

'Prussians as Bees, Prussians as Dogs': Metaphors and the Depiction of Pagan Society in the Early Hagiography of St. Adalbert of Prague¹

Miłosz Sosnowski

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Medieval Christian missionary efforts can hardly be seen as scholarly expeditions set on learning. The goal of a missionary is not the studying of pagan *error* and *ydolatria* but rather rooting them out by any acceptable means. No matter how naïve it might sound today, the pagan culture and identity were to be swiftly demolished and replaced with new Christian ones. These remarks also apply to hagiographers describing the struggles of missionaries. On one hand, as foes of Christianity, pagans and their religion should be destined for *damnatio memoriae*. But at the same time and for the same reason, i.e. because they are antagonists of the hagiographer's hero, they can and should be utilised in giving an awe-inspiring picture of his sainthood and the triumph of true religion. What's more, in composing their account of the beliefs and societal organization of the pagan peoples before and during the Christianization – a belief system and society in many aspects quite alien to them – medieval hagiographers often had to turn to the cultural equipment they had already acquired.

First and foremost, this meant employing the literary works read at school and the patterns and norms derived from them. The matrix of meaning of a world composed in such a fashion is inevitably textual. Fragments that meticulous 19th century eyes identified as quotations or allusions, and which editors were satisfied to relegate to tiny footnotes – this is where the modern reader can begin a journey of unravelling the oft-hidden intended meaning. Although it obviously sometimes happens that a quotation is nothing more than an ornate

building block or a flashy erudite display, this is not something we can *a priori* assume to be the case, especially if the rest of a text's allusions work together to paint a coherent picture.

The second important characteristic of texts constructed with building blocks derived from the authors' erudition is that sometimes words have connotations different from the surface meaning. What a modern historian often does not see is that even the literal level of the text may refer to a previously signalled comparison or metaphor² and, on a higher plane, the same terms may also signify on the allegorical level.

This article explores a single such case, that of the depiction of Old Prussians in the early cluster³ of *vitae* of St. Adalbert of Prague⁴ (+997). Adalbert was born as Vojtěch in a minor princely family of Bohemia, then was: twice a runaway bishop of Prague; a zealous monk at the Benedictine monastery of SS Boniface and Alexius in Rome;⁵ and finally a failed missionary to the Old Prussians on the south-eastern shores of the Baltic. His dramatic life and subsequent violent death, immediately construed as martyrdom, prompted a number of learned communities to compose his *vitae* and several others to re-write the received texts. The emperor Otto III, not only a personal friend but also a great promoter of the veneration of the new martyr, sponsored the first anonymous one, along with several pious foundations. The *Vita prior* of Adalbert exists in three main redactions: one 'imperial' (VP rA) composed north of the Alps before the year 1000, and two subsequent 'Italian' versions, probably rewritten at San Alessio in Rome (VP rB) and at Monte Cassino (VP rC), not counting some minor redactions the editor deemed unnecessary to edit separately.⁶ After just a few years a close associate of Otto's, Bruno of Querfurt⁷ (+1009), himself on a path to voluntary martyrdom, composed the second *vita*. As far as the textual tradition of this hagiographic cluster allows,⁸ we can now discern not only the two oldest basic *vitae* (BHL nos. 38, 39) but also their subsequent re-workings, at least three in the case of the first text and one or two of the second one, which seems to have been a work-in-progress in the original authorial milieu. Although the textual tradition of the *vitae*, based upon the known repertoire of manuscripts,⁹ has been established for almost half a century, this sudden outburst of hagiographic interest has only slowly drawn the attention of historians.

Close investigation into the polyphony of Adalbert's earliest hagiography reveals the extent to which his life and death provided a focus for the disputes of the time.¹⁰

The last text analysed here is the *Passio s. Adalperti martiris*, an early 11th century account, first discovered in the 1860s in a single Munich manuscript from the abbey of Tegernsee (hence the Polish label *Passion from Tegernsee*).¹¹ This short work is currently known from just two manuscripts¹² and its origin is contested. The existing text is only an abridgment of an earlier lost one that was probably originally written in the first quarter of the 11th century in the circle of Adalbert's brother Gaudentius, then an archbishop in Poland. The story it tells not only contains some exclusive evidence but also often seems to directly oppose what the reader can learn from previous, and more substantial, *vitae*. When the perceived differences and discrepancies proved impossible to reconcile, scholars accordingly tried to discard either the earlier hagiography or PT, thus creating a patchwork account. Since the discovery of the older manuscript in the mid-19th century historians have paid special attention to: Adalbert's supposed founding of a monastery in Poland;¹³ a completely different account of the martyr's last missionary effort in Prussia; and, last but not least, to phraseology they considered similar to some previously known texts of the time. From the latter they inferred that the lost unabridged original must have been more popular than the manuscript tradition suggests and that it may have been identical to the lost *Liber de passione [s. Adalberti]*, a text upon which the anonymous author of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* based his account of the Gniezno convention of the year 1000.¹⁴ In effect historians paid inordinate attention to analysing *ad nauseam* some parts of PT. Furthermore these analyses were almost entirely concerned with artificially isolated fragments, failing to pay attention to the role of narrative elements or to the text as a whole. At the same time historians tended to ignore those discrepancies that originate in the hagiographer's different interpretation of Adalbert's life and not in the factual stratum of the text, such as the reasons for the hero's desertion from the episcopacy or the scene of martyrdom.

This article examines one such ignored peculiarity of PT, i.e. its description of Prussian society. Bearing in mind the remarks considered above – mainly the specific way hagiographers composed

their accounts of alien cultures – I will try to show how the author, using the works of Virgil, compared the unfamiliar Prussian society to that of bees. What follows is an attempt at explaining the meaning of such comparison, namely that Prussians are (like) bees. How far can one push the interpretation of this metaphor? What was its planned purpose and what goals did the hagiographer try to reach with his intended audience by using it? Since PT is best read as a polemic within the cluster of early biographies of Adalbert, I will take the descriptions of Prussians of the earlier hagiography – comparing pagans to dogs and wolves – as my point of departure. Geneviève Bührer-Thierry has quite recently explored the recurrent theme of comparing Slavic pagans to dogs and wolves. My interpretation disagrees in a major way with hers and I will point out the main differing points below. Although our *vitae* play a major role in her treatment of the subject¹⁵ she does not take into account some basic facts. Bührer-Thierry does not pay attention to the fact that Prussians were not a Slavic language community, even though this was clearly understood by at least one of the authors she analyses (Bruno of Querfurt). Moreover, she completely disregards re-writings (redactions) of *vitae*. Further polemical points will be explored later.

