



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



The Common book
Legends and Myths

Grundtvig project

**RETIREMENT – A SENSE
OF PURPOSE THROUGH
AN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

(RE.S.P.I.D.)

2009

The main objective of the project “Retirement – a sense of purpose through an intercultural dialogue (RE.S.P.I.D.)” is to bring together Municipalities and Community Councils from different European countries in order to exchange ideas, experience and knowledge for the welfare of elderly/ retired people.

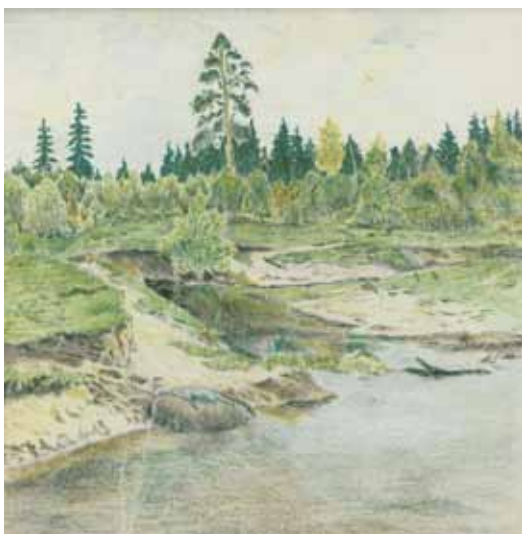
The partner towns are:

1. Pyrgos Community Council – Cyprus
2. Administration of Plunge District Municipality – Lithuania
3. Breaza Local Community Council – Romania
4. Santa Severina Community Council – Italy
5. Menai Bridge Town Council, Wales (United Kingdom)

The Common book

Legends and Myths

Let's go to the trip through Cyprus,
Lithuania, Romania, Italy and Wales (United Kingdom)
and discover the land of its Legends and Myths...



Author Pranas Gedvilas,
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LITHUANIA



Historical legends still continue to give pleasure to the present-day reader, even if the latter does not believe in the depicted events. We are attracted by the simplicity and the perfection of form, the vividness of the scenes, the extraordinary character and the mythical quality of the events.

Istorinės legendos vis dar teikia malonumo dabartiniams skaitytojams net žinant, kad pastarieji netiki pavaizduotais įvykiais. Mus traukia šio žanro formų paprastumas, stiprūs veikėjų charakteriai, paslaptingos scenos, mitinių įvykių gyvumas.

Text author Norbertas Vėlius, 1986.
Translation to Lithuanian Rasa Jonušienė, 2009.



Author Pranas Gedvilas,
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Arkliakaktė (Horse's forehead)

A very long time ago a possessed queen lived on a island in Lake Plateliai. She had a beautiful palace. Everyone hated her and wanted to get rid of her somehow. They often fired bullets at her, but they did no harm whatsoever: she wore iron gloves and would catch the bullets, even those fired from a machine-gun. The queen, possessed by the devil, would ride a white mare and come ashore. Her mare was also impervious to bullets.

Once they thought to make a bullet out of salt. They shot that bullet at the mare, hit it in the forehead, and killed it. The mare sank and so did the queen. The edge of the lake where the mare sank was called Arkliakaktė (Horse's forehead).

Arkliakaktė

Seniai seniai Platelių ežero saloje gyveno pikta karalienė – ragana. Ji turėjo gražius ištaigingus rūmus. Žmonės jos nekentė ir vis stengėsi koku nors būdu ja atsikratyti. Ne vienas bandė ją nušauti, tačiau mažai jai pakenkdavo: karalienė – ragana dėvėjo geležines pirštines, kuriomis laisvai pagaudavo kulka, iššautas net iš geriausių ginklų. Velnio apsėstoji karalienė turėjo baltą kumelę, kuria – lyg viesulu – nujodavo net iki pat kranto. O ir kumelė buvo stebuklinga – paprastomis kulkomis jos nenušausi. Ir sugalvojo žmonės pasidaryti kulka iš druskos. Pasidarę palaukė atjojančios karalienės, šovė baltai kumelei tiesiai į kaktą ir užmušė. Ši nuskendo, o kartu su ja – ir karalienė – ragana. Tada tą ežero krantą, prie kurio nuskendo kumelė, pavadino Arkliakakte (Arklio kakta).

