe black book sorcerers as originating from other countries: one Russian (LTR 4813/140),[2] one Latvian (LTR 1208b/498), one Hungarian (LTR 1250/22), and one instance of a sorcerer identified in the text as an American (LTR 3923/26). In this regard, black book sorcerers have greater similarities to folkloric witches than to other types of sorcerers. However, black book sorcerers also fit the image of "the other", commonly found in portrayals of folkloric sorcerers, in additional ways. In many cases, they are described as people from a village in the neighbouring area. This is often followed by specifying the identity of a sorcerer. In over one-third of all folkloric texts about black book sorcerers (36 out of 95), the storyteller provides the exact name and surname of the sorcerer in question. In the majority of cases, the name of the village or, at the very least, the whereabouts of where he lives are provided. This practice of identifying the sorcerer as a particular individual is distinct from that observed in other countries. To illustrate, in Poland, folk legends do not mention the names of the sorcerers (Wróblewska, 2017, p. 6). The mentions of exact names and locations suggest that at least some of the people in question were actual sorcerers, most likely healers or charmers, who were perceived as black book sorcerers in other villages. Unfortunately, ethnographers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Lithuania did not conduct any thorough investigation into these stories, and today we do not know if those people, identified as black book sorcerers, were indeed real people. One exception, however, warrants further consideration.

In 1926, two folk legends were recorded at the farmstead of Slabadka, in the area of Gervėčiai (a cluster of a few villages in the north-western part of contemporary Belarus, still populated by Lithuanian-speaking people). These legends concern a sorcerer named Šimas Rėvas (LMD I 841/1; I 841/13).[3] The storyteller made reference to

[2] The abbreviation LTR stands for Lietuvių tautosakos rankraštynas (Lithuanian Folklore Archives); it is followed by the reference number of a particular text.

[3] The abbreviation LMD stands for Lietuvių mokslo draugijos rankraštynas (Manuscripts of the Lithuanian Scientific Society); it is followed by the reference number of a particular text.

the black book, gave general information about the sorcerer, and talked about some of his abilities and adventures.

> Šimas Revas, with his daughters and his sweetheart, reads his "black book" late into the evening. Once his sweetheart threw his black book into the fireplace and burnt it. The next day she found the same book lying on a shelf. He [Šimas Revas] can make a carriage ride without a driver. He doesn't like vodka much, he calls it poison. He comes to weddings covered from head to toe in flowers and plays the violin. (LMD I 841/13)

In 1970, an ethnographic expedition arrived in the Gervėčiai region, where folklorists recorded approximately 100 new folk legends about the same sorcerer, now known as Šimutis. By the time, he had evolved into a complex folkloric character. In some accounts, Šimutis is depicted as a benevolent sorcerer who provides assistance to people with their daily problems and health issues. However, his malevolent actions are also mentioned, particularly his use of a black book, through which he made a pact with the devil (there are 13 instances of Šimutis and his black book). During their time at Gervėčiai, folklorists made an intriguing discovery. The character of Šimutis was based on a real person, a farmer and local sorcerer named Šimas Augulis (1880–1935), who lived in a village called Pelegrinda (Vėlius, 1989). Indeed, Šimas Augulis was a traditional charmer and a sorcerer, who helped villagers with health issues and practical problems. He employed magic to locate misplaced items, catch criminals, or predict the weather. Nevertheless, in the neighbouring villages, he became renowned, even during his lifetime, as a black book sorcerer who sold his soul to the devil. This iteration of Šimutis legend further developed in the Gervėčiai region and, over the course of several decades, people were telling various stories about his black book and malevolent sorcery.[4]

A few aspects of the character of Šimutis, both as a legendary sorcerer and in relation to his real-life counterpart, are worth mentioning when considering the general features of black book sorcerers in Lithuanian folklore. This is because Šimutis resembles many of them. It is notable that, apart from his role as a sorcerer, Šimutis is also referred to as a farmer. Some kind of primary occupation, other than being a sorcerer, is a common feature among legendary black book sorcerers. However, Šimutis' being a farmer is somewhat of an exception, which may be a reflection of the real-life farmer Šimas Augulis. In folk legends, it is more common for black book sorcerers to have a different primary occupation, such as miller or craftsman. Violetta Wróblewska posits that non-agricultural occupations, such as blacksmith or miller, are sometimes ascribed to sorcerers in folklore because these were perceived as inferior to farming by villagers (Wróblewska, 2017, p. 5). Similarly in Sweden, sorcerers could