The analysis below is constrained by one important conscious limitation. My focus will be on hagiographers comparing pagans to animals, but the reader will not find a detailed survey of the day-to-day realities of various relationships which medieval monks could have with animals and how those relationships, i.e. with dogs or bees, are reflected in their literary works.¹⁶ Such an interpretative strategy would no doubt produce interesting results, but here I hope to look at the world of animals through the lens of an intricate repertoire of symbolic and moral interpretations produced through the preceding centuries. In other words, I prefer to see the hagiographers' work as an exercise in interpretation, geared not simply toward producing an account of the past, but rather influencing their present.¹⁷

Prussians are like dogs – the simile of *Vita prior*

The polarity between familiar, and consequently 'human', Christian society – its representative being the missionary – and an unfamiliar, not fully human, pagan community, reveals itself already in the oldest

extant redaction of the so-called 'First Life' of Adalbert. The comparison of pagan behaviour to that of an animal is especially visible in the account of the first encounter between the missionary and the community he wants to preach to. On Saturday, the 17th of April 997, Adalbert crossed an unknown river and after spending an entire day there and then saying vespers, he was taken along with his fellow missionaries to a larger Prussian settlement. The hosts were by no means open-handed:

Congregat se undique iners uulgu et quid de illo foret
acturus, furibundo¹⁸ et canino rictu exspectant.¹⁹

[An idle pack congregates and – with raging canine jaws –
awaits what he will do with them.²⁰]

The 'raging canine jaws' of the text do not simply amplify the horror of the precarious situation the missionary has found himself in. A learned medieval reader could also recognize it as a relatively familiar phrase with negative moral connotations.²¹ The same passage looks a little different in those redactions of *Vita prior* that were edited south of Alps. Italian editors switched the order of some phrases, but more importantly changed the relatively obscure 'idleness' (*iners*) of this menacing dog pack.²² This was idleness in the sense of not being employed in the Christian cult because, as the reader immediately sees, the community was far from being physically idle. It was changed into a threatening growl (*murmuriosum vulgus*).²³ In the same passage, when Adalbert introduces himself and explains his reasons for coming, Prussians threaten him with death yet again, shaking their clubs, feigning an attack and finally they *infrendunt dire dentibus in eum* (grind their teeth against him). This last phrase, as noted by the editor, is obviously biblical,²⁴ but the reader – with *caninum rictus* echoing – immediately imagines the grinding teeth of pagans as long canine fangs. The meaning of this passage is quite clear. Prussians are similar to dangerous dogs. Genevieve Bührer-Thierry tries to associate this comparison with Matthew's account of Christ and the Canaanite woman (Mt 15, 21-28), and postulates that the imagery of the dog, and therefore also of the Prussians of our *vita* is morally ambiguous and somehow hopeful. Bührer-Thierry notices, but fails to draw

conclusions from, the fact that the ambiguity of Matthew's account was understood as applying not to dogs in general but to *catelli/catulli*, which in patristic expositions were usually treated as an animal different from a dog and sometimes even as a dog-hybrid.²⁵

When the text of the *Vita prior* became a foundation for later re-workings and new literary works, their authors did not always decide to keep the canine imagery. A century later an editor at Monte Cassino discarded the similitude by shortening the fragment and thus reducing the story of the pack of pagans to a decidedly less unusual one of a mob making an uproar (*tumultuans uulgus*).²⁶ The imagery is also nowhere to be found on the pages of the 12th or 13th century *De sancto Adalberto episcopo* (inc. *Tempore illo*).²⁷

Prussians are (like) wolves – the simile of *Vita altera*

That the intended reader at the turn of the millennium could understand the passage and build upon the canine simile above one can clearly see from the amplification made by Bruno of Querfurt (+1009), the author of the so-called *Vita altera* written not more than a couple of years later.²⁸ Since Bruno himself was consciously trying to emulate Adalbert and wanted to die a martyr's death while preaching, he was especially interested in depicting the pagans. At the same time Bruno's writings abound with animal similes – he even compares himself to both a pig and a dog – and most of these comparisons are used to push a moral argument.²⁹ The tenor of the relevant passage is generally similar:

Circumstant subito cęlicolam uirum longo agmine capita canum. Pandunt cruentos rictus, interrogant unde esset? quid quęreret? quare uenisset quem nemo uocauit? Lupi sanguinem siciunt, minantur mortem, quare ad eos portet uitam.³⁰

[Suddenly a long line of dogs' heads (dog-heads?) surrounds the heaven-dweller. They spread their bloodthirsty jaws open and ask: 'Where did he come from? What is he looking for? Why did he come, whom no one had

summoned?' The wolves are thirsty for blood, they threaten with death: 'Why did he come to them risking his life?']

When Adalbert answers those questions, Prussians again try to intimidate him and the people who led him to the place. They speak and act menacingly like rabid dogs, furiously foaming at the mouth (*spumante ira*).³¹ While it is clear that Bruno refrained from changing the factual stratum of the preceding account, he nevertheless sharpened the canine image of hostile pagans. Prussians are not 'like' dogs anymore. Prussians 'are' dogs and what's more they also 'are' wolves. To the meaning of such a comparison, we shall return.

Bruno's account has been used in discussions of mythical dog-heads (*cynocephali*) supposedly living on the Baltic coast.³² The written tradition of *cynocephali*, in its many variations, is very old, probably older than Hesiod.³³ Herodotus in his *Histories* (IV, 191) placed them in Libya and Ctesias of Cnidus claimed they dwelled in the mountains of India³⁴ and his account bears all the hallmarks of an early version of the 'noble savage' stereotype.³⁵ In later writings the fantastic breed of dog-heads was to inhabit various lands, usually to the East and North of Europe. It was always situated on the unknown and menacing margin of the civilized, and later Christian, world.³⁶ St. Augustine doubted their (*canina capita*) very existence in the 'City of God' when he pondered over the question of whether the various monstrous races described by Pliny were really descended from Adam.³⁷ At the same time he argued that if such creatures really existed then they certainly belong to the human race.³⁸ Later authors often quote Augustine *verbatim*, be it selectively, in order to construct sensationalist stories and one can hardly see in them a deep reflection on the Augustinian accounts. Missionaries of the Carolingian era had to revisit the problem when they were confronted with a possibility – be it remote – of meeting and preaching to monstrous races. After all, they were headed to the North Sea and later the Baltic, locations to which the wanderings of the learned legend had brought the *cynocephali* from Libya and India. A telling example of missionaries' anxiety is a letter of Ratramnus of Corbie to Rimbert, a former monk of the same monastery, then a zealous missionary – a single surviving dispatch of a larger chain of letters that must have been devoted to the problem. Rimbert had read *De Civitate Dei* before, or at least some

parts of it, because the question he asked echoes not only the problem but also the words of Augustine.³⁹ Conversely, it seems possible that Ratramnus himself rephrased the question because the answer he gives reads like an exposition of a brief Augustinian teaching.⁴⁰

To a certain extent I agree with Ian Wood, who connected Bruno's account both with Ratramnus' letter and with works of erudite medieval geography and ethnography that deal with dog-heads. The similarity of those texts, and especially the discovery of canine-looking wooden masks in Haithabu, enable Wood to see in Bruno's story a certain 'touch of authenticity'.⁴¹ But it is worth remembering that in no way can we consider Haithabu to be a territory inhabited by Baltic tribes. What's more, similar 'ethnographic moments' in medieval texts – e.g. the *terra feminarum* of Adam of Bremen – all seem to be fantasizing upon the North, as was current among learned circles. Even if those stories' admittedly early origins were somehow grounded in the material reality of the discovered masks, we should still expect that the stories diverged from reality sooner or later.