Translation to English Birutė Kiškytė, 2000,
Lithuanian historical legends, Vilnius, "Vaga", 2000.
Translation to Lithuanian Rasa Jonušienė, 2009.

Gedimino sapnas

Daugelio senųjų miestų istorija prasideda nuo legendų. Tokia legenda yra ir apie Vilnių. Užrašyta ji Lietuvos metraščiuose XVI a. Joje pasakojama, kad toje vietoje, kur dabar įsikūręs Vilniaus miestas, nuo neatmenamų laikų šlamėjo žmogaus rankų neliestos sengirės, pilnos laukinių žvėrių ir paukščių. Tai buvusios puikios vietos medžioklei, kurias mėgęs lankyti didysis Lietuvos kunigaikštis Gediminas (1316 – 1341), tada gyvenęs savo pilyje Trakuose.

Vienos tokios medžioklės metu Gediminas nušovęs senųjų Lietuvos girių žvėrį – gražuolį taurą. Medžioklė buvusi sėkminga, ir niekas nepastebėjęs, kai atėjo vakaras. Į Trakus grįžti jau buvę vėlu. Kunigaikštis vienoje iš Panerio kalvų liepęs įrengti stovyklą nakčiai.

Gediminui prisisapnavęs nepaprastas sapnas: matęs kunigaikštis Neries pakrantėje aukštą kalną, o jo viršūnėje – galingu balsu staugiantį didžiulį vilką. Laidęs kunigaikštis į jį strėles, bet jos atšokusios nuo geležiniais šarvais apkaustytų vilko šonų. O žvėris, aukštai iškėlęs galvą, staugęs tokiu stipriu balsu, jog rodęsis, kad jame visas šimtas kitų vilkų staugtų. Toli po plačias girias aidėjęs jo balsas.

Pabudęs kunigaikštis ir iš Šventaragio slėnio, kur buvusi pagoniška lietuvių Dievo Perkūno šventykla, liepęs pakviesti žynį Lizdeiką. Kad šis jam sapno reikšmę paaiškintų. Žynys Lizdeika į kunigaikštį tokiais žodžiais prabilęs:

- O, šviesusis valdove! Tavo sapnas – tai pačių mūsų Dievų tau siunčiama valia. Jie nori, kad tu šiame kalne stiprią pilį pastatytum, kuri, kaip tasai geležinis vilkas, priešo strėlių neįveikiama būtų. Vilko staugimas reiškia garsą ir šlovę miesto, kuriam prie pilies bus lemta išaugti ir tavo plačių valdų sostine tapti.

Patikęs kunigaikščiui žynio Lizdeikos aiškinimas, patikusi jam ir kalva gražiam Šventaragio slėnyje. Tada ir liepęs statyti čia pilį ir steigti miestą, nuo Vilnios upės iš pradžių Vilnia, o vėliau Vilniumi imtą vadinti.

Gediminas' dream

The history of foundation of old towns often begins with legends. At 16th century Lithuanian chronicle contains a legend which every child in Lithuania knows today.

At the beginning of the 14th century dense forests full of wild animals and birds covered the area on which Vilnius stands today. These forests were the favourite hunting grounds of Great Lithuanian Duke Gediminas (1316 – 1341), who at that time lived in his castle in Trakai.

One day out hunting the Duke killed a proud and powerful aurochs. Evening was drawing near and it was already too late to return to Trakai, and so Gediminas decided to spend the night in the forest. He gave the order to pitch camp on one of the hills where Vilnia stream joined the quite-flowing Neris.