[4] According to folklorists who took part in the latest ethnographic expeditions to the Gervėčiai region, conducted between 2010 and 2012, the character of Šimutis was already beginning to fade. Nevertheless, the legends about his black book were still recounted, illustrating the core of this character.

also be smiths, coachmen or millers (Klintberg, 2010, p. 271). Also, there are four instances in Lithuanian legends where the sorcerer is depicted as lord of the manor (LTR 2411/66; 4115/56; 4115/62; 4311/288). It is noteworthy that only two Lithuanian texts (LTR 619/20; 1072/215) identify black book sorcerers as Catholic priests. By contrast, in Norwegian legends about black book sorcerers, the ownership of black books is more often than not attributed to ministers (Ohrvik, 2021, p. 110). Additionally, two texts (LTR 1250/22; 1580/525) identify the black book sorcerer as a Freemason. In her study on the image of Freemasons in Lithuanian folklore, Radvilė Racėnaitė writes that Freemasons often exhibited similar characteristics to those attributed to folkloric sorcerers. In particular, many legends focus on how a Freemason makes a pact with the devil (Racėnaitė, 2012).

A further factor that contributed to the portrayal of Šimas Augulis as a black book sorcerer was his knowledge. According to his relatives, who were interviewed in 1970, Augulis was able to read, even in Latin, and was knowledgeable about the names of constellations and the field of astronomy (Vėlius, 1989). In medieval and early modern Europe, knowledge and education were closely associated with the practice of sorcery (Davies, 2009). Šimas Augulis' ability to read, particularly in Latin, indubitably strengthened his reputation as a sorcerer. The importance of knowledge in the context of black book sorcerers is a prominent theme in folklore. According to one of the stories, "these books are written in different tongues and different letters, one needs to know how to read them very well" (LTR 833/341). Another story ends with the sentence "Šimutis reads only with his mind" (LTR 4232/39). There is a strong correlation between knowledge and black book sorcery, similarly to the patterns in other countries' folklore. In Norway, for instance, black book sorcerers are often educated people (Ohrvik, 2021, p. 123). Similarly, in Poland, the ability to read and write is a distinctive characteristic of male sorcerers, which sets them apart from witches (Wróblewska, 2017, p. 5).

A few words have to be said about the characteristics of the books in question. In folk legends, the books are consistently described as being "black", sometimes with black pages with either white (LTR 1270/16; 1282/101; 3665/262; 3670/160; 3715/88; 4115/62; 4232/36) or red letters (LTR 3863/44; 4473/28). The latter appearance of these magic books is a common feature in Swedish (Klintberg, 2010, p. 290), Finnish and Estonian folklore (Davies, 2009, p. 132). In three of the legends, the authorship of the black book is attributed to Moses. In two stories, the full name of a famous grimoire, *The Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses*, is provided (LTR 1657/239; 3426/153).

A total of seven legends have been recorded in Lithuania which describe the fate of the book. Usually, the wife or children of the sorcerer decide to burn it when he dies: "After the sorcerer's death, the women burned the book. While the book was burning in the fire, the moaning of the spirits could be heard in the chimney" (LTR 1657/239). If the sorcerer is alive and the book is burned, he could die as a result (LTR 1552/238;

3665/262). In other legends, the book does not burn in the fire if the sorcerer is still alive (LTR 3426/153; 4232/518).