Finally, a comparative lexical analysis delivers one more argument against seeing in the description of Prussians a form of the *cynocephali* legend. There is no occurrence of Bruno's phrase *capita canum* in other, late antique or medieval, accounts of dog-heads.⁴² For Pliny these were *Cynamolgi caninis capitibus* (*Hist. nat.* VI, 195) and in Augustine we read *de Cynocephalis*, in Isidore about *Cynocephali et ipsi similes simiis sed facie ad modum canis* (*Etymol.* XII, 2) and in another place *qui canina capita habent* (*Etymol.* XI, 3). In the 7th or 8th century a certain Hieronymus giving an account in his *Cosmographia* of the travels of Aethicus of Istria wrote, notably with an explicit doubt,⁴³ about *homines Cenocefalus [...] capite canino habere similitudinem*⁴⁴ living somewhere in Scandinavia. Similar phrases (*canina capita*) are quite numerous, but the specific one used by Bruno (*capita canum*) has many meanings previously and subsequently and none of those is used to describe dog-heads.

What is even more important is to realize that Bruno is not especially interested in unfurling a long narrative around Prussian *capita canum* and the phrase is a *hapax* in Bruno's corpus. Dogs' heads don't seem to be an interpretative problem for him, nor are they connected within the *vita* with some lengthier report of monstrous races. In the late antique and early medieval ethnographies

the *cynocephali* are always a separate *gens* and not a part of any larger, better-known, peoples. Prussians therefore are definitely described as 'dogs' heads' but, as usual with Bruno, it is better to seek a fuller interpretation in the moral and symbolic sense.

What is visible in both the *Vita prior* and *altera* is precisely the moral meaning, built upon biblical allusions and canine similes, or rather upon a metaphor, at least in the latter case. The Old Testament dog – an image quite different to the one in the modern West – is a treacherous and malicious creature, worthy merely of scorn.⁴⁵ Obviously the Bible was not the only frame of reference for hagiographers and their intended readers and the moral sense they subscribed to derived from the dynamic assemblage – a spider's web in the making – of interpretative texts. The image of dogs in exegetical works is not always the same, and points to a certain ambivalence derived from interpretations of dog stories in Scripture. The *Etymologiae* of Isidore underscore canine virtues: dogs are the smartest of animals; they are faithful, strong and swift.⁴⁶ Two centuries later Hrabanus Maurus⁴⁷ in his 'On the Nature of Things', an authority oft-cited in this context, wrote of dogs in the same words (*in canibus duo sunt expectanda: aut fortitudo, aut velocitas*) and expounded on them allegorically, giving the overall image of the dog as slightly superior to the neighbouring wolf and fox. And yet most of the connotations are negative, and they culminated with Hrabanus explaining that the dog 'signifies either the devil, or the Jew, or the pagan people' (*nam aut diabolum vel Judaeum, sive gentilem populum significat*). The account suggests a certain gradation of wickedness, where the wolf is the worst and the dog is relatively less evil, which goes well with the above understanding of Bruno's account as harsher than that of the previous hagiographer.

A final point concerning canine simile and metaphor, which are only the background for the interpretation of the *Passio s. Adalberti*, requires returning to the scene of Adalbert's encounter. Just before the dialogue that resulted in the failure of his missionary effort, pagans had forced Adalbert and his comrades to leave the island where they first landed, because they saw an alien in him. Now, in a mirror image, it is Prussians themselves who are perceived by the hagiographer and his hero as alien. In the narrative of the *Vita prior* this parallel is rather

delicate, but in Bruno's story it is reworked in order to make it clearer and more striking.

Prussians are like bees – the simile of *Passio s. Adalperti*

When first discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century, the *Passio s. Adalperti* was considered a rather simple text, not only due to its abridgement, but also because it was supposed to be originally composed by someone not very well versed in Latin. Some early commentators identified certain phrases as sounding like allusions or quotations but, apart from Max Manitius, made no effort to identify their source.

One of the passages where the hagiographer clearly used a familiar literary text, potentially known to his readers, to compose his story, is the description of the reaction to Adalbert's presence of the inhabitants of *Cholinun*, an otherwise unknown Prussian town. This fragment has been used to reconstruct the social organization of the Balts in the late 10th century.⁴⁸ The missionary is ordered by the lookout (*custos*) situated atop the town walls to position himself on a small hill nearby, so the lookout can see him clearly and decide whether or not he should let him in. When Adalbert complies, the watchman shouts loudly (*alto clamore*) and inhabitants gather around. The whole situation, and especially the reaction of Prussians, is compared to the behaviour of an infuriated swarm of bees:

[...] more irascibilium apum quasi tumultuantis populi quicquid uirorum ac mulierum inerat concurrere. Improbi quoque facto agmine unanimiter circumuallantes sanctum dei [...].

([...] in the manner of irritable bees something of a commotion of people, both male and female, started to come running in. The wicked having formed a line are surrounding God's saint [...])

Max Manitius was the only one to see⁴⁹ in this an allusion to Vergil's 'Georgics',⁵⁰ but he limited himself to a short note, given in passing

and without trying to define the context or function of the allusion. This is the relevant passage from Book 4, mostly devoted to bees:

Sunt quibus ad portas cecidit custodia sorti, | inque vicem
speculantur aquas et nubila caeli | aut onera accipiunt
venientum aut agmine facto | ignavum fucos pecus a
praesepibus arcent⁵¹

[Some, allotted to be sentries at the alighting boards, take turns to keep an eye on clouds and coming rain and to relieve the homing bees of their burdens, or, having rounded up a troop, keep out the drones, that lazy shower, from the mangers⁵²]

The phrases in the 'Georgics' are similar to those of the *Passio*, and suggest a correlation between the *Cholinun* lookout and the hive's *custodia*. The Vergilian bees are obviously a metaphor for society⁵³ and this usage is echoed in the anonymous hagiographer's account. The Prussians treat Adalbert with hostility, much as a beehive protects itself from a useless drone.

To this single identification by Manitius we should add the phrase describing the thick hail of stones, hurled by Prussians at Adalbert (*non densior grando sata conterendo fuerit*), which corresponds with the depiction in the 'Georgics' of an attacking swarm:

erumpunt portis; concurritur, aethere in alto | fit sonitus,
magnum mixtae glomerantur in orbem | praecipitesque
cadunt; non densior aere grando, | nec de concussa tantum
pluit ilice glandis.⁵⁴

[they burst out of the entranceway, charge, lock forces high in the sky – a mounting racket – and, mingled and massed into a ball, trip and fall headlong; never was hail thicker, nor a shower of acorns that rained down from a shaken oak⁵⁵]

The similarities above allow us to put forward the hypothesis that both texts – especially the unabridged lost one, but also the extant copies – consistently tried to construct for their readers a vision of

Prussians as a ferocious and potentially threatening swarm of bees, and that this metaphor was founded on a well-known⁵⁶ Vergilian treatise on agriculture. Before considering the possible meaning of the simile in the context of Adalbert's hagiography, we should ask what exactly was the significance of a bee in early medieval learned circles and how did other texts use the bee simile in accounts of real and fictional peoples?