Gediminas saw a prophetic dream. On a high hill an enormous wolf was standing and howling as loudly as if it were a large pack of wolves. The Duke began firing arrows at the fearsome animal. However, the arrows bounced off the wolf with a twang, broke and fell onto the ground. The wolf was protected by iron cuirass...

Gediminas woke up and summoned the priest Lizdeika to explain the dream.

Lizdeika pronounced:

- Oh, Great Duke! Your dream is the very will of our Gods. They want you to build a castle on the hill. And it will be strong and powerful like the iron wolf. Then a large town will soon arise whose fame will spread all over the world.

Gediminas was pleased with the words of the old priest. Shortly after returning to Trakai he ordered a castle to be raised on the hill by the mouth of the Vilnia, and a town to be built in the valley. According to the legend, this was how Gediminas founded Vilnius and made it the capital of Lithuania.

Text author Dainius Juozėnas, 1992, Vilnius, "Vyturys", 1992.

Translation to English Vida Bėkštienė, 1992.



ITALY



1st Myth

There are many legends that affect our country and that have been handed down through the centuries. We choose two that seem representative. A long time ago Santa Severina was besieged by Angevins: The people from Santa Severina, who were in difficulties, went to the tomb of Angelo Del Duca, a brave warrior, and asked him for assistance. Angel Del Duca, (we



do not know if it was in a dream or if he was actually talking directly to someone,) told them to milk the animals and then, with the milk produced to ask the women to make many ricotta cheeses to throw at the enemies. By doing this, they would have fooled the enemies into believing that people still had plenty of food and because of this, they would have gone away, discouraged. This is what happened, and Santa Severina was saved.

2nd Myth

Another legend is about the church of Pozzoleo: A long time ago, in the place where the Church of Pozzoleo stands today, there was a house, which had a well outside. In this house, lived a woman called Filomena, with her child.

One day the mother went out, leaving her daughter alone. The daughter, driven by curiosity, went to look inside the well. She leaned over and fell in. The mother returned and could not find her daughter. She began to cry desperately. The little girl heard her mother's call and said "Mum, do not cry: I am in the arms of a beautiful lady." The mother went to call some people and they came to help. The child was found at the bottom of the well sitting on a painting of the Madonna. The picture was saved and up to today, is stored in what was the home of the child, and which became the Church of Pozzoleo.

1° Mito

Molte sono le leggende che riguardano il nostro paese e che sono state tramandate attraverso i secoli. Ne scegliamo due che ci sembrano suggestive:

Molto tempo fa Santa Severina era assediata dagli Angioini: I santaseverinesi, che erano in difficoltà, si recarono presso la tomba di Angelo Del Duca, un valoroso guerriero, e lo pregarono di venire loro in aiuto. Angelo Del Duca, non si sa se in sogno o parlando direttamente a qualcuno, consigliò loro di mungere gli animali e anche le donne, col latte ricavato, fare tante ricotte e buttarle ai nemici. In tal modo questi avrebbero creduto che i cittadini avevano ancora molto cibo e se ne sarebbero andati scoraggiati. Così avvenne, e Santa Severina fu liberata dall'assedio.

2° Mito

Un' altra leggenda riguarda la chiesetta di Pozzoleo: molto tempo fa, al suo posto, vi era una casa, munita di un pozzo e nella quale viveva una donna, Filomena, con una bambina. Un giorno la madre uscì, lasciando la figlia sola. Questa, spinta dalla curiosità, andò a guardare nel pozzo e si sporse cadendovi dentro. Quando la madre tornò e non trovò la figlia si mise a piangere disperata. La bambina sentendola la chiamò:

“Mamma, non piangere: sono nel pozzo in braccio a una bella signora”. La madre andò a chiamare alcune persone che le portassero aiuto, e la bambina fu trovata in fondo al pozzo seduta sul quadro della Madonna. Adesso il quadro è conservato in quella che era la casa della bimba, diventata la Chiesa di Pozzoleo.