Black book sorcerers and the devil

The motif of a person entering into a pact with the devil, which was popularised in Germany with Faustian legends and subsequently spread throughout Northern and Central Europe, is also prevalent in Lithuanian folklore concerning black book sorcerers. Interactions with the devil or his demons and the summoning of diabolical creatures play an important role in many pre-medieval and medieval grimoires as well, including *The Testament of Solomon* and others. Even more recent grimoires included a pact with the devil as a crucial element for the success of written magic. It is noteworthy that the popularity of Scandinavian black books is linked to the fact that they did not include a pact with the devil and were aimed at controlling the devil for one's own purposes (Davies, 2009, p. 116). In Lithuanian folk legends, a pact with the devil is frequently alluded to, though it is not specifically described. Only five texts include the details of such a pact, typically involving the widely known condition of signing a document with one's own blood:

> There is a magic book. You read it and the devil comes. You need money – a gentleman will come and give it to you. You need to sign in blood. You'll have to pay the money back when the leaves fall off the trees. And you say: "Not only leaves, but the needles from the fir and the pine trees as well." Then he won't take you. (LTR 4232/147)

The folk legend quoted above contains a common motif of a sorcerer outsmarting the devil. The protagonist of the story specifies that he will only be able to repay the debt to the devil once all the needles have fallen from the fir and pine trees, which makes it impossible. The context of this image of a sorcerer being able to outsmart or even be superior to the devil can be divided to three parts. From one perspective, this points to the wisdom and knowledge of sorcerers, who are often depicted as too cunning even for the devil. On the other hand, this is closely connected with an image of the folkloric devil (or, as it is often the case with folk legends about black book sorcerers, many "little devils"), who, in contrast to the Christian devil, is typically depicted as stupid and easily deceived (Valk, 2001; Vėlius, 1987). Thirdly, as Davies posits, there is a distinct difference between female witches and male sorcerers in the context of European grimoire tradition and legends, particularly with regard to their relationship with the devil. In most cases, the devil tries to trick witches into making a pact and serving him, while sorcerers often initiate the ritual, summon the devil, and have an upper hand in the pact, often becoming superior to the devil or his demon (Davies, 2009, pp. 82–83). This is evident in Lithuanian folk legends,

where witches are often depicted as being accountable to the devil. He is portrayed as their leader during Witches' Sabbath (Kerbelytė, 2002, p. 221). By contrast, sorcerers, particularly those who own a black book, are able to control the devil for their own purposes. This position is analogous to Polish (Wróblewska, 2017, p. 8), Finnish (Jauhiainen, 1998, pp. 147–148) and other European folk legends, where the sorcerer is frequently depicted as superior to the devil.

This depiction of the relationship between the sorcerer and the devil(s) is a prominent theme in Lithuanian texts about black book sorcerers. According to legends, "in those books were written instructions on how to control devils" (LTR 1657/239); "when one reads from a black book, the devil comes and does everything one commands him" (LTR 4310/133); and similar examples. These statements indicate that the sorcerer has power over the devil. The exact actions that the devil performs for the sorcerer are not always clear. However, it is often stated that the book makes the sorcerer wealthy (e.g. LTR 2069/195; 3426/153). Sometimes, a specific task is mentioned, such as building a fence around a piece of land (LTR 4311/288). One legend is worth examining in more detail. In this text, it is asserted that it is not the devils but the living-dead that are controlled by the sorcerer:

> When I was young, I had a neighbour, and she had these black books with black letters. At one point people needed workers for excavating a huge hill, so they went to her. She read from the book and summoned the dead to come and dig the hill. The dead arrived, and in about five minutes those people had the whole hill dug up. One day she went to the garden and left the book open. Her daughter came and read from the book. She observed the dead coming to her and asking: "Give us work, give us some work." She didn't know what to do, so she told them to cut down the forest. By the time her mother came back, 6,000 trees had been cut down. When people found out that she was living with the dead and the devils, they stopped asking her for help. (LTR 260/549)

This legend, recorded in 1925, is quite unusual. First of all, in this case, the sorcerer using a black book is a woman. Only two other instances among the 95 folk legends about black book sorcerers identify them as women. Secondly, in the initial section of the legend, a highly specific task (excavating a hill) needs to be accomplished with the help of a black book. Thirdly, instead of devils, the sorcerer is able to summon the dead to aid her. Black book sorcerers summoning or communicating with the dead also appear in three other legends (LTR 1208b/499; 4575/480; 4433/127). However, in these instances, the dead are referred to as spirits. The legend quoted above clearly speaks of the dead not as spirits or ghosts, but as physical living-dead, capable of shovelling and of cutting trees, akin to the living-dead *upiór* from Polish and Ukrainian folklore, whose figure is closely connected with that of the witch/sorcerer (Kozak, 2020, p. 20).