Not surprisingly the core of the medieval erudite knowledge of bees was inherited from Antiquity. The ancients believed for example – and this belief seems to endure through the entire Middle Ages – that each swarm has its own king and that upon his presence and well-being hangs the fortune, or even the very existence, of the whole bee society.⁵⁷ On this specific point the received learned knowledge of our anonymous hagiographer and the intended recipients of his work couldn't have been very different.⁵⁸ Especially persistent – and here we move to symbolic senses – was the idea put forward by Augustine in the *De Civitate Dei* of bees' virginity, their *castitas* and *diligentia*. In the eleventh century this inspired two chroniclers, Radulf Glaber and Landolf Senior, to give a compelling and socially critical vision of the ideal society.⁵⁹

Bees in western medieval Christendom were often viewed – in another legacy from Antiquity – as the only creatures possessing a divine spark (Vergil) and as the only ones, apart from humans, capable of living in a society, a bees' republic (*res publica apium*). Such a vision of a community of bees was produced by St. Ambrose in his lengthy commentary on Genesis.⁶⁰ This text, like one of Augustine's commentaries,⁶¹ extolls the 'tiny birds' as an exemplar of communal living. The view of bees in general seems to be very positive, with a repertoire of comparisons of bees' continuous humming to incessant prayers and *lectio divina*⁶² or the words of *Exsultet*.

On the other hand – and here again one detects the ambivalence of the bee – the menacing and unpredictable sting, a weapon of the swarm, was far from forgotten. The Old Testament spoke of bees attacking people (*Deut* 1, 44), surrounding their enemies (*Psalms* 117, 12), and compared them to a threatening army (*Isaiah* 7, 18). Similarly intimidating, even if positive in the end, was the comparison of *gens* to a swarm of bees found in Jordanes, who in the introductory part of

Getica (I.9) thus indicates the content of what follows: *quia gens, cuius originem flagitas, ab huius insulae [Scandzae, scil. Scandinavia, considered an island - M.S.] gremio velut examen apium erumpens in terram Europae advenit: quomodo vero aut qualiter, in subsequentibus, si dominus donaverit, explanavimus.*⁶³ A bit further into the text when Jordanes gives a description of Scandinavia (*Getica* III.19) he writes that due to extreme cold it would be futile to look for bees there. This contrast of the absence of bees from Scandinavia and the 'swarming out' of peoples from the 'island' I would see as intended and quite felicitous rather than an unfortunate oversight.⁶⁴ Neither of the passages contains a direct quotation from Vergil, but the Vergilian motif of *ultima Thule* - derived from 'Georgics' (I.30) - is definitely present in this account of islands of the North.⁶⁵

Returning to exegetical writings - since they offered the basis for the learned Christian matrix of meaning - one finds a generally positive interpretation of bees. Hrabanus Maurus, whose comments on dogs have already been considered, includes in his *De universo* a chapter on flying insects.⁶⁶ In accordance with ancient classifications found also in Isidore's *Etymologiae*⁶⁷ this chapter is titled in manuscripts *de minutis avibus*, although modern editions change this to *de apibus*. Hrabanus begins with two learned etymologies, copied from Isidore,⁶⁸ tying *apes* with the word *pes* (foot). The more interesting of the two explains that bees are born without legs. The exegesis itself quotes Vergil extensively and the 'Georgics' are the source of much specific information in Hrabanus' account. Of all the flying insects, bees are presented as the most morally valuable. They are the image of wisdom (*Sap.*) and a typological analogue of Nebuchadnezzar, while flies symbolize the Pharaoh (*Is.*). In Hrabanus' typology all of the negative features of bees represent Jews just as the flies symbolize the heretic.

The overall view of bees in exegetes is both threatening and friendly at the same time, whilst evoking many Christian virtues. This ambivalence, starting with a contrast (i.e. wild/domesticated) in Ambrose, found its best expression in a sentence of Gregory the Great. This warned of bees' hypocrisy: *apes enim in ore mel habent, in aculeo caudae vulnus*,⁶⁹ an image derived from Psalm 97.⁷⁰

The passage from *Passio s. Adalperti* shown before to be constructed from building blocks derived from the 'Georgics' has an

alternative, or rather complementary, explanation that is worth mentioning. The comparison of gathering Prussians to a thickening swarm could also be an allusion to the very popular *Aeneid*.⁷¹ For medieval readers Vergil was first and foremost a pagan *Poeta*, who in his 'Eclogues' presaged the coming of Christ. However by the Carolingian period his works in general, supplemented by many commentaries and compendia on grammar, had become an indispensable element of studying the *trivium* in schools.⁷² Among such commentaries popularizing Vergil the most important was *Institutiones grammaticarum*, a sixth-century treatise by Priscianus that exposed its users to 31 verses from the fourth book of 152 verses of the 'Georgics' in total.⁷³ The statement of Max Manitius that when someone in the Middle Ages knew just the *Aeneid*, they did not really know Vergil at all, is only a slight exaggeration.

Phrases found in the *Passio* echo the description in the first book of the *Aeneid* of the inhabitants of Tyre busily swarming around the construction site of what was to become Carthage:

qualis apes aestate nova per florea rura | exercet sub sole
labor, cum gentis adultos | educunt fetus, aut cum liquentia
mella | stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas, | aut onera
accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto | ignavum fucos
pecus a praeseptibus arcent⁷⁴

[Even as bees in early summer, amid flowery fields, ply their task in sunshine, when they lead forth the full-grown young of their race, or pack the fluid honey and strain their cells to bursting with sweet nectar, or receive the burden of newcomers, or in martial array drive from their folds the drones, a lazy herd⁷⁵]

At school and in cloisters this passage on building Carthage must have been far more popular than the *Aeneid* as a whole because it was employed in the grammars of both Priscian (*Institutiones* 479.11-12) and Servius (*Explanationum in artem Donati* 4, 535).⁷⁶ Even though Vergil repeats here the same words he used before in his treatise on agriculture, the sociological metaphor of bees in the *Aeneid* is made explicit while in the 'Georgics' it is only implied.⁷⁷ For a monastic

reader or listener with only a rudimentary knowledge of Carthage's history and its defeat by Rome, the image from the *Aeneid* could have suggested the future, inevitable defeat of pagans at the hands of their own (admittedly Roman) religion.

The interpretation proposed here is also suggested by the third stylistic echo⁷⁸ which the hagiographer used. The very same fragment, describing the fury of Prussians, contains a rare phrase *limphata gens* (meaning: frenzied, deranged and also poisoned). It seems to evoke, as also already noted by Manitius,⁷⁹ one of the hymns in *Cathemerinon* ('Book in Accordance with the Hours') by Prudentius. This text was readily available in the late 10th and early 11th century, including in Tegernsee.⁸⁰ The hagiographer again preferred to employ an allusion rather than a direct quote:

Sed cum fideli spiritu | concurrat ad praesepia | pagana
gens, et quadrupes, | Sapiatque, quod brutum fuit: | Negat
patrum prosapia, | Perosa praesentem Deum: | Credas
venanis ebriam, | Furiisve lymphatam rapi⁸¹

[Yet though with faithful spirit heathen race and four-footed
beast come together to the stall and what was brutish show
understanding, the seed of the patriarchs deny Him, hating
the God who is present among them, as if they were
drugged with poisons or maddened by Furies.⁸²]