ROMANIA



A shepherdess called „Breaza” (Piebald)

It says a long time ago, on these blessed places on which is settled the present city of Breaza, was living a shepherd which carries his sheep on the lands beneath the woods. In one morning, the shepherd's wife took the fresh milk and exhausted – because on that night she didn't sleep, because the trip from the Birsa Land or Fagaras Land or just because of the hungry wolves around – she fallen asleep. The milk was boiling and some drops of milk land on her cheek, reason for which all the people she knew called her The Piebald (BREAZA).

The Dragobetele

The son of Old Woman Dochia, Dragobetele is celebrated on 24th February. His celebration is considered the Romanian equivalent of Valentine's Day, the celebration of love. Probably the 24th February means for the archaic man the spring beginning, the nature's awakening, the bear leaves it's den, the birds seek for new nests, and the man must participates on the nature's joy.

A magic entity like Eros or Cupidon, Dragobetele is different from gentleness of catholic Saint Valentine being a handsome, restless and impetuous. Took from the our old ancestors, where Dragobetele was an animals suitor and godfather, the locals transfigured Dragobetele in the love's protector of people who gathered on his celebration day, love that will last for the whole year.

On this day the villages vibrate of the young people rejoicing. All the celebration participants were saved from illness all year long and the Dragobetele helped also householders in having a good year.

Dressed with the best clothes, girls and lads met in front of the church and departed to seek spring flowers. The girls come back, running in the village followed by boys who liked them. If the boy caught the girl and the girl liked him, she kissed him in front of all of them. That kiss meaning was their engagement for an year or even more, the Dragobetele's day being an opportunity for the community to know what weddings should be in the autumn.

The older people also were involved in this celebration, by taking special care of all the living creatures around. On this special day no animal was immolated because they didn't want to damage their breeding. The women used to touch a man from an other village in order to be amorous all year long. The virgins were gathering the last remaining snow, called fairy snow, and the melted snow was used for beautify them and for love spells.

The Dragobetele was transformed by The Holly Mary in an weed called Navalnic (Impetuos), after the Dragobetele dare to confuse her paths.

„O ciobaniță numită Breaza “

Se spune că de mult ,prin locurile binecuvintate în care se află actuala stațiune și localitate Breaza trăia un cioban care își păstora mioarele pe pajistile de sub geana codrilor . Într-o dimineață ,nevasta ciobanului a pus la închegat laptele muls proaspăt și cuprinsă de oboseală –căci noaptea îi fusese fără de somn din cauza drumului anevoios pe care-l străbătuse tocmai din țara Bîrsei sau din țara Făgărașului ori din cauza lupilor flămanzi ce dăduseră tîrcoale turmei –adormise . Laptele se umflă ,dau în foc și o atinse pe obraz, lăsîndu-l cîteva semene, pricină pentru care de atunci toți semenii ei i-au zis Breaza . „Dragobetele “

Fiul Babei Dochia ,, Dragobetele este sărbătorit pe 24 februarie . Sărbătoarea de Dragobete este considerată echivalentul românesc al sărbătorii Valentine's Day, sau ziua Sfințului Valentin ,sărbătoare a iubirii . Probabil ca 24 februarie înseamnă pentru omul arhaic începutul primăverii ,ziua cînd natura se trezește , ursul iese din bîrlog ,păsările își caută cuiburi ,iar omul trebuia să participe și el la bucuria naturii .

Entitate magică asemanatoare lui Eros sau Cupidon ,Dragobetele se diferentiază de blajinitatea Sfantului Valentin din tradiția catolică ,fiind un bărbat chipeș ,un neastamparat si un navalnic . Preluat de la vechii daci ,unde Dragobetele era un petitor si un nas al animalelor , localnicii au transfigurat Dragobetele in protectorul iubirii celor care se intalnesc in ziua de Dragobete, iubire care ține tot anul ,așa cum păsările ,, se logodesc în “ această zi .