This legend about living-dead helpers could be divided into two parts. The first concerns the shovelling of a hill, while the second – the cutting of trees. The latter part incorporates a narrative motif which is common in Lithuanian folklore about

black book sorcerers. In this motif, a person has to give any kind of task to the devil, multiple devils, or, in this case, the dead. Failure to do so results in harm to the person or in their losing control of the summoned. Such tasks include separating poppy seeds from dirt (LTR 866/147; 4417/40), building the hearth of the house (LTR 1580/525) or a bridge over the lake (LTR 4424/240), and counting all the stars in the sky or the leaves on the trees (LMD I 841/1). These examples demonstrate how the sorcerer often outsmarts the devil. However, when the sorcerer is away, other individuals, less cunning and wise, can read his book, which results in unpleasant outcomes. In the final section of this article, I will discuss such legend types and their relationship to the folk tale "The Sorcerer's Apprentice".

The humiliated apprentice

In his anthology of the folk tale "The Sorcerer's Apprentice", Jack Zipes provides his own terms for the two types of this tale: one he refers to as the "Rebellious Apprentice", and the other as the "Humiliated Apprentice" (Zipes, 2017, p. 8). The "Rebellious Apprentice" version, classified as ATU 325 "The Magician and His Pupil" magic tale type in the Arne-Thompson-Uther catalogue (Uther, 2011, pp. 207–209), is the more widely known version of the tale. In Lithuanian variants, it typically begins with a father sending his son to learn magic from a sorcerer. The son subsequently learns how to shapeshift and, either after being released or running away from his apprenticeship, he and his father begin to earn money by repeatedly selling the son transformed into an animal. Typically, the narrative concludes with the sorcerer capturing his former apprentice and engaging in a shapeshifting duel with him in the tale's finale. Magic tale ATU 325 is well documented in Lithuanian folklore, with 174 variants recorded. It follows the traditional plot and is very similar to its Latvian, Polish and Russian versions. Some Lithuanian variants of this tale include the sorcerer's magic book, from which the apprentice secretly learns magic (e.g. LTR 565/27).

For the purposes of this article, the version of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" indexed as ATU 325*[5] ("Apprentice and Ghost"; Uther, 2011, p. 209) is of greater relevance. This tale type has been identified as the "Humiliated Apprentice" by Zipes. Lucian's work, *Philopseudes* (*The Lover of Lies*, written around 160 CE), is regarded as the first literary iteration of this tale. However, there is evidence to suggest that much earlier oral versions existed in Greece and Egypt (Ogden, 2007, pp. 4–5). The general plot of

[5] ATU 325 and ATU 325* (with an asterisk) are two different folk tale types. One is identified as 325 in the ATU index (Uther, 2011, p. 207) and is called "The Magician and His Pupil", and the other is marked 325* (Uther, 2011, p. 209) and is called "Apprentice and Ghost". Both of these folk tale types involve a sorcerer and a person who is not proficient in magic (apprentice, servant, guest, etc.).

this tale type can be summarised as follows: an apprentice (or a guest, servant, family member) overhears half of an incantation said by the sorcerer and uses it while the master is away from home, which results in the summoning of ghosts or bewitching inanimate objects. Only when the sorcerer comes back, he rectifies the situation and, in some variants, humiliates the apprentice.

Although this narrative type is classified as a magic folk tale in Uther's catalogue, all Lithuanian examples of the ATU 325* plot exhibit the stylistic features of folk legends rather than folk tales. In Lithuanian folklore, this plot consistently appears within the tradition of legends about black book sorcerers. A similar phenomenon can be observed in many European countries, where ATU 325* never transformed into something we can classify as a magic tale. Christiansen classified it as migratory legend type 3020 (Christiansen, 1958), and the version involving the sorcerer's black book is known in Scandinavian countries, classified as folk legend as well (Jauhiainen, 1998, p. 137; Klintberg, 2010, pp. 296–297). Consequently, in this article, the plot that is identified by Zipes as "Rebellious Apprentice", and that is also known as magic tale ATU 325*, will be analysed in the context of folk legends.

