



ANGELS RAISING SOULS TO HEAVEN: IMAGES OF ENTERING LIFE AFTER DEATH DURING THE CHRISTIANISATION OF LIVONIA AND PRUSSIA

Marius Ščavinskas

 ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3984-3123

ABSTRACT

With the Christianisation of the Lithuanians in the Middle Ages, fundamental changes brought new Christian images of the Otherworld and entry to it. The image of souls being raised to heaven by angels is one of the images that emerged in the wake of changes in burial rituals. Based on Medieval historical sources, the article examines the image of the angel ascending to heaven that emerged in Balt and Finno-Ugric countries during their Christianisation. It explains how it is related to the Christian image of the Otherworld, and how it changed the pre-Christian Balt and Finno-Ugric mythical perception of the world beyond. It also explores the question of whether, in the Balt and Finno-Ugric mythical world-view, there may have been companions that conducted the soul in the Otherworld (psychopomps), which are seen as angels in Christianity. The research shows that in the earliest written sources describing ancient Balt and Finno-Ugric burials, there is no mention of spirits or deities acting as psychopomps, or of deities in charge of the deceased. The article argues that converts may have learned about angels raising souls to heaven because burial rituals and the concept of life after death changed in the course of Christianisation in Livonia and Prussia.

KEYWORDS: souls ascending to heaven, Christianisation, psychopomp, concepts of life after death, Livonia, Prussia, Middle Ages.

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ANOTACIJA

Lietuvių christianizacijos metu Viduramžiais vyko esminiai pokyčiai, atnešę naujų, krikščioniškų anapusinio pasaulio ir patekimo į jį vaizdinių. Vienas tokių, atsiradusių pasikeitus laidojimo papročiams, yra į dangų angelų keliamų sielų vaizdinys. Šis christianizacijos metu baltų ir finougrų žemėse atsiradęs į dangų kylančio angelo vaizdinys straipsnyje nagrinėjamas remiantis Viduramžių istoriniais šaltiniais. Aiškinamasi, kaip jis siejasi su krikščioniškuoju anapusinio pasaulio vaizdiniu ir kaip jis keitė ligtolinį ikikrikščioniškąjį baltų ir finougrų mitinį anapusinio pasaulio suvokimą. Taip pat keliamas klausimas, ar baltų ir finougrų mitinėje pasaulėžiūroje galėjo egzistuoti sielų palydovai į anapusinį pasaulį (psychopompai), kurie krikščionybėje laikomi angelais. Tyrimas rodo, kad ankstyviausi rašytiniai šaltiniai, aprašę senovės baltų ir finougrų laidotuves, nemini nei dvasių ar dievybių, atliekančių psychopompo funkcijas, nei dievybių, atsakingų už mirusiųsiuosius. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad apie angelus, keliančius sielas į dangų, konvertitai galėjo sužinoti vykstant christianizacijai Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje, besikeičiant laidojimų papročiams ir sampratai apie anapusinį pasaulį.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: sielų kėlimas į dangų, christianizacija, psychopompas, gyvenimo po mirties samprata, Livonija, Prūsija, Viduramžiai.

Marius Ščavinskas, Doc. Dr., senior research fellow, Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology, Klaipėda University, Herkaus Manto g. 84, LT-92294 Klaipėda, Lithuania. E-mail: scavinskas.marius@gmail.com.

Introductory remarks

Henry of Livonia, the Livonian chronicler from the beginning of the 13th century, while describing the activities of the first Christian missionaries Meinhard and Theodoric among the Livs, provided a sensual story about the baptism of an old, seriously ill Liv, and his beautiful Christian death: after the convert died, angels raised his soul to heaven. The amazing event was seen by the other neophyte who was seven miles away from the deceased patient's house.¹

This story, with hagiographic clichés from the Middle Ages,² contains several unusual moments for the pagans of yesterday among the Livs: 1) Angels played a role in the journey of souls to heaven; 2) Angels raised souls to heaven; 3) The existence of a vision, seen from a distance. Certainly, the story is related to the Christian concept of the state of the soul in the afterlife and the method of going to heaven (paradise): the soul escapes from the body of the deceased and is led by angels to the bright afterlife in heaven, i.e. to the space influenced by the divinity.

Henry of Livonia, a Christian clergyman who was in contact with the Livonian neophytes,³ provided this story to achieve certain goals of Christian didacticism: 1) It was to show that the souls of virtuous Christians go to paradise, and that no one should doubt it (this is why one of the neophytes saw the soul of the deceased being raised to heaven, even seven miles from the deceased person's house, and he had to support the 'certainty' of the event); 2) The deceased was strongly advised not to be baptised by women (they probably belonged to the family of the deceased, but Henry of Livonia does not name them); therefore, the story about angels raising souls to heaven was meant to show people who had not yet been baptised, but who already doubted the pagan religion, that the Christian God does not abandon his own people by sending angels, the soul conducted by them enters the divine space, i.e. finds peace. So pagans and converts who doubted the soul's successful access to the afterlife can rest assured they did not experience anything bad. On the contrary, the soul of a virtuous person is conducted by angels and experiences happiness with

¹ *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae* (Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, 31). Ed. Leonid ARBUSOW, Albertus BAUER. Editio altera. Hannoverae, 1955 (hereinafter HCL), Lib. I, §10: '*Infirmitas eiam quidam fratrem Theodericum vocat, baptismum petit. Quem mulierum proterva prohibet pertinencia a sancto proposito. Sed invalescente egritudine vincitur muliebris incredulitas, baptizatur, orationibus Deo committitur. Cuius morientis animam neophitus quidam ad septem distans miliaria ab angelis in celum deferris vidit et agnovit.*'

² DINZELBACHER, Peter. The Way to the Other World in Medieval Literature and Art. *Folklore*, 1986, Vol. 97, No. 1, pp. 70–87.

³ For more on the participation of Henry of Livonia himself in Christian missions in the context of the Crusades, see: TYERMAN, Christopher. Henry of Livonia and the Ideology of Crusading. In *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Ed. by Marek TAMM, Linda KALJUNDI, Carsten Selch JENSEN. Farnham, 2011, pp. 7–10, 15–18.

the new Christian God. The new God does not leave the person in the presence of death. He is presented to the converts as the God of the living and the dead.