În această zi satele răsunau de de veselie tinerilor și de zicala : Dragobetele sarută fetele. Astfel se spune că cine participă la această sarbatoare avea să fie ferit de bolile anului ,și mai ales de febra, și că Dragobetele îi ajută pe gospodari să aibă un an îmbelșugat . Îmbracati de sarbatoare, fetele și flăcăii se întal-

neau în fața bisericii și plecau să caute prin paduri și lunci ,flori de primavară . Fetele se întorceau în sat alergând , obicei numit zburătorit, urmărite de câte un baiat căruia îi căzuse dragă . Dacă băiatul era iute de picior și o ajungea ,iar fata îl placea ,îl sarută în văzul tuturor . Sărutul acesta semnifică logodna celor doi pentru un an ,sau chiar pentru mai mult , Dragobetele fiind un prilej pentru comunitate pentru a afla ce nunți se mai pregatesc pentru toamna Nici oamenii mai în vîrsta nu stăteau degeaba ,ziua Dragobetelui fiind ziua în care trebuiau să aibă grijă de toate orătaniiile din ogradă ,dar și de păsările cerului . În această zi nu se sacrificau animale pentru că astfel s-ar fi stricat rostul împerecherilor . Femeile obisnuiau sa atinga un barbat din alt sat ,pentru a fi dragastoase tot anul . Fetele mari strîngeau de cu seară ultimele rămșite de zapadă ,numită zapadă zînelor ,iar apa topită din omăt era folosită pe parcursul anului pentru înfrumusetare și pentru diferite descîntece de dragoste .

Dragobetele a fost transformat într-o buruiană ,numită Năvalnic, de Maica Precistă ,după acea nesăbuitul a îndraznit să i încurce și ei cărările .



CYPRUS



Pyrgos tis Rigenas (Queen's Tower)

Many years ago there lived the Queen of Amathounda, known as Rigena, who was a very beautiful woman. She was very rich.



She asked her slaves to excavate a big tunnel to connect her palace in Amathounda with the region of village Pyrgos. The workers for entire days and nights excavated the tunnel. After that, the Queen asked her architects to build a beautiful tower, in which she would visit and relax there. When the tower was finished, she asked her servants to put all her treasures into this tower, because she was afraid that their treasures and jewelry would be stolen by pirates, who oppressed the local people who lived on the coast of Cyprus.

Thus Rigena, in a golden chariot with two very beautiful, tall horses, entered the tunnel for passage to her lovely Tower. People in the palace knew nothing about that Tower. In the centre of Pyrgos village, is located the Church of the Virgin Mary (Panayia Neroforousa). Very close to the church there is a big arch (kamara). People say her golden chariot passed under this arch and the inhabitants used to bow in front of her, and welcome the Queen. Then she would leave her chariot in a stable and would enter in the Tower.



According to the legend, Rigena constructed that Tower and the long tunnel for another reason. She used to meet her lover, a very handsome young man from that region, in the Tower far away from the courtiers.



The neighbouring settlement was named Tower and the village, down to this day, has the same name.



The Tower of Rigena was destroyed, after many years, but the treasures and the golden chariot still lies beneath the village. Nobody knows where it is, but people believe that in the future, they will reappear.

The bird Giannis

Once upon a time two brothers lived happily in a small village. Their parents were very poor, but they worked hard in order to provide for their children. Unfortunately, after a number of years their parents died, thus the two brothers became orphans, without house or food. Somebody told them that in the next village there lived a rich man who could help them. They followed therefore the path to the next village. They found a farm with horses. Upon entering, they met a serious gentleman. They explained everything about their life and they asked him to allow them to sleep at the farm and have little food in return for caring for the horses.

The gentleman told them, “You can stay in my farm, you will have food and accommodation, but you have to be careful with my horses. I don’t want to loose any one of my forty horses.”

The gentleman told them, “You can stay in my farm, you will have food and accommodation, but you have to be careful with my horses. I don’t want to loose any one of my forty horses.”



So, they stayed at the farm

Every morning they used to take the 40 horses, counting them many times every day, driving them to the fields and feeding them. Very late in the afternoons, they would bring them safely back to the farm. They used to count the horses and put them in their stable.