The folk legend in which someone inexperienced reads from a black book and thus gets into trouble is by far the most common narrative in Lithuanian folklore about black books (33 recorded texts). In these legends, a person who is not educated in magic discovers the sorcerer's black book unattended, reads from it, and consequently encounters malevolent creatures, such as devil(s) or ghosts; the person is not able to get out of the situation. In some cases, the person dies, but in most legends they are rescued by the sorcerer. I will be using Zipes' term "Humiliated Apprentice" for this legend type, because it fits the plot of Lithuanian legends. Additionally, I will be referring to the main character of these legends as the "apprentice", despite the fact that in most Lithuanian legends the relationship between the sorcerer and the person is different.

In these narratives, two types of characters can be identified, depending on their relationship with the sorcerer. The first category comprises people living in the same house as the sorcerer, such as servants or family members. The second category includes individuals who are not directly connected with the sorcerer, namely neighbours and unknown individuals. Servants often feature in these tales (seven texts), for example: "servants stole the book from the Old Man and, gathered together, started reading it" (LTR 1552/238); "a servant summoned devil by chance" (LTR 5061/66). In addition, three folk legends are about the sorcerer's children as the perpetrators in this scenario (LTR 4232/147; 4575/389; 4424/240).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there are villagers or even unknown outsiders. A neighbour is the most common character (seven texts). Most of these texts were recorded in the Gervėčiai region, where the legend concerns a careless neighbour visiting the house of sorcerer Šimutis: "one time a neighbour found the book open in the house, read from it, and terrible noise began around the house. Šimutis rushed

in, took the book back, and the sound disappeared" (LTR 4230/11). In other regions of Lithuania, similar accounts identify people who read from the book as neighbours (LTR 619/20; 4451/41; 4551/134), guests (LTR 4551/190), or unidentified outsiders (e.g. LTR 2083/539; 4115/62; 1072/215). It is notable that only two legends describe the sorcerer as teacher and the "apprentice" as his student (LTR 2430/25; 3426/153).

According to folk legends, as soon as a servant, family member, neighbour or an outsider reads from the sorcerer's book, just like in the example above about strange noise at Šimutis' house, bad things happen. "Dead people started gathering inside" (LTR 1208b/589); "a group of riders on horses appeared, started to destroy the house" (LTR 4232/39); "the reader was possessed by the devil and hanged himself" (LTR 4232/534); "Devils gathered inside the house" (LTR 4232/30) – these are but a few examples of many similar consequences that result from reading the sorcerer's book. In the majority of cases, the person who reads from the book, whether accidentally or out of curiosity, finds themselves in a tough position where they are unable to deal with the devil/demons/magic independently – they have be rescued.

In his analysis of written variants of "Humiliated Apprentice" tales from Egypt and Europe, Zipes notes that "the apprentice never achieves his goal even when, in one instance, the young pupil seeks to kill his master. Moreover, the sorcerers, even when they are the devil, are not depicted as evil. Rather they are powerful holders of magical knowledge" (Zipes, 2017, p. 15). The same is also evident in Lithuanian legends concerning the "Humiliated Apprentice". Once the "apprentice" gets into trouble, accidentally summoning (the) devil(s) or evoking some malevolent magic, he is typically terrified and unable to achieve his objective. Particularly telling are a couple of legends in which the "apprentice" purchases or steals the book. With no sorcerer around, the consequences are severe. The person becomes insane (LTR 4473/28), is tortured by devils (LTR 2411/66), or devils repeatedly ask for work and do not leave the person alone (LTR 2705/59). Furthermore, the note made by Zipes of the sorcerers not being malevolent in this narrative is also accurate. In some cases, the sorcerer rescues the apprentice and sometimes humiliates him: "Šimutis was at the sauna. When he came back, he said: 'You fool, do not read what is not meant to be read', and dealt with the situation" (LTR 4232/39). Nevertheless, the majority of legends have lost the element of humiliation: the narrative typically concludes with the rescue of the apprentice.