At first this evocation may seem rather dubious or even forced, much like overzealous nineteenth-century quotation-spotting. On the other hand, one has to remember how influential the text and its author were and, at the same time, realize how rare the usage of this word is. What is much more important though is how well the sense corresponds to neighbouring Vergilian allusions. This part of the Christmas hymn of Prudentius tells about the recognition of the Saviour by both animals and *pagani*, i.e. rustics, shepherds. This original meaning of *pagani* was by the eleventh century no longer the primary one, and the word would have been predominantly understood as meaning pagans in the modern sense. At the same time the equating of Prussians and beasts was understandable for readers because it had been previously suggested by the Vergilian metaphor

of the swarming bees. Now through the allusion to the Christmas hymn the hagiographer seems to suggest that, just as the pagan peoples of old accepted the true faith, now the Prussians – even if ‘maddened’ in their fury – are destined for inevitable conversion. The phrase *limphata gens* seems therefore to reinforce the readers’ conviction, introduced shortly before, with a Vergilian link to the story of Carthage. Prudentius addresses the Jews of his time and our anonymous hagiographer addresses his readers, suggesting that Prussians remain a missionary challenge that needs to be taken.

Conclusions

The cluster of early hagiographies of St. Adalbert of Prague contains a series of interrelated texts that used the saint as a vehicle for disputes on the meaning and shape of the surrounding world. Out of numerous issues debated by a series of hagiographers this article discusses the metaphors employed in describing the pagan society of Prussians, the object of their hero’s missionary endeavour. We cannot seriously consider which one of those metaphors was closer to the reality of southern Baltic shores ca. 1000.⁸⁸ Instead what has been discussed above are the symbolic and moral meanings of animal metaphors and their relation to literary texts which were influential at the time of composition of Adalbert’s hagiography. This article has tried to show that debating the world at the beginning of the eleventh century could be framed as a grammatical play of interpretation, with expectations that both sides, the hagiographers and their intended audience, had to fulfil. Even in a text so greatly abridged as the existing *Passio s. Adalberti* the traces of this are discernible. It is only when modern readers pay close attention to the meaning of quotations and allusions, no matter how insignificant these may seem, that they can begin to grasp the rules and take part in the exercise our hagiographers devised.

The anonymous *Vita prior* of St. Adalbert of Prague is likely to have been written in circles whose attitudes toward Prussians were not only negative and hostile but also full of fear. Those circles viewed pagans as a threatening phenomenon, perverse and malicious by nature. To a certain extent this might have been influenced by the still-fresh memory of the 983 Slavic pagan uprisings east of the river

Elbe,⁸⁴ an event which reverberated through much of Saxon literature of the period. The *Vita altera* by Bruno of Querfurt offers an even stronger assessment, the sharpness of which could have been caused by this hagiographer's direct fear of Prussians, whom he seems to have wanted to Christianise but, at the time of writing, had not yet even seen. Both redactions of the text contain this image, which is especially telling considering that the shorter re-worked edition was written after Bruno's encounters with various pagan peoples. He never writes anything of the sort about Hungarians or Pechenegs, who had already become a target of his missionary activity. The second, higher order, reason for this hardening might have been Bruno's deeply Gregorian understanding of sin and evil as an indelible complement of good. Good and evil deeds determine each other in a mysterious way – a good deed can have evil consequences and sin can result in morally good effects. Maybe – even though the hagiographer never explicitly states this – the bigger the sin, the better the outcomes it can produce. Consequently, major sinners produced a truly great saint.

The *Passio s. Adalperti* offers a radically different presentation of Prussians. By discarding the canine simile and employing the metaphor of bees, this new image is not really positive but rather ambivalent. The Prussians are obviously still the murderers of the missionary saint, but they are not characterised by a demonic, diabolical evil. If we can imagine what the circle of Gaudentius, St. Adalbert's brother and the first archbishop of Poland, might think about Prussians, this seems to be in concord with the *Passio's* bee metaphor. On one hand, they are definitely threatening – the whole presentation is of a swarm of furious bees – but on the other hand, the educated reader could detect hints of optimism beneath the threats. The paganism of Prussians and their monstrous society was doomed to failure.

Notes

⁸⁴This article started as a paper delivered at the spring 2011 conference *Colloquia Baltica IV*: 'Od religii tradycyjnych do chrześcijańskiego synkretyzmu – przemiany religijności w kulturze ludów bałtyjskich' [Between traditional religions and Christian syncretism – religious change in the

culture of Baltic peoples] and is printed in Polish in a conference volume. This translation uses some of the stylistic conventions of the first publication.

² For a cogent account of studies on medieval metaphor see: Giles Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', *Viator*, 38.2 (2007), 2: 1-20.

³ For the idea of researching hagiographic clusters, see: Ian Wood, 'The Use and Abuse of Latin Hagiography', in *East and West: Modes of Communication*, ed. E. Chrysos and I. Wood (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 1999): 93-109.

⁴ On Adalbert in general see: Gerard Labuda, Franz W. Mares, *Adalbert (Wojciech)*, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 1, pp. 101-102. Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Sanctus et gloriosissimus martyr Christi Adalbertus: un État et une Église missionnaires aux alentours de l'an Mille', in *La conversione al cristianesimo nell'Europa. Atti della XIV Settimana di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1967), pp. 611-648. Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life. Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe. 400-1050* (London, 2001), pp. 207-225. Roman Michałowski, 'Christianisation of Political Culture in Poland in the 10th and Early 11th Century', in *Political Culture in Central Europe (10th-20th Century)*, t. 1: *Middle Ages and Early Modern Era*, ed. H. Manikowska, J. Pánek (Prague 2005), pp. 31-46. For a vast, even if currently out-dated, bibliography of Adalbert, see Aleksandra Witkowska and Joanna Nastalska, *Św. Wojciech. Życie i kult. Bibliografia do roku 1999* (Lublin, 2002).

⁵ This monastery was seen as a training centre for missionaries (e.g. Hamilton Bernard, *The Monastery of S. Alessio and the Religious and Intellectual Renaissance of Tenth-Century Rome*, (Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History' II), (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1965), pp. 265-310), but see serious doubts raised by Jean-Marie Sansterre, 'Le Monastère des Saints-Boniface-et-Alexis sur l'Aventin et l'expansion du Christianisme dans le cadre de la *Renovatio Imperii Romanorum* d'Otton III (une révision)', *Revue Bénédictine*, 100 (1990): 493-506.

⁶ For the textual tradition, transmission and the complicated problem of redactions of *Vita prior* the main point of departure is the series of studies by Jadwiga Karwasińska, published in Polish in 'Studia Źródłoznawcze', and her introduction to the critical edition published in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica series nova*, t. IV, fasc. 1, Warsaw, 1962. For problems of relative chronology of redactions and the authorship cf. a recent argument by Johannes Fried ('Gnesen - Aachen - Rom. Otto III. und der Kult des hl. Adalbert. Beobachtungen zum älteren Adalbertsleben', in *Polen und Deutschland vor 1000 Jahren. Die Berliner Tagung über den 'Akt von Gnesen'*, ed. M. Borgolte (Berlin, 2002), pp. 235ff.), who wants to see the oldest redaction as originating in Rhineland. This redaction, based on a re-examination of one line of manuscripts, was edited by Jürgen Hoffmann (*Vita Adalberti. Früheste Textüberlieferungen der Lebensgeschichte Adalberts von Prag*, Europäische Schriften der Adalbert-Stiftung-Krefeld 2 (Essen, 2005), edition: pp. 125-159).

