

ENCYCLOPEDIA LITUANICA

VOLUME IV



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 74-114275

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Published by JUOZAS KAPOČIUS

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Printed in the United States of America

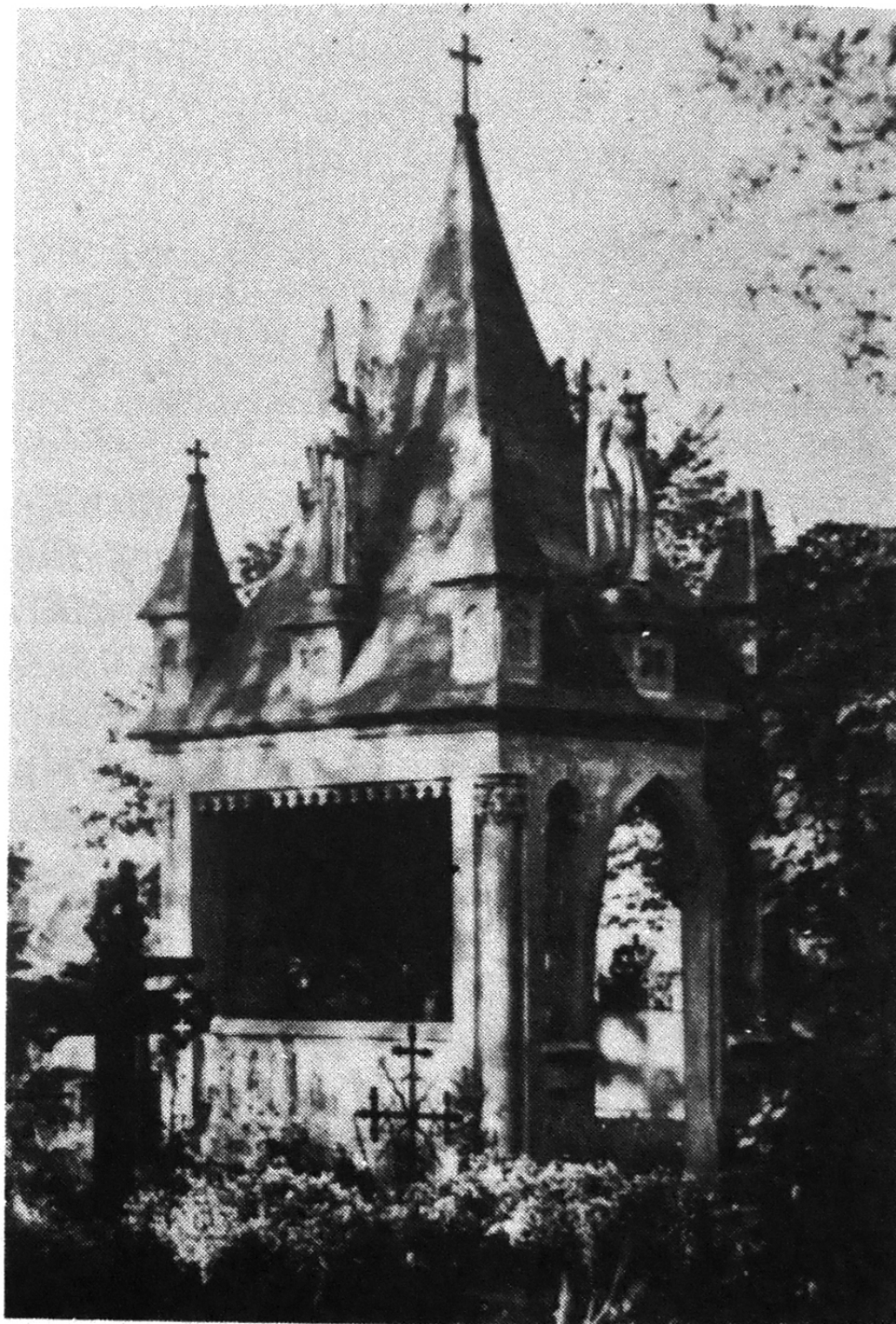
Encyclopedia Lituanica

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PABRĖŽA, Jurgis Ambroziejus (1771–1849), Franciscan priest and botanist, born in Večiai, county of Kretinga. He studied medicine, botany and liberal arts at the Principal School of Lithuania (formerly the Academy of Vilnius) from 1792–94. In the fall of 1794 he entered the Samogitian Seminary of Varniai, was ordained priest on Feb. 16, 1796, and subsequently took on pastoral duties in a number of Samogitian parishes. In 1816 he joined the Franciscan-Bernardine friary at Kretinga, taking the name of Ambroziejus (Ambrose), and a year later started teaching Latin and na-

tural science at its school. During this period he wrote an unpublished textbook of Latin and together with his students collected and studied the regional flora.

In 1821 he exchanged his teaching duties for preaching, delivering sermons before huge crowds not only in Kretinga but in numerous other parishes. Since he preserved 250 of his sermons in writing, their reputation for coherence, profundity, pictur-



Tomb of Jurgis Pabrėža in the cemetery of Kretinga

esqueness, and practicality is easily confirmed. Written in the Samogitian sub-dialect of Kretinga, the sermons describe numerous folk customs and beliefs prevailing at that time, thus constituting a valuable source for both linguistic and ethnographic research. A well-liked spiritual advisor and father confessor, he also wrote several religious books, but only one, concerning the examination of conscience, was ever published. In addition, he has left a number of humorous poems.

Two of them, *Esu sau žmogelis* (I'm a Fellow) and *Apie pipkininką* (About a Pipe-smoker), were widely known and sung to in Samogitia, while the others remained in manuscript form and have only recently been published.