Conclusions

The folk legends analysed in this article demonstrate how stories about black book sorcerers in Lithuanian folklore constitute a fully developed legend type that is part of a much broader phenomenon in Northern and Central European folklore. Two folklore

traditions can be identified as external influences to this legend type in Lithuania. Firstly, the mapping of legends shows that the folklore surrounding black book sorcerers is more prevalent in eastern and southern Lithuania, as well as in contemporary Poland and Belarus – in regions close to the Lithuanian-Polish border. The name *černaknyžnikai* 'black book sorcerers', which resembles Belarussian *чарнакніжнік* and Polish *czarnoksiężnik* (both meaning 'sorcerer'), and the similarities with Slavic folklore indicate that the Lithuanian black book sorcerer tradition has been influenced by it. It is also pertinent to consider the black book tradition of Scandinavian countries, where printed grimoires, known as *svarteboken*, circulated among people and influenced the character of the black book sorcerer in folk legends, which has many similarities to Lithuanian material.

The figure of the black book sorcerer is rooted in the "own vs other" dichotomy. The portrayal of these folkloric characters as foreigners, people from other villages, landlords, or even priests and Freemasons, illustrates how this opposition was manifested in folk legends. It is notable that black book sorcerers are often identified by name and dwelling place, which suggests that they were sometimes actual sorcerers or charmers from nearby villages. This is evidenced by the character called Šimutis in the Gervėčiai region. The relationship between black book sorcerers and the devil, including their ability to restrain him and use devil's powers for their own benefit, demonstrates a distinction between black book sorcerers and folkloric witches. Furthermore, it addresses the subject of wielding power. The most intriguing aspect of the character of the black book sorcerer in Lithuanian folklore is its connection with the narrative of folk tale ATU 325*, which has also been identified as the "Rebellious Apprentice" type. In the Baltic region and Central Europe, the plot of magic tale type ATU 325* is known as migratory legend type 3020, because the same plot is stylistically presented as a folk legend rather than a folk tale. It is often associated with socially or culturally diverse groups with mixed identities, which is understandable given that this legend type is prevalent in Lithuanian border areas.

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The Image of the Black Book Sorcerer in Lithuanian Folklore

Abstract

This article examines the image of the black book sorcerer in Lithuanian folklore. In Lithuanian folk legends, the black book sorcerer is a male magician who possesses magical abilities and derives his power from a magic book. This folkloric character is prevalent in numerous European countries, with analogous folk legends observed in Slavic, Baltic and Scandinavian countries. In the course of this research, 95 folk legends from the Lithuanian Folklore Archives (Lietuvių tautosakos rankraštynas) were analysed, with a focus on the main features of the black book sorcerer as a folkloric character, the relationship between him and the devil, and the manner in which this legend type is connected with the folk tale "The Sorcerer's Apprentice". The analysis of these aspects, including the sorcerer's nationality, occupation, education, methods of controlling the devil, and his relationship with other people, provides an insight into the image of this figure in Lithuanian folklore.

Keywords: black book sorcerer; folk legends; Lithuanian folklore; sorcerer's apprentice; ATU (Aarne-Thompson-Uther Index) 325*

Obraz czarnoksiężnika w folklorze litewskim

Streszczenie

Artykuł analizuje wizerunek czarnoksiężnika w folklorze litewskim. W litewskich legendach ludowych czarnoksiężnik to mężczyzna o magicznych zdolnościach, czerpiący swą moc z magicznej księgi. Jest to postać folklorystyczna rozpowszechniona w wielu krajach europejskich, a analogiczne legendy ludowe występują w krajach słowiańskich, bałtyckich i skandynawskich. W toku badań przeanalizowano 95 legend ludowych ze zbiorów Litewskiego Archiwum Folklorystycznego (Lietuvių tautosakos rankraštynas), koncentrując się na głównych cechach czarnoksiężnika jako postaci

folklorystycznej, jego relacji z diabłem oraz sposobie, w jaki ten typ legendy jest powiązany z bajką *Uczeń czarnoksiężnika*. Analiza tych aspektów, w tym narodowości czarnoksiężnika, jego zawodu, wykształcenia, sposobów na uzyskanie kontroli nad diabłem oraz jego relacji z innymi ludźmi, pozwala uzyskać wgląd w obraz tej postaci w folklorze litewskim.

Słowa kluczowe: czarnoksiężnik; legendy ludowe; folklor litewski; uczeń czarnoksiężnika; ATU (klasyfikacja Aarne-Thompsona-Uthera) 325*

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