The story of the angels raising souls to heaven may pose several questions worthy of further consideration by a contemporary researcher. 1) How did the converts and the pagan Livs who observed them (and, more generally, the pagans of the east Baltic coast) understand the soul's access to the Christian afterlife, and what images might have illustrated the 'certainty' of this world for them? 2) Did the image of the soul's journey to the afterlife in the mythological pre-Christian world-view differ from the Christian image conveyed by Henry of Livonia? This question can also be formulated differently: Did the pagan Balts and Finno-Ugrians know about any soul companions to the afterlife who were later replaced by the Christian 'psychopomps', angels (and partly the saints)? 3) What role did the missionaries themselves ascribe to the pagans and converts in the afterlife? The latter question should be considered within the broader framework of missionary work, its content and nature among the pagan Balts and Finno-Ugrians during Christianisation in the context of the Christianisation of 'New Europe'.⁴ So far, research into the Christianisation of Prussia and Livonia has paid most attention to changes in the burial of the dead,⁵ the relationship between paganism and Christianity,⁶ the depth of Christian inculturation and the establishment of ecclesiastical structures,⁷ the representation of Balt paganism in Medieval sources,⁸ and an analysis of the phases of Christianisation.⁹ Less attention has

⁴ For more on this, see: PADBERG, Lutz E., von. *Christianisierung im Mittelalter*. Darmstadt, Stuttgart, 2006, S. 121–159; ŠČAVINSKAS, Marius. *Kryžius ir kalavijas. Krikščioniškųjų misijų sklaida Baltijos jūros regione X–XIII amžiais*. Vilnius, 2012, p. 100–167. Cf. SOSNOWSKI, Miłosz. Strategia misyjna *ad gentes* na łacińskim Zachodzie – dylematy i rozwiązania. In *Chryścianizacja „Młodszej Europy”*. Red. Józef DOBOSZ, Jerzy STRZELCZYK, Marzena MATLA. Poznań, 2016, s. 221–249.

⁵ VALK, Heiki. Christianization and Changes in Faith in the Burial Traditions of Estonia in the 11th–17th Centuries AD. In *Rom and Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts*. Hrsg. von Michael MÜLLER-WILLE. Bd. II. Stuttgart, 1997, S. 40–50; SZCZEPAŃSKI, Seweryn. Od Homera do Wulfstana – wyścigi jako motyw honorowania zmarłych u ludów indoeuropejskich (i czy tylko zmarłych?). *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 2014, Nr. 3, s. 313–326; MUIŽNIEKS, Vitolds. The Co-Existence of Two Traditions in the Territory of Present-Day Latvia in the 13th–18th Centuries: Burial in Dress and in a Shroud. In *The Archaeology of Death in Post-medieval Europe*. Ed. by Sarah TARLOW. Warsaw, Berlin, 2015, pp. 93–95, 102–106; BOJARSKI, Jacek. *Obrzędowość pogrzebowa w strefie chełmińsko-dobrzyńskiej we wczesnym średniowieczu* (Mons Sancti Laurentii, t. 9). Toruń, 2020. Cf. BUKO, Andrzej. Chrześcijaństwo i poganie. O problemach interpretacji odkryć archeologicznych związanych z początkami chrześcijaństwa na ziemiach polskich. *Slavia Antiqua*, 2016, Nr. 57, s. 13–51.

⁶ KAWIŃSKI, Paweł. *Sacrum w wyobrażeniach pogańskich Prusów. Próba interpretacji na pograniczu historii i etnologii religii*. Olsztyn, 2018.

⁷ BISKUP, Marian. Parafie w państwie krzyżackim. In *Państwo Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach. Podziały administracyjne i kościelne od XIII do XVI wieku*. Red. Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Roman CZAJA. Toruń, 2000, s. 81–94; RADZIMIŃSKI, Andrzej. *Kirche und Geistlichkeit im Mittelalter. Polen und der Deutsche Orden in Preussen*. Toruń, 2011; RADZIMIŃSKI, Andrzej. *Chryścianizacja i ewangelizacja Prusów. Historia i źródła*. Toruń, 2011; NIKODEM, Jarosław. Chryścianizacja wschodnich poberzeży Bałtyku. In *Chryścianizacja „Młodszej Europy”...*, s. 177–198.

⁸ BRAUER, Michael. *Die Entdeckung des „Heidentums“ in Preussen. Die Prusen in den Reformdiskursen des Spätmittelalters und der Reformation* (Europa im Mittelalter, Bd. 17). Berlin, 2011.

⁹ ŚLIWIŃSKI, Błażej. The Christianisation of Prussia: the Polish Contribution until the Introduction of the Teutonic Order. In *Christianization of the Baltic Region* (Castrī Dominae Nostrae Litterae Annales, Vol. I).

been paid to Balt and Finno-Ugrian ideas of the afterlife and death in general which unfolded during Christianisation.¹⁰ The image of the angels raising souls to heaven allows us to look not only at ideas of the afterlife, but also at the influence of folk religiosity on the process of Christianisation, as well as the question of the 'depth' of Christian inculturation in the period of the first generations of converts.

The Christian image of souls being raised to heaven by angels

There is no doubt that Henry of Livonia took the image of angels raising souls to heaven from the Holy Scriptures and Medieval works. In Luke's Gospel, we find the story of a poor and sinless Lazarus whose soul was taken to heaven by angels: 'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side' (Luke 19–22). Since Lazarus was without sin, he went to Abraham's side, i.e. to paradise. The rich man, on the other hand, from whose table Lazarus expected at least a few crumbs, had committed plenty of sins and went to hell (Luke 16: 23).¹¹

The sick Liv mentioned by Henry of Livonia was cleansed of all his sins by accepting baptism on his deathbed, and was therefore conducted to heaven by angels immediately after his death, just like Lazarus. This image served to make it clear to converts, Christians coming to Livonia, and doubting pagans, that a virtuous Christian goes to a wonderful place where his soul finds rest. Although Henry of Livonia did not mention hell as a place for sinners, such an image of angels lifting souls to heaven had to emphasise the gap between the divine heaven and the dark, terrible and non-divine hell imagined somewhere in the depths and/or under the earth.

Ed. by Jerzy GAŚSOWSKI. Pułtusk, 2004, pp. 39–63. Cf. ZOLL-ADAMIKOWA, Helena. Przyczyny i formy recepcji rytuału szkieletowego u Słowian nadbałtyckich we wczesnym średniowieczu. *Przegląd Archeologiczny*, 1988, t. 35, s. 220–226.