The first to investigate Lithuanian flora, Pabrėža collected a large herbarium which was kept at the Kretinga friary. It was discovered in 1913 by the Polish professor B. Hryniewiecki, who transferred a greater part of the collection to the University of Odessa in 1914, where it disappeared during the Russian Revolution. Hryniewiecki published the contents of the herbarium in *Tentamina florae Lithuaniae* (1933). The remaining 238 pages of the collection are at the University of Kaunas. Pabrėža described many new varieties of plant life, copied their folk names, and also created a Lithuanian plant terminology. He compiled a Latin-Lithuanian botanical dictionary (ca 1829), a morphological plant dictionary, and wrote many botanical studies. Part of his manuscript *Botanika*, a botany text written according to the classification system of Linnaeus, was published in the United States in 1900.

During his visits to parishes, he noted that many people suffered needlessly and died prematurely from various illnesses. Using his medical knowledge, he began researching the medicinal properties of plants and prescribing them for different diseases. After more practice and experience he wrote a booklet on how to nurse patients where no doctor is available, becoming a true folk doctor. Pabrėža died on Oct. 30, 1849, in Kretinga, and was buried in the old cemetery. A stone cross marks his grave and in more recent times a shrine has been constructed. Considered a holy man by the people, his grave has been visited by a great many of the faithful, seeking his intercession.

Some of Pabrėža's manuscripts are housed in the libraries of the Lithua-

nian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the University of Vilnius, and of the Lithuanian Society of Botanists. A few of his religious books and sermons are in private collections, while the rest were lost during the first Russian occupation (1940) when the Kretinga friary was turned into an army barracks.

Bibl.: V. Biržiška, *Aleksandrynas*, II, Chicago, 1963; J. Dagys, K. Jankevičius, ed., *Jurgis Pabrėža*, published by the Lithuanian Academy of Science and the Lithuanian Society of Botanists, Vilnius, 1972; J. Dagys, "Jurgis Pabrėža — pionier litovskoi botaniki," *Botanicheskii Zhurnal*, Vol. 49, 1964 (Moskva). V.Gdž.