⁷ On Bruno, see: Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 226ff.

⁸ Still of use is: Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Les trois rédactions de Vita I de S. Adalbert* (Roma, 1960). For a full picture see the critical introductions by Karwasińska to her editions of both texts in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (MPH), series nova (s.n.), t. IV, fasc. 1 and 2 (Warszawa, 1962 and 1969).

⁹ Since Karwasińska a single manuscript was added to the textual tradition of the *Vita prior* and a single incomplete one to *Vita altera*.

¹⁰ See Friedrich Lotter, 'Das Bild des hl. Adalbert in der römischen und des sächsischen *Vita*', in *Adalbert von Prag - Brückenbauer zwischen dem Osten und Westen Europas*, ed. H. H. Henrix (Baden-Baden, 1997), pp. 77-107; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 270ff (especially: pp. 215ff). My 2010 dissertation on the subject is currently in print as Miłosz Sosnowski, *Studia nad wczesnymi żywotami św. Wojciecha. Tradycja rękopiśmienna i polemika środowisk*, (Poznań, 2013).

¹¹ I have prepared a new critical edition of this text: Miłosz Sosnowski, 'Anonimowa *Passio s. Adalberti martiris* (BHL 40) oraz Wiperta *Historia de predicatione episcopi Brunonis* (BHL 1471b) - komentarz, edycja, przekład', *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 43 (2012): 5-74. Of the old editions the best one was prepared by Augustin Kolberg, 'Das Lobgedicht auf den heiligen Adalbert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Alterthumskunde Ernlands*, 7 (1879/81): 79-112, 372-598, esp.: 502-519 (Latin text with German translation). Of widest availability is the ed. by Georg Waitz in MGH, SS 15/2 (Hannover, 1888), pp. 705-708.

¹² Both manuscripts are currently in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The older one Clm 18897 (later 11th century) is contained in the last booklet (and quire) of the 15th century composite codex, once held at the library of the Benedictine monastery in Tegernsee, Bavaria. The later codex Clm 23846 (15th century) also originates from southern Germany, in my opinion from the diocese of Bamberg.

¹³ Tomasz Jurek, 'Ad Mestris locum: Where Was the Monastery Founded by Saint Adalbert Situated?', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 103 (2011): 5-29 with an extensive bibliography of the problem.

¹⁴ First proposed by Stanisław Kętrzyński, 'O zaginionym żywocie świętego Wojciecha', *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział historyczno-filozoficzny*, 43, (1902): 252-299. A century of research was recently summarised by Gerard Labuda: *Święty Wojciech, biskup - męczennik, patron Polski, Czech i Węgier* (Wrocław, 2004), pp. 38nn. For an English summary cf. Przemysław Wiszewski, *Domus Bolesłai: Values and social identity in dynastic traditions of medieval Poland (c. 966-1138)*, transl. P. Barford (Leiden-Boston, 2010), pp. 19-22 with a bibliography listing the older research.

¹⁵ Cf. Geneviève Bühner-Thierry, 'Des païens comme chiens dans le monde germanique et slave du haut Moyen Âge', in *Impies et païens entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, ed. L. Mary, M. Sot (Paris, 2002), pp. 175-187; cf. by the same author: 'Étrangers par la foi, étrangers par la langue: les missionnaires du monde germanique à la rencontre des peuples païens', in *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public. 30e congrès* (Göttingen, 1999), pp. 259-270.

¹⁶ For a survey of scholarship on this subject see Pierre Boglioni, 'Les animaux dans l'hagiographie monastique', in *L'animal exemplaire au Moyen Âge (V-XV siècle)*, ed. J. Berlioz, M.A. Polo de Beulieu, P. Collomb (Rennes, 1999), pp. 51-79 or his earlier: 'Il Santo e gli animali nell'alto Medioevo', in *L'uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto Medioevo. Atti della XXXI Settimana di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1985), pp. 935-993.

¹⁷ Similar strategies prove useful in analyses of early medieval literary production, as shown in the already classic work of Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, (Princeton, 1994).

¹⁸ The oldest transalpine manuscripts read *furbundo* here, against some later ones and all of the cisalpine manuscripts where it was changed into *furbunda uoce*. The latter reading was the only one used by modern translators.

¹⁹ VP rA 29, MPH s.n. IV/3, p. 42.

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted the translations are mine.

²¹ Used in this sense by St. Jerome in his letter to the senator Pammachius, his school friend and later a saint, criticizing John of Jerusalem (*Contra Ioannem Hierosolymitanum Episcopum ad Pammachium* 11; PL 23, col. 364): *Tu et chorus tuus canino rictu, naribusque contractis, scalpentes capita, delirum senem nutibus loquebamini*. In pagan Roman antiquity this phrase was also in similar use; e.g. see Juvenal's bitter words on senility (*Sat. X*, 271-272).

²² The understanding of Latin *vulgas* as a 'pack' is far from unprecedented. It is found in the later *vita* of the English hermit, St. Goderic (*Godricus*), - his desert dwelling was to become a monastic complex at Finchale - written by Reginald of Durham (BHL 3600). In chap. 21 of the

story Goderic, anticipating an almost Franciscan love for animals, saves a deer from hunters but primarily from harassing *vulgus canum*. See *Libellus de Vita et Miraculis S. Godrici, Heremitae de Finchale*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Publications of the Surtees Society 20 (London, 1847), p. 366.

²⁸ VP rB. 28, MPH s.n. IV/1, p. 65.

²⁹ Three times in Psalms (34, 36, 111) but it can also be found in classical authors (see: Plautus, *Captivi* 4, 4, 5: *ego illum male formidabam, ita frendebat dentibus*).

³⁰ Bühner-Thierry, 'Des païens', pp. 178-181.

³¹ VP rC 28, MPH s.n. IV/1, p. 82.

³² BHL 42, edited by Wojciech Kętrzyński in MPH IV, Lwów 1884, p. 206-221 and almost concurrently by Max Perlach in MGH SS 15/2, pp. 1177-1184. *Tempore illo* is supposed to be based on the redaction of *Vita prior* created at Monte Cassino, but also on the *Vita altera*, discussed below. On the relations of *Tempore illo* to Adalbert's early hagiography see Gerard Labuda, 'Nad legendą o św. Wojciechu "Tempore illo" - analiza źródłoznawcza', in *Ecclesia Posnaniensis. Opuscula Mariano Banaszak septuagenario dedicata*, ed. F. Lenort, K. Lutyński (Poznań, 1998), pp. 11-31.

³³ The text exists in two redactions - an original longer one (VA r1) and a shorter authorial reworking (VA rb); the most recent and best edition is *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita Altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi*, MPH s.n. IV/2, ed. J. Karwasińska, (Warszawa, 1969), pp. 3-69.