¹⁰ BERESNEVIČIUS, Gintaras. *Dausos. Pomirtinio gyvenimo samprata senojoje lietuvių pasaulėžiūroje*. Vilnius, 1990. Cf. similar research focused on the West Slavs: BYLINA, Stanisław. Problemy słowiańskiego świata zmarłych. Kategorie przestrzeni i czasu. *Światowit*, 1995, t. 40, s. 9–25. Cf. TAMM, Marek. Martyrs and Miracles: Depicting Death in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. In *Crusading and Chronicle Writing...*, pp. 135–156. Cf. the work focused on the Christianisation of the Otherworld images of the Lithuanians: ŠČAVINSKAS, Marius. *Kristus prieš Belialą*. T. I: *Lietuvių anapustinio pasaulio vaizdinių Christianizacija Viduramžiais*. Klaipėda, 2021.

¹¹ See the comment on those evangelical lines: ST GREGORY the Great. *Dialogues* (The Fathers of the Church). Transl. by Odo John ZIMMERMAN. Washington, 2002 (hereinafter *GGD*), lib. IV, cap. 34. For more about the refuge of Abraham: LE GOFF, Jacques. *The Birth of Purgatory*. Transl. by Arthur GOLDHAMMER. Aldershot, 1990, pp. 42–44.

These are fragments of missionary sermons about the afterlife for the souls of kind people found in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia.¹²

In late Antiquity, the image of angels (or/and saints, the Mother of God) raising souls to heaven mixed with the image of angels and/or saints appearing at the deathbed of the deceased. These images best expressed the notion of the Christian afterworld in the descriptions of saints and martyrs (in hagiographic works) and apocrypha: the souls of good Christians are received by angels or saints, the righteous go to heaven, while devils gather by a sinner's deathbed to take his dark soul to hell.¹³ So from the beginning, converts had to know two places in the Christian Otherworld, which were for the souls of the righteous and sinners (besides the latter, purgatory was seen for half-good, half-evil souls). Pope Gregory the Great, for example, in the hagiography of St Benedict of Nursia (late sixth and early seventh century), described a story involving Bishop German of Capua: after his death, Benedict himself saw the bishop's soul being carried to heaven by angels.¹⁴ In book IV of the *Dialogues*, Gregory the Great passed on a similar story of a God-fearing man named Stephen. When the time of death approached, some God-fearing men who had gathered at the house of the deceased saw angels by Stephen's deathbed who had come to conduct the soul of the deceased to heaven.¹⁵ In the *Dialogues of St Gregory the Great* we find similar stories in other chapters as well.¹⁶ As can be seen, Henry of Livonia had more than one source that spoke of the souls of good men being carried to heaven by angels, which enabled him to construct a similar story with the conversion of the Livs.

Importantly, in the Christian world-view, the angels (good and evil) fulfilled the will of God himself. They were not independent deciders of human destiny.¹⁷ The place of the afterlife to which the angels conducted a soul depended only on the life of the person and the decision of God. These and similar stories became popular in the Middle Ages, as is witnessed by the records of Henry of Livonia and other chroniclers of German origin who described the Christian missions and Crusades on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea.

¹² For more on the Holy Scriptures and biblical citation in general in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, see UNDUSK, Jaan. *Sacred History, Profane History: Uses of the Bible in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. In Crusading and Chronicle Writing...*, pp. 45–75.

¹³ Cf. *Caesarii Heisterbacensis Monachi ordinis Cisterciensis Dialogus miraculorum*. Ed. Josephus STRANGE. Vol. I. Coloniae, Bonnae, Bruxellis, 1851, dist. V, cap. 5, 8, 44; XI, cap. 2; XII, cap. 22–23.

¹⁴ *GGD*, lib. II, cap. 35: '[...] the whole world was gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light. As he gazed at all this dazzling display, he saw the Soul of Germanus, the Bishop of Capua, being carried by angels up to heaven in a ball of fire.' Cf. *Ibid.*, lib. IV, cap. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, lib. IV, cap. 20: 'Some of those who stood round his bed at the time became speechless with amazement when they saw angels entering the room. Others saw nothing at all. But everyone was struck with fear, and none of them could remain in the room at the Soul's departure. All of them without exception, those who had seen the angels as well as those who had seen nothing, fled the room in terror.'

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, lib. IV, cap. 12, 15, 17, 35, 40.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, lib. IV, cap. 5.

Take, for example, the chronicler Peter of Duisburg. In the first half of the 14th century he described the battle of Durbė, which ended fatally for the knights of the Teutonic Order and their supporters (it took place in 1260 near Lake Durbe in present-day west Latvia), and told in an emotional way, without hiding his grief, how the souls of the slain Christians and Prussian converts were raised to heaven by angels and the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.¹⁸ A similar story is told of the friars of the Teutonic Order and their supporters who lost the Battle of Pokarviai (Pokarwen, Pokarben) against the rebellious Old Prussians in 1261 in the western part of the present-day Kaliningrad Oblast. Similar to the case that Henry of Livonia described of a vision seen at a distance of seven miles, according to Peter of Duisburg, a pious hermit woman saw devils rushing to Prussia. They told her that the souls of the Crusaders killed in the Battle of Pokarviai were saved, except for a few.¹⁹ In his description of the Battle of Durbė, Peter of Duisburg also noted that the souls of fallen Christians, including Old Prussian converts, were carried to heaven by angels.²⁰ In addition, the chronicler relayed the story of a bishop, told by a knight from Westphalia killed at the Battle of Pokarviai, that the souls of the Crusaders who died for their faith in Prussia went straight to heaven, bypassing purgatory.²¹ Although Peter of Duisburg did not indicate that the soul of the slain knight would have been conducted to heaven by angels, the image of the devils rushing to the scene of the battle clearly suggests that evil spirits were targeting the sinful Crusaders (only three), and no doubt the souls of the pagans as well, while the angels, together with the Mother of God, were looking after the souls of all the other dead.

The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle mentions that the souls of the brothers of the Teutonic Order who died near the castle of Memelburg (now Klaipėda) were happy to go to heaven together with other martyrs.²² These images are nicely complemented by a cycle of miniatures dedicated to St Hedwig of Silesia (dating from around 1353): one miniature shows how the soul of Henry, the Duke of Silesia, who was killed in the Battle of Legnica against the Mongols in 1241, was raised to heaven by angels together with the souls of the other fallen.²³ It is interesting that this role of angels

¹⁸ PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* (hereinafter *PDC*). In *Scriptores rerum Prusicarum Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Ordensherrschaft*. Hrsg. von Theodor HIRSCH, Max TÖPPEN, Ernst STREHLKE (hereinafter *SRP*). Bd. 1. Leipzig, 1861, lib. III, cap. 86 (82)–87 (82). Cf. NICOLAUS von Jeroschin. *Kronike von Pruzinlant*. In *SRP*. Bd. 1, lines 10820–10833, 10853–10880.