However, one afternoon, when they returned, they counted the horses and they found out that one horse was missing. They only found 39 horses. They hadn't counted the horse on which they rode.

"My dear brother, only 39 I find. One of them is missing."

"Yes, my brother, we have left a horse in the fields. Our farmer will be very angry if he realises this."

"I'll round up the horses and bolt them in the stable, you run as fast as you can back to the fields in order to find the missing horse."

So Giannis, the youngest brother, returned to the fields.

People say that a big wild lion killed and ate little Giannis.

Time passed and young brother didn't return back home. His brother went back to the fields to look for him. He went to the fields, up to the hills, and climbed on the trees, in order to have better view, all the while shouting,

"Gianni, Gianni, Gion..., Gion..."

He spent the whole night, all of the next day, and many other days trying to find him. The eldest brother continued searching for him and calling to him,

"Gianni, Gianni, Gion..., Gion..."



A fairy was very sorry to hear about what had happened and she magically transformed him into a small dark bird, in order for him to be able to fly from tree to tree searching for his brother. Thus, the bird Giannis, every spring, mainly in the evenings, passes from tree to tree calling to his brother with his very sad voice,

“Gion..., Gion... Gion..., Gion...”





WALES



(UNITED KINGDOM)

The Menai Suspension Bridge was designed by Thomas Telford and was built to cross the treacherous Menai Strait separating the Isle of Anglesey from the Welsh mainland where ferries had previously carried people and animals. This had incurred great losses of life. The Bridge was finally opened in January 1826 but when the first chain was put into place in April 1825, not only did three workmen become so excited that they walked the 9 inch chain from one side to another – being told off soundly by Mr. Telford for doing so – legend has it that a cobbler from Menai Bridge also walked the chain to the middle and completed a pair of shoes – sitting on the chain!

Cylluniwyd Pont Crog Menai gan Thomas Telford i groesi Afon Menai lle bu cychod cyn hynny yn cludo pobol ac anifeiliad drosodd i'r tir mawr. Roedd croesi'r Afon yn beryglus iawn a chollwyd llawer o fywydau. Agorwyd y Bont ym mis Ionawr 1826, ond pan osodwyd y gadwyn gyntaf ar draws yr Afon ym mis Ebrill 1825 mae'n debyg fod tri gweithiwr wedi gwirioni cymaint fe ddringodd y tri a cherdded ar draws y gadwyn 9 modfedd o led o un ochr i'r llall – a Mr. Telford yn dweud y drefn wrthynt am wneud y fath beth – ond yn ol yr hen hanes fe gerddodd crydd o Borthaethwy hefyd i ganol y gadwyn, eistedd arni a gorffen par o esgidiau tra'n eistedd yno!



Menai Bridge/Welsh Legends 2

Yn y chweched ganrif trigai dau sant ar Ynys Mon – Cybi oedd yn byw yng Nghorllewin yr ynys yn yr hen gaer Rhufeinig yng Nghaergybi a Seiriol oedd yn byw yn Nwyrain yr Ynys yn agos i ffynnon ym Mhenmon. Mae'n debyg bod y ddau yn ffrindiau mawr ac roeddynt yn cerdded 20 milltir yr un yn aml i gyfarfod yn Ffynnon Clorach ger Llannerch-y-medd yng nghanol yr Ynys. Cychwynai'r ddau yn gynnwys yn y bore, Cybi yn cerdded tua'r dwyrain, a Seiriol tua'r gorllewin; y ddau yn cyfarfod yng Nghlorach a threulio'r diwrnod yno gyda'i gilydd cyn cychwyn wedyn i gerdded yr 20 milltir adref. Roedd yr haul yng ngwynneb Cybi fore a nos, ac adwaenir ef fel Cybi Felyn. Roedd yr haul wrth gefn Seiriol fore a nos, ac fe adwaenir ef fel Seiriol Wyn.