³⁴ To focus on dogs, see Bruno's BHL 1147: *Vita quinque fratrum*, 18 (MPH s.n. IV/3, ed. J. Karwasińska (Warszawa, 1973), p. 61), where, on murderers of hermits, he writes: *aderant facili bello canes ad sanguinem, lupi ad predam, uolentes nocere, coacti prodese*.

³⁵ VA r1 25, MPH s.n. IV/2, pp. 31-32.

³⁶ Foaming at the mouth as an image of anger is and was quite popular. The specific phrase used by Bruno might echo the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, CCSL 126, ed. M.P. Cunningham, Turnhout, 1966, p. 155, v. 113: *Hanc procul ira tumens feruida rictu*), widespread both in Carolingian and Ottonian worlds (see S. O'Sullivan: *Early Medieval Glosses On Prudentius' Psychomachia: The Weitz Tradition*, (Leiden-Boston, 2004), pp. 3-21). Since the phrase at hand is far from widespread, another possibility seems worth mentioning. If we accept the argument of Matthew Innes ('The classical tradition in the Carolingian Renaissance: Ninth-century encounters with Suetonius', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 3 (1997), no. 3, 265-282) that Suetonius' main opus, his *De Vita Caesarum*, was more popular than has been traditionally accepted, we could cautiously point to that text also. The Life of Claudius (*De Vita Caesarum* V.30) richly describes the ruler's ire (*ira*) with both a similar sense of urgency and the same phrase (*spumans rictus*). For a persuasive argument that the work was read in the circle of the young Otto III, at least in the context of the opening of the grave of Charlemagne, probably in connection with Adalbert's death, see: Eliza Garrison, 'Otto III at Aachen', *Peregrinations* 3/1 (2010): pp. 83-137 (pp. 113-114).

³⁷ Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 219ff; Bühner-Thierry, 'Des païens', pp. 183-185.

³⁸ Claude Lecouteux, 'Les Cynocéphales étude d'une tradition tétralogique de l'Antiquité au XIIe s.', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 24 (1981), no. 94: 117ff.

³⁹ The original *Indica* is lost and known only from an epitome in the 9th cent. *Bibliotheca* of Photius. The account of dog-heads can be found in *Bibl.* 72.XX-XXIII.

⁴⁰ James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton 1994), pp. 77-81.

⁴¹ For a comparative study of the legend, taking into account both the Far East and India, see: David Gordon White: *Myths of the Dog-Man* (Chicago, 1991).

⁴² *De Civ.* XVI.8 (*De civitate Dei libri XXII*, t. 2, [Biblioteca Teubneriana 1105], ed. B. Dombart, A. Kalb (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 135): *Quid dicam de Cynocephalis, quorum canina capita*

atque ipse latratus magis bestias quam homines confitetur? Sed omnia genera hominum, quae dicuntur esse, credere non est necesse.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136: *Verum quisquis uspiam nascitur homo, id est animal rationale mortale, quamlibet nostris inusitatum sensibus gerat corporis formam seu colorem siue motum siue sonum siue qualibet vi, qualibet parte, qualibet qualitate naturam: ex illo uno protoplasto originem ducere nullus fidelium dubitauerit. Apparet tamen quid in pluribus natura obtinuerit et quid sit ipsa raritate mirabile.*

³⁹ *Ratramni Corbeiensis epistolae*, no. 12, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Ep. VI (Berlin, 1925), p. 155: *utrum de Adae sint stirpe progeniti an bestiarum habent animas.*

⁴⁰ Cf. a different interpretation by Scott G. Bruce, who sees Ratramnus' answer as polemical toward Augustine ('Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography: A Note on Ratramnus of Corbie's Letter Concerning the Conversion of Cynocephali', in *Insignis Sophiae Arcator: Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Michael Herren on His 65th Birthday*, ed. G.R. Wieland, C. Ruff, R.G. Arthur (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 45-56). Bruce writes that Augustine considered dog-heads to be animals, but he does not take into consideration the 'second' part of Augustine's deliberations (see above; *De Civ. Dei* XVI, 8), where he dispels his previous doubts about the nature of monstrous races.

⁴¹ See Wood: *The Missionary Life*, p. 219; earlier signalled in Eiusdem: 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', in *The Christianization of Scandinavia: report of a symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden 4-9 August 1985*, ed. B. Sawyer, P.H. Sawyer, I.N. Wood (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 64-65.

⁴² This changed in the first half of the 14th century, when in *Mirabilia* of the Dominican explorer Jordan Catalani (*Recueil de voyages et de mémoires*, t. 4 (Paris, 1839), p. 57) dog-heads are described as *homines caput canis habentes*. More often this phrase is used, rather than the legendary *cynocephali*, for *canina simia (oblonga facie)*.

⁴³ *Die Kosmographie des Aethicus*, ed. O. Prinz, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 14 (München, 1993), p. 114: *Multa quidem et alia difficilia in enigmatibus suis scripsi de his insolitis quae a nobis incertum vel dubium reneretur. Just before this sentence Hieronymus ended the description of the inhabitants of an island called Munitia, i.e. dog-heads.*

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 114 (the whole story, pp. 114-116).

⁴⁵ See Edmund Kalt, 'Hund', in *Biblisches Reallexikon*, t. I., 2nd ed. (Paderborn, 1938), cols 839-840.

⁴⁶ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XII, 2, 25-26, PL 82, col. 438. For a complicated history of the passage, cf. Liliane Bodson, 'Les paradoxes du témoignage d'Isidore de Séville sur les chiens (*Etymologies*, XII, 2, 25-28)', in *Milieus naturels, espaces sociaux. Études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. E. Mornet, F. Morenzoni (Paris, 1997), pp. 177-188.

⁴⁷ Hrabanus, *De universo (De rerum naturis)*, VIII, 1, PL 111, cols 223-225, where also: *Hic leonem diabolum, canem vero gentilem vel hominem peccatorem accipiendum puto [...] Canes populus gentium [...] heretici etc.*

⁴⁸ Henryk Łowmiański, *Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*, t. 2 (Wilno, 1932), p. 220.

⁴⁹ Max Manitius, *Geschichte der Lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 2. Bd.: *Von der Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ausbruch des Kampfes zwischen Kirche und Staat* (Münich, 1923), p. 229, n. 4.

⁵⁰ On the poem see a collection of papers: *Virgil. Critical Assessments of Classical Authors*, t. 2: *The Georgics*, ed. Ph. Hardie (London, 1999).

⁵¹ *Georgica*, lib. 4, v. 165-168; quoted after: *P. Vergilii Maronis opera*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969).

⁵² The translation is by Peter Fallon (*Virgil. Georgics*, trans. P. Fallon, annot. E. Fantham (Oxford, 2004), p. 79).

⁴³ For an analysis of Vergil's treatise on bees as a metaphor for society see Hellfried Dahlmann: 'Der Bienenstaat in Vergils *Georgica*', *Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 10 (1954): 547-562 [reprinted in: *Virgil. Critical Assessments...*, t. 2, pp. 253-267]. See also Wolfgang Pollehn, 'The Bee Simile: How Vergil Emulated Apollonius in His Use of Homeric Poetry', *Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft*, 8 (2005): 115-160.

⁴⁴ *Georgica*, lib. 4, v. 78-81.

⁴⁵ *Virgil. Georgics...*, p. 76.