¹⁹ *PDC*, cap. 92 (87): '*Qui reversi dixerunt, quod Christiani perdidissent victoriam, et quod omnes anime, quarum corpora ibi occisa fuerant, essent salvate, preter tres, que non devocionis causa [...]*'

²⁰ *Ibid.*, cap. 86 (82).

²¹ *Ibid.*, cap. 91 (86): '*[...] miles de Westfalia, dictus Stenckel de Bintheym, qui audierat in quodam sermone episcopi, quod anime fidelium interfectorum in Prussia deberant ad celum sine omni purgatorio evolare [...]*'

²² *Livländische Reimchronik*. Hrsg. von Leo MEYER. Paderborn, 1876 (hereinafter *LR*), Verse 4519–4526; *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*. Ed. and transl. by Jerry C. SMITH, William L. URBAN. 2nd Ed. Chicago, 2001 (hereinafter *LRC*), lines 4519–4526.

²³ Unknown artist/maker. *The Battle of Liegnitz; The Beheading of Heinrich and His Soul Carried by Angels to Heaven, 1353*. URL: <<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/105VYJ>>. Last accessed 15 Sept. 2023.

lifting souls to heaven is established in Slavic and Balt folk songs, so the image was adopted by 'the silent majority' through Christianisation.²⁴

It is obvious that the elevation of the souls of the brothers of the Teutonic Order and the Crusaders (in the case of the Silesian Duke Hedwig, of Christians in general) to heaven served as a didactic provision that even if Christians lost a battle against the godless pagans, they would receive the victory wreath of martyrs in heaven, and only a few Christians would fall into the hands of the devil because of their sins.²⁵ This is a reflection of the language of the Crusades, in which Christians are portrayed as fighters for God against the 'northern Saracens', the pagans who represented dark forces.²⁶

The main truths of the Christian religion and images of the world beyond in relation to death were explained to the converts. For example, in addition to the description of the Liv noble Caup (*mortes preciosus*), the above-mentioned Henry of Livonia offers an account of how death was met in a Christian way (including confession, penance, and receiving the necessary sacraments),²⁷ a story with the already-mentioned missionary Theoderic, who travelled through Livian country with a secret letter to the Pope about the deteriorating situation of the Church in Livonia. Under the pretext of travelling to the sick to administer the last rites, Theoderic managed to pass unnoticed among the Livs,²⁸ who wanted to sacrifice him to their gods.²⁹ Henry of Livonia did not hide the fact that this 'deception of saints' eased Meinhard's fate and encouraged a Crusade against the apostate Livs. Had the Livs not known about the final anointing and its significance for the terminally ill, such a ploy by Theoderic would not have been effective. The missionaries, Crusaders, merchants and others who came to Livonia familiarised the Livonian and Prussian neophytes with the images of angels raising souls to heaven known in Christian Europe. It is no wonder: the newly baptised wanted to know no less about what would happen to their souls after death than their tribesmen who had not accepted baptism and knew from time immemorial what awaited the soul after it had separated from the body. Therefore,

²⁴ MICHAŁOWSKA, Teresa. „Dusza z ciała wyleciała”: proba interpretacji. *Pamiętnik literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej*, 1989, Nr. 80, z. 2, s. 3–26; ŠČAVINSKAS, M. *Kristus prieš Belialą*, p. 125–135.

²⁵ For more on the angels raising souls to heaven, see: ŠČAVINSKAS, M. *Kristus prieš Belialą*, p. 352–356.

²⁶ MURRAY, Alan V. Heathens, Devils and Saracens. Crusader Concepts of the Pagan Enemy during the Baltic Crusades (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries). In *Crusading on the Edge. Ideas and Practice of Crusading in Iberia and the Baltic Region, 1100–1500* (Outremer. Studies in the Crusades and the Latin East, Vol. 4). Ed. by Torben Kjersgaard NIELSEN, Iben FONNESBERG-SCHMIDT. Turnhout, 2016, pp. 199–223.

²⁷ HCL, lib. III, cap. 21, §4. For more about the death of Caupo: TAMM, M. Op. cit., pp. 137–138. Cf. ŠČAVINSKAS, M. *Kryžius ir kalavijas...*, p. 155–159.

²⁸ HCL, lib. I, §12: 'Unde pro captando consilio domino pape clam nuncium suum, fratrem Theodericum de Thoreyda, direxit. Qui vindens se de terra exire non posse, pio dolo vicit Lyvonum insidias, vectus equo, habens stolam, librum, aquam benedictam, quasi infirmum visitaturus; et hanc vie sue causam viatoribus interrogantibus pretendens, terram exeundo evasit et ad summum usque pontificem pervenit.'

²⁹ HCL, lib. I, §10.

teaching converts about the fate of the soul after death was an important part of explaining Christian truths.

The story of a baptised and just deceased Liv, an exemplary story told by Peter of Duisburg about the future redemption of the Westphalian Crusader's soul, and the images of angels raising souls to heaven in the descriptions of the battles of Durbė and Pokarviai, are all known today as fragments of explanations that are characteristic of 13th and 14th-century sources describing the Christianisation of the Balts and the Livs.

Were psychopomps present in the mythical world-view of the Balts?

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The Christian image of angels raising souls to heaven stimulates a discussion about the existence of certain spirits helping souls to enter the afterlife in pre-Christian communities. We know that the Ancient Greek esoteric/philosophical movements (e.g. the Greek Orphics, popularised in the fifth and fourth centuries BC) considered Had-Pluto to be a companion of souls on their way to Had (the Otherworld),³⁰ before the psychopomp functions were taken over by the god Hermis, according to Homer.³¹ In some Indo-European religions that had certain cultural relations with the Ancient Greek world, soul companions were also mentioned (e.g. in the religion of the Iranian Aryans the soul after death was accompanied by the spirit *daēnā/dēn* to the Otherworld³²). The researcher of Lithuanian mythology Gintaras Beresnevičius tended to believe that the Balts might also have had similar spirits that fulfilled the functions of a psychopomp.³³ The 'Myth of Sovius', handed down by an unknown author in the 'Chronograph of 1262' (from the second half of the 13th century), mentioned Sovius as a guide to hell (i.e. to the pagan Otherworld).³⁴ Therefore, one could reasonably ask whether the Christian angels overshadowed the earlier spirits (or Sovius himself) who had the functions of a psychopomp?

In seeking an answer to this question, there are two possibilities: 1) Angels overshadowed the earlier spirits which had the functions of a psychopomp, i.e. the pre-Christian Balt and Finno-Ugric mythical world-view included the concept of a psychopomp;

³⁰ ŠČAVINSKAS, M. *Kristus prieš Belialą...*, p. 323.

³¹ HOMER. *The Odyssey*. Transl. by Robert FAGLES, introduction and notes by Bernard KNOX. Philadelphia, 1996, pp. xxiv, 1–5. For more about the function of Hermis as a psychopomp: BURKERT, Walter. *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz, 2011, S. 243–244.

³² EMADINIA, Arash. *The Soul in the Afterlife: Individual Eschatological Beliefs in Zoroastrianism, Mandaeism and Islam*. PhD dissertation. Gottingen, 2017, pp. 58–59, 66; SKJAERVO, Prods Oktor. Afterlife in Zoroastrianism. In *Jenseitsvorsellungen im Orient* (Religionen im Vorderen Orient (RVO), Bd. 1). Hrsg. von Predrag BUKOVEC, Barbara KOLKMANN-KLAMPT. Hamburg, 2013, S. 311–349.

³³ BERESNEVIČIUS, G. Op. cit., p. 113, 117–124, 129, 176, 181.

³⁴ Jono Malalos kronikos intarpas = Chronographia, 1261. In *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai* (hereinafter BRMŠ). T. I. Red. Norbertas VĖLIUS. Vilnius, 1996, p. 268; LEMEŠKIN, Ilja. *Sovijaus sakmė ir 1262 metų Chronografas*. Pagal Archyvinį, Varšuvos, Vilniaus ir I. J. Zebelino nuorašus. Vilnius, 2009, p. 296–297.

2) The image of angels raising souls to heaven spread during Christianisation, and prevailed in Prussia, Livonia and other Balt and Finno-Ugric countries, i.e. before the introduction of Christianisation, pagan societies did not have the image of a psychopomp. We had the opportunity to make sure that the image of a psychopomp is closely connected with Christianity by quoting Luke 16: 19–22, religious ecclesiastical writings, hagiographic works, and chroniclers of German origin, describing the Crusades and Christianisation in Livonia and Prussia; however, the question of whether such pagan psychopomps existed on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea remains open.

In some of the earliest writings describing the burials of the Balts, and partly of the Finno-Ugrians, it is mentioned that the deceased were led to the afterlife by sacrificed servants/slaves. For example, the Treaty of Christburg, signed in February 1249 between the Teutonic Order and the Prussian nobles, mentions that certain Prussian sorcerers (*Tulissones vel Ligaschones*) saw the deceased flying in the sky to eternity with a large host of attendants (*comitato magno*).³⁵ Henry of Livonia mentions that Lithuanian women committed suicide because they wanted to remain in the afterlife together with their husbands who were killed in a raid.³⁶ The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle also mentions that the pagan Old Prussians buried their dead with horses, weapons and other objects.³⁷ The sacrifice of people, things and animals is also mentioned in sources describing Slavic paganism.³⁸ However, the earliest source describing a Prussian burial, Wulfstan's account of Anglo-Saxon origin (around the end of the ninth century), does not mention human sacrifice, although it does describe the burning of the deceased with weapons and various belongings.³⁹ All these briefly discussed data suggest that the deceased (or more precisely, people of a high social status, as historical sources say nothing about non-nobles) did not travel alone or empty-handed to the Otherworld; they were guided by certain people, all of whom travelled with various belongings and weapons. The horse, of which graves are found in Prussia and central Lithuania, also seems to have played an important role before

³⁵ *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abteilung*. Bd. I: *Die Bildung des Ordensstaates*, 1. Hälfte. Hrsg. von Rudolf PHILIPPI (hereinafter *PUB*). Königsberg, 1882, Nr. 218. For the newest publication and translation: KREGŽDYS, Rolandas. *Baltų mitologemų etimologijos žodynas*. T. I: *Kristburgo sutartis*. Vilnius, 2012, p. 56–63 (in Latin), p. 63–72 (in Lithuanian).

³⁶ *HCL*, cap. IX, §5.

³⁷ *LR*, Verse 3870–3890; *LRC*, Verse 3870–3890.

³⁸ Cf. *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*. Ed. Ioh. M. LAPPENBERGII. Hannoverae, 1889, lib. VIII, 3. For more about those cases: SZCZEPAŃSKI, Seweryn. *Pomezania. Na styku świata pogańskiego i chrześcijańskiego (studia z dziejów)*. Olsztyn, 2019, s. 115–117, 122–123.

³⁹ Wulfstano pranešimas apie kelionę per Prūsiją = Wulfstans Reisebericht über Preussen um 890–893. In *BRMŠ*, t. I, p. 166–167 (in the original), p. 168–169 (in Lithuanian). For more about this and the text in English, see: BATELY, Janet. Wulfstan's voyage and his description of *Estland*: the text and the language of the text. In *Wulfstan's Voyage. The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard* (Maritime Culture of the North, Vol. 2). Ed. by Anton ENGLETT, Athena TRAKADAS. Roskilde, 2009, pp. 14–28.

the soul entered the afterlife⁴⁰ (it is also mentioned in the Treaty of Christburg, the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, and other sources). Moreover, belongings attributed to a horse, bridles and remains of saddle loops, are usually found in the graves of male deceased, which do not contradict the information in the Treaty of Christburg about riding a horse into the afterlife.

It is not entirely clear whether horses or some participants in funerals (e.g. *Tulissones vel Ligaschones*) can be called psychopomps, helping the soul pass into the Otherworld.⁴¹ Even if we ascribe to them the functions of psychopomps (which hardly correspond to the reality portrayed in the scriptures), it is obviously Christianity that had spirits of various kinds in the form of angels that help souls reach the Otherworld, where the good angels ensure that souls reach heaven, and evil spirits (evil/fallen angels) drag the souls of sinners to hell. We do not see such a division of souls into good and evil in the earliest Balt and Finno-Ugric descriptions of funerals and images of the Otherworld. However, we do find such roles of angels and devils in Christian sources, which was already discussed in the first part of the article. In general, sources for the mythology of the Balts and the Finno-Ugrians do not allow for the idea that good souls travel to a bright and beautiful place (which could be understood as a place of reward), and bad ones to a dark and gloomy place (which could be understood as a place of punishment), because it is not known at all whether access for the pagan Balts and Finno-Ugrians to the Otherworld depended on their earthly life, as it did in Christianity. This means that the division of the Balt and Finno-Ugric afterlife into heaven for the souls of good people and hell for the souls of bad people could have taken place during Christianisation.

Moreover, *Tulissones vel Ligaschones*, who praise the deceased, the slaves and servants who accompany him, women/wives, and finally the animals used for the ride to the afterlife, are not spirits or deities, whereas in the Indo-European religious tradition, spirits/gods but not wives or animals have the functions of a psychopomp. In fact, in the slightly later version of the German mythical tradition, some spirits connected with the world beyond come to the world of the living on three-legged horses,⁴² which could testify to a specific role for the horse in the transfer from this world to the other (as we can see in the material from cemeteries). However, these horses should not be considered psychopomps, as their role is limited to the transfer of the soul to the Otherworld, and vice versa. Meanwhile, psychopomps conduct the soul of the deceased to its assigned place, stand by it, and 'take care' of it, depending on the life a person has lived, i.e. the functions of a psychopomp are somewhat broader than just transferring from the world of the living to the world of the

⁴⁰ KURILA, Laurynas. Symbolic Horse Burials in the Iron Age of East Lithuania. *Archaeologia Baltica*, 2009, Vol. 11, pp. 242–253.

⁴¹ SZCZEPAŃSKI, S. *Pomezania...*, s. 163.

⁴² MALTEN, Ludolf. Das Pferd im Totenglauben. *Jahrbuch des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 1914, Bd. 29, S. 188, 211.

dead. Sovius, as a psychopomp, is mentioned in the 'Chronograph of 1262', but the anonymous author acknowledged that the Balts and Finno-Ugrians learned about the custom of cremation from the Ancient Greeks.⁴³ This means that Sovius could also have taken over the Greek functions of a psychopomp at the time when the author described the custom of cremating the dead Balts and Finno-Ugrians following the example of the *interpretatio Romana*, i.e. transferring the image of paganism constructed in the Middle Ages to the 'Chronograph of 1262'.

Archaeological material shows that neither the graves of the Balts nor those of the Livs had any specific artefacts testifying to a spirit/deity that ensures that the soul passed into the afterlife. The custom of placing coins in graves, which emerged in Prussia in Late Antiquity, goes back to the tradition of the Greek payment to Charon. But it disappeared just as unexpectedly as it had appeared. After almost a thousand years, the custom of placing coins in graves should already have been related to Christianisation in Balt and Finno-Ugric countries. Now the payment was meant for St Peter, who guards the gates to heaven.⁴⁴ But we cannot find in the scriptures any information about the existence of a spirit or a deity, destined for deceased Balts or Finno-Ugrians, that could take over the functions of a psychopomp.

Many Balts and Finno-Ugrians burned the bodies of their deceased, which enabled them to reach the Otherworld, i.e. to dispose of the corpse quickly and effectively (cf: information in 'Chronograph of 1262' on the introduction of burning corpses among the Balts and Finno-Ugrians). Wulfstan's account indicates that when a cremation took place, bones that were not completely burned were found, and the participants in the funeral (most likely the relatives of the deceased) had to offer a sacrifice⁴⁵ to calm the soul, so that it could not harm the living and feel comfortable in the afterlife. In other words, fire is the main mediator in funeral rituals, enabling the soul to separate from the body and feel at ease in the Otherworld (cf: the story of the Sovius myth, with the cremated father who said he found peace in his soul when his children cremated his body⁴⁶). The *Tulissones vel Ligaschones*, who praise the deceased, saw such a dead man with a host of (household) servants travelling on horses to the world beyond, so that the fire would open the possibility of entering the Otherworld, so that the soul could feel at ease there together with the household that accompanied it. It should be remembered, however, that not all the Balts burned their dead: for example, the Žemaitijans (Samogitians) and the Semigallians did not. In the case of the Žemaitijans and Semigallians, the burial of uncremated bodies in the

⁴³ Jono Malalos kronikos intarptas..., p. 268.

⁴⁴ For more on this, see: SVETIKAS, Eugenijus. Mirusių pinigai Lietuvoje XIV a. pabaigoje – XVIII a. pradžioje: krikščioniškas laidojimo paprotys ir jo semantika. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis. 1999 metai*. Vilnius, 2000, p. 27–37.

⁴⁵ Wulfstano pranešimas apie kelionę per Prūsiją..., p. 167, 169. Cf. BATELY, J. Op. cit., p. 17.

⁴⁶ Jono Malalos kronikos intarptas..., p. 267.

ground showed a slightly different understanding of how to enter the Otherworld, but whether this understanding included a place for psychopomps is unclear. The companions of the deceased, mentioned in the earliest descriptions of the burials of the Balts and Finno-Ugrians, were not necessarily responsible for helping the soul to travel to the Otherworld; they also helped the soul to 'live' in the Otherworld. That is why the 'escort' included horses, weapons, work tools and other artefacts found by contemporary archaeologists. It is only Christianity, with its emphasis on the importance of the morality of the deceased before going to heaven or hell, that rejected the custom of placing belongings in graves as unnecessary.

Also worth mentioning is Peter of Duisburg's reference to the deceased leaving a sign with a spear or another tool in the doorway of the house of a sorcerer named *Criwe*, which can be understood as proof that the deceased was successfully travelling to the realm of the dead, or had happily reached it and his soul had successfully 'settled' there.⁴⁷ According to Peter of Duisburg, *Criwe* saw the souls of recently deceased Old Prussians, whom he recognised by the clothing and weapons and/or various implements they carried with them. Like other Medieval authors, Peter of Duisburg does not indicate that the souls were conducted by a deity or spirit responsible for the world of the dead. In other words, the deceased relies on his weapons, implements, companions and dogs on his journey to and in the Otherworld, but not on psychopomps, which we can see in the Ancient mythical world or in Christianity. The same Peter of Duisburg adds that the deceased has the same social status in the Otherworld that he had or attained in the living world.⁴⁸ This shows that there was no great need for the appearance of a psychopomp. The opposite was typical of the Ancient Greek world: all the souls of the deceased, regardless of their social status in the living world, floated *in corpore* in the gloomy Hades, and only a few could enjoy the pleasures of the Elysian Fields (or the Island of Happiness). Even Odysseus finds the heroes of the Trojan War in Hades, but not on the Island of Happiness. It was only much later that some of these heroes, who were given the status of demigods, became gods of Olympus, as was the case with Hercules. Wulfstan's remark about the sacrifices that were necessary when bones that had not been fully cremated were found at a burial shows that in pre-Christian times the Old Prussians associated further life in the Otherworld with correctly performed rituals and the status of the deceased in society. Improper funeral rituals could signify the soul's 'malice' towards the living, or the soul's discomfort in the afterlife. It is therefore probably not a coincidence that, according to Henry of Livonia, the Semigallians cut off the heads of slain Lithuanian warriors: the souls of such headless deceased were said to

⁴⁷ *PDC*, lib. III, cap. 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

have felt particularly uncomfortable in the afterlife; therefore, the Lithuanians tried to recover these heads and bury them according to the usual rituals.⁴⁹

Since Christianity emphasised the importance of the morality of the deceased to the passage of the soul to heaven or hell, it changed the custom of placing things in graves, as being unnecessary. This means that Christianity arrived in Prussia and Livonia with its own Christian concept of the Otherworld, which differed from the pagan concept of life after death. Advocates of the Christian faith were keen for converts to accept the Christian concept of the Otherworld immediately. For example, in 1222 the rebellious Estonian neophytes reverted to paganism and dug up their recently buried dead in the Christian cemetery.⁵⁰ In 1241, rebellious Estonians on the island of Saaremaa undertook to bury their dead according to Christian customs,⁵¹ which the Prussians also undertook to do by signing the Treaty of Christburg in 1249.⁵² Archaeological material also shows that as soon as Christianity began to penetrate Livonia and Prussia, Christian burials appeared.⁵³ The advocates of Christianity tried not to retain inappropriate pagan practices; some were banned, as happened with the ban on the burial of the pagan dead.⁵⁴ This shows that the understanding of the Otherworld and the image of life after death changed, and that the image of angels raising souls to heaven may have played a role in this. Instead of the sacrifice of servants, horses, and other things with which the pagan deceased travelled to the afterlife, the neophytes were presented with the role of angels and devils (a kind of Christian psychopomps) in the soul's journey to the Otherworld. The vision of people who lived far away seeing the soul of the deceased being raised to heaven by angels was supposed to be the best proof to converts that all this was true, and that the Christian God cares for righteous people. These images are not abstract and 'purely' theologically based statements. Therefore, it was easier for converts, as well as for other Christians with little theological education, to understand and imagine that angels conduct souls to heaven. Similarly, it was easier to understand that devils take the souls of sinners to hell.

⁴⁹ HCL, cap. IX, §4, XVII, §5.

⁵⁰ HLC, lib. III, cap. 26, §8: '*Et receperunt uxores suas, tempore christianitatis dimissas, et corpora mortuorum suorum, in cemeteriis sepulta, de sepulchris effoderunt et more paganorum pristigo cremaverunt [...].*'

⁵¹ Liv-, Est- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch. Bd. 1. Hrsg. von Friedrich Georg von BUNGE. Reval, 1853, Nr. CLXIX, col. 220: '*Multis itaque placitis et interlocutoriis hinc inde habitis, praedicti apostatae in hoc tandem universaliter et finaliter conveniunt: Quod si ecclesia subscriptam formam sine omni permutatione violenta in perpetuum ab ipsis acceptare dignaretur, vellent redire devoto animo et prompta voluntate ad catholicae fidei, a qua diabolico instinctu recesserant, unitatem.*'

⁵² PUB, Nr. 218.

⁵³ SPIRĠIS, Roberts. Archaeological evidence on the spread of Christianity to the Lower Daugava area (10th–13th century). In *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe Archaeological and Historical Evidence*. Ed. by Maciej SALAMON, Marcin WOŁOSZYN, Alexander MUSIN, Perica ŠPEHAR. Kraków, Leipzig, Rzeszów, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 689–712. Cf. BOJARSKI, J. Op. cit.

⁵⁴ For more on this, see: ŠČAVINSKAS, Marius. The Christianisation of the Past (the Example of the Baltic Society in High Middle Ages). *Quaestiones mediaevi novae*, 2017, Vol. 22, pp. 365–368.

Conclusions

The Medieval sources discussed show that, according to the pre-Christian Balt and Finno-Ugric mythical world-view, the deceased travelled to the Otherworld along with the sacrificed household, animals (horses, dogs, hunting birds), and weapons and/or implements. A very similar situation is offered by writings describing the burial rituals of the West Slavs. One could therefore assume that the Balt, Finno-Ugric and Slavic peoples imagined the afterlife as a place where the deceased, with his wives, slaves, belongings and animals, continued the 'life' that was usual for the living. The people accompanying the deceased (wives, slaves, etc) could hardly be regarded as psychopomps, since their role in the Otherworld was to help the deceased live there.

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Christianity clearly holds that there are two realms in the Otherworld: paradise (heaven), and hell (and purgatory next to it). Access to these realms of the Christian Otherworld did not depend on social position or wealth in goods or slaves, but on the moral precepts of the life the person had led. Angels conducted only the souls of the virtuous and the righteous to heaven on God's behalf, and after the souls were there, they were entrusted to God himself. In this way, the Balt and Finno-Ugric neophytes were shown that the righteous deceased are placed under the protection of the Christian God himself, the steward of the dead and the living, and of the entire Universe. There is no doubt that the division of the Otherworld into realms intended for good and bad souls, and the role of the angels that conducted these souls to heaven (or hell), were new experiences for Balt and Finno-Ugric converts.

The leadership of the Teutonic Order and the Christian clergy required converts to follow Christian burial customs, invoking the image of angels raising souls to heaven: to reach the Christian paradise, one did not need to burn the body of a deceased person, or place animals or belongings in the grave, or sacrifice human blood. Animals or physical belongings that helped the deceased to 'dwell' in the afterlife were rejected by Christianity as unnecessary and non-binding. Instead of physical means for 'sojourning' in the afterlife, Christianity supported notions of the morality of the deceased, of angels raising souls to heaven, and of resurrection from the dead. Thus, the image of souls raised to heaven by angels, which came to the Balt and Finno-Ugric countries through Christianisation, contributed to the change in burial rituals in Livonia and Prussia in the 13th century.

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ANGELAI, KELIANTYS SELAS Į DANGŲ: ĮŽENGIMO Į GYVENIMĄ PO MIRTIES VAIZDINIAI LIVONIJOS IR PRŪSIJOS CHRISTIANIZACIJOS METU

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Marius Ščavinskas

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip galėjo kisti mirusiųjų laidojimo papročiai Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje, vykstant šių kraštų christianizacijai. Tyrime nagrinėtas tik vienas su laidotuvių papročiais susijęs kontekstas – sielų, angelų keliamų į dangų, vaizdinys, jo atsiradimas ir reikšmė laidotuvių kaitai, remiantis rašytiniais šaltiniais, aptariančiais Livonijos ir Prūsijos pagoniškus laidojimo papročius ir vykusią christianizaciją. Tuo tikslu straipsnyje yra iškelti keli svarbūs klausimai: 1) kaip konvertitai ir į juos žiūrintys pagonys lyviai (o bendrąja prasme – rytinės Baltijos pakrantės pagonys) suprato sielos pakliuvimą į krikščioniškąjį anapusinį pasaulį ir apskritai kokie vaizdiniai jiems galėjo iliustruoti krikščioniškojo anapusinio pasaulio „tikrumą“? 2) ar ikikrikščioniškojoje mitinėje pasaulėžiūroje buvęs sielos kelionės į aną pasaulį vaizdinys skyrėsi nuo Henriko Latvio pateikto krikščioniškojo vaizdinio? 3) kokį vaidmenį pagonims ir konvertitams anapusiniame pasaulyje skyrė patys misionieriai? Pastarasis klausimas sietinas su apskritai misijų veiklos metodais, turiniu ir jos pobūdžiu tarp pagonių baltų ir finougrių bendrame Naujosios Europos christianizacijos kontekste.

Šaltinių apie sielas, angelų keliamas į dangų, ir besikeičiančių laidotuvių papročių aprašymų Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje christianizacijos metu nėra daug. Apie tokį vaizdinį yra rašęs Henrikas Latvis (XIII a. pirmoji pusė) ir Petras Dusburgietis (XIV a. pirmoji pusė). Iš dalies šis vaizdinys aptinkamas ir „Eiliuotojoje Livonijos kronikoje“ (XIII a. pabaiga). Tačiau pats vaizdinys į šiuos šaltinius yra atkeliavęs iš Šventojo Rašto, žr. „[...] gulėjo votimis aptekęs elgeta, vardu Lozorius. Jis troško numarinti alkį, bent trupiniais nuo turtuolio stalo, bet tik šunes atbėgę laižydavo jo votis. Ir štai elgeta mirė ir buvo angelų nuneštas į Abraomo prieglobstį“ (Lk 16, 20–22) ir gausios Viduramžių raštijos, plg. straipsnyje minimus

šv. Graigaliaus Didžiojo, Cezarijaus Heisterbachiečio ir kitų autorių raštus. Henriko Latvio „Livonijos kronikoje“ esantis siužetas su pakrikštytu ir tuoj pat mirusiu lyviu, kitos straipsnyje aptartos istorijos, Petro Dusburgiečio papasakota *exemplum* tipo istorija apie būsimą kryžininko iš Vestfalijos sielos išganymą, kryžininkų ir prūsų konvertitų sielų nešimo į dangų vaizdiniai Durbės ir Pokarvių mūšių aprašymuose rodo, kaip su angelų keliamų sielų vaizdiniais galėjo susipažinti Livonijos ir Prūsijos konvertitai.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama, ar šis angelų keliamų sielų vaizdinys galėjo egzistuoti iki christianizacijos Livonijoje ir Prūsijoje, tariant, kad galbūt už angelų figūrų stovėjo baltiški ir finougriški psychopompai (sielų nešėjai, palydovai), ar tai visiškai naujas, krikščionybės į Livoniją ir Prūsiją atsineštas vaizdinys, keičiantis laidotuvių papročius ir supratimą apie anapusinį pasaulį. Ikikrikščioniški Prūsijoje ir Livonijoje gyvenusių žmonių laidotuvių papročiai, žinomi iš vadinamojo Wulfstano pranešimo (IX a. pab.), Kristburgo pasidavimo akto (1249 m.), Henriko Latvio, Petro Dusburgiečio, „Eiliiotosios Livonijos kronikos“ ir kitų šaltinių, nieko tikra apie galimus psychopompus nekalba. Atvirkščiai, šaltiniai akcentuoja būtinybę anapusiniame pasaulyje velioniui sudaryti tas pačias gyvenimo sąlygas, turėtas žemiškajame pasaulyje, todėl mirusieji buvo laidojami (dažniausiai sudeginant) kartu su žirgais, vergais, daiktais, ginklais. Žirgai ar vergai nelaikytini psychopompais, nes jie turėjo likti tarnauti savo šeimininkui ir po mirties, tuo tarpu psychopompas pagal indoeuropietiškąją tradiciją tokios funkcijos neatliko. Be to, nieko tikra nėra žinoma apie pagonybės laikais galimai egzistavusias anapusinio pasaulio dalis, skirtas tik geriems mirusiesiems, lydimiems gerųjų psychopompų, ir blogiems mirusiesiems, lydimiems blogųjų psychopompų. Tuo tarpu krikščionybėje labai aiškiai matomas ne tik anapusinio pasaulio dalijimas į rojų geriesiems ir pragarą blogiesiems mirusiesiems, bet ir psychopompų vaidmenų pasidalijimas – angelai į dangų lydi gerųjų mirusiųjų sielas, o velniai – blogųjų.

Bet kuriuo atveju, kadangi krikščionybė nieko nekalbėjo apie mirusiųjų sielų gyvavimą aname pasaulyje analogišką kaip ir gyvųjų šiame pasaulyje, atkriti būtinybė į kapus dėti įvairius daiktus ir aukoti mirusiajam aname pasaulyje patarnaujančius vergus ar tarnus. Todėl darytina išvada, kad anapusinio pasaulio dalijimas į geroms ir blogoms sieloms skirtas vietas bei angelų vaidmuo lydint šias sielas į dangų (arba į pragarą) buvo naujos patirtys baltų ir finougrų konvertitams. Apeliuodami į angelų keliamos į dangų sielos vaizdinį, Vokiečių ordino vadovybė ir krikščionių dvasininkai iš konvertitų reikalavo laikytis krikščioniškų laidojimo papročių: tam, kad pasiektum krikščioniškąjį rojų, nebereikėjo nei deginti mirusiųjų kūnų, nei dėti įkapių, nei žmonių kraujo aukų. Daiktai ar kitokie artefaktai buvo fizinės priemonės, padedančios velioniui gyvuoti aname pasaulyje, tačiau krikščionybė atmetė jas kaip nereikalingas ir nebūtinas. Vietoje fizinių priemonių, padedančių gyvuoti aname pasaulyje, krikščionybė palaikė velionių moralės, angelų keliamų sielų į dangų ir kūnų iš mirusiųjų prisikėlimo idėjas. Tokiu būdu per christianizaciją į baltų ir finougrų žemes atėjęs į dangų angelų keliamų sielų vaizdinys prisidėjo prie laidotuvių kaitos Livonijoje bei Prūsijoje XIII a. ir naujos krikščioniškos anapusinio pasaulio sampratos įsigalėjimo.