⁴⁶ On the medieval manuscript tradition of *Vergiliana* see Valerie Edden, 'Early Manuscripts of Vergiliana', *The Library*, 14/1 (1975): 14-25. More generally on Vergil in the Middle Ages see Fidel Rädle: 'Die lateinische Kultur als 'tertium comparationis' der europäischen Nationen', in *Der Hofstag in Quedlinburg 973*, ed. A. Ranft (Berlin, 2006), p. 90. On medieval reception of *Georgics* see L.P. Wilkinson: *The Georgics of Virgil: a critical survey* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 273ff. A classic survey worth consulting is Domenico Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, [trans.] E.F.M. Benecke, S. Sonnenschein (London, 1895), p. 75-135 (esp.: pp.75-96).

⁴⁷ A far-fetched interpretation would seek in *Georgics* the hagiographer's recipe for defeating the Prussians, e.g. *Georgica* book 4, v. 105-108: 'you must intervene to sway their idle minds from such inconstant play; nor is that intervention hard: pick up the queens, pinch their wings and pluck them off. While they stay put, none of the others dares take to the air, nor budge a standard from the camp'.

⁴⁸ The most doubtful, and probably exciting, was the question of how bees breed. Some, like Vergil in *Georgics* and following him also Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* XII.8), thought that the only way of producing a new swarm is a rather complicated procedure or finding a young, uncastrated bull, binding it, clubbing to death and then putting the carcass somewhere safe. After a while the rotting corpse would produce a number of tiny worms, which without a doubt were bees. Similar recipes were given for spawning fleas from horses, drones from mules, wasps from donkeys and so on. Not everyone subscribed to this theory though. Pliny, who also believed that bees do not copulate and are the smallest of birds, wrote that they nevertheless lay tiny eggs and then brood on them like tiny hens (Pliny, *Nat. hist.* XI.16.48). These are just two surprising physiological features of bees out of the many more catalogued in classical and medieval literature.

⁴⁹ As presented by Hilário Franco Junior, 'Les abeilles hérétiques et le puritanisme millénariste médiéval', *Le Moyen Age* 111 (2005/1): 71-93.

⁵⁰ Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 5.21.67-70 and 76 (CSEL 32/1, ed. K. Schenkl (Wien, 1896), pp. 189-193, p.195). In previous parts of his homily Ambrose attributes the ability for constructing society to cranes also but bees seem to have more of this inborn capability than other birds.

⁵¹ Augustine, *Sermo XI: In Sabbato*, PL 46, cols 819-820.

⁵² Corbinian Gindele, 'Bienen-, Waben- und Honigvergleiche in der fruehen monastischen Literatur', *Regulae Benedicti Studia* 6-7 (1981): 1-26.

⁵³ 'For the race whose origin you ask to know burst forth like a swarm of bees from the midst of this island and came into the land of Europe. But how or in what wise we shall explain hereafter, if it be the Lord's will'. Translation from Charles C. Mierow: *The Gothic History of Jordanes* (Princeton NJ, 1915), p. 52.

⁵⁴ For a different view cf. Arne Søbø Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the history of the Goths: studies in a migration myth* (Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 252-253.

⁵⁵ For more, see Andrew H. Merrills, *History and geography in late antiquity* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 122-123. Unfortunately I was not able to find a copy of Andrew Gillett's, 'The Goths and the Bees in Jordanes: A Narrative of No Return', in *Byzantine Narrative Papers in honour of Roger Scott*, ed. J. Burke et al., *Byzantina Australiensia* 16 (Melbourne, 2006).

⁵⁶ Hrabanus, *De universo*, lib. VIII, cap. 7, PL 111, cols 255-258.

⁵⁷ *De minutis volatilibus* in Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XII, 8, PL 82, col. 469.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, cols 469-470. The information itself already in Vergilian *trunca pedum* (*Georgica* IV.310). For a full list of etymologies cf. Robert Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds, 1991), pp. 42-41.

⁶⁷ 'Bees have honey on their lips but [bring] the injury by the sting in their tails'. For Latin: *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, lib. I, Hom. 9, PL 76, cols 879-880. For a brief explanation see Thomas D. Hill, 'The hypocritical bee in the Old English 'Homiletic fragment I', lines 18-30', *Notes and Queries* 15/4 (1968): 123.

⁶⁸ Ps 97.12: *Circumdederunt me sicut apes, et exarserunt sicut ignis in spinis*.

⁶⁹ The gift of a monk *Reginfridus* for the monastery at Tegernsee (10th century) mentions i.a. *librum Virgili* and *librum Virgilianae continentiae*; see: *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui*, ed. Gustav Heinrich Becker (Bonn, 1885), no. 57, p. 142.

⁷⁰ Bernhard Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. M.M. Gorman (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 104ff.

⁷¹ Martha Dana Rust, 'The Art of Beekeeping Meets the Arts of Grammar: A Gloss of *Columelle's Circle*', *Philological Quarterly* 78/4 (1999): 365.

⁷² Vergil, *Aeneid*, lib. 1, v. 430-435; quoted after *P. Vergili Maronis opera*, [ed.] R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969).

⁷³ *Virgil. Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid, books 1-6*, transl. H. Rushton Fairclough, t. 1 (Harvard, MA, 1999), p. 293.

⁷⁴ Rust, pp. 359-387.

⁷⁵ Emphasised by Polleichtner, p. 142. For more on differences cf. Eleanor Winsor Leach, 'Sedes Apibus from Georgics to the Aeneid', *Vergilius* 23 (1977): 2-16.

⁷⁶ All of them can be consulted in the new critical edition. See n. 11 above.

⁷⁷ Manilius, p. 229, n. 4.

⁷⁸ Today at BSB as Clm 18922.

⁷⁹ Prudentius, *Cathemerinon*, 11: *Ad kalendas Ianuarias*, 85-92; quoted after *Prudentius*, t. 1, trans. H.J. Thomson (Cambridge, MA 2000; re-print of 1949 ed.), p. 100.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 101.

⁸¹ Missionaries and their hagiographers were not trying to produce an anthropological field report. They were set on effecting a change in society not on freezing it in order to facilitate its study, even though a modern observer can easily pinpoint some similarities of Prussian society to what was current in literature discussing the 'society' of the beehive. According to the so-called Wulfstan each Prussian 'town' was headed by a 'king', the Prussian land as a whole was rich in honey (*hunig*), which the non-aristocratic (*unspedigian*) populace used to prepare the drinking honey (*medo*); see *King Alfred's Orosius*, Book I, ch. 1, par. 21 (*King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon version of the Compendious history of the world by Orosius*, ed. J. Bosworth (London, 1858), p. 22). For a modern German translation see: *Wulfstan's Reisebericht ber Preussen*, in: *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum* I, pp. 732-733. For an authoritative analysis of the passage see: Henryk Łowmiański: 'Stosunki polsko-pruskie za pierwszych piastów', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 41 (1950): 153-154.

⁸² The event reverberated around the Empire and its literature. Christian Lübke, *Slavenaufstand*, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Bd. 7, col. 2003f and Wolfgang Fritze, 'Der slawische Aufstand von 983 - eine Schicksalswende in der Geschichte Mitteleuropas', in: *Festschrift der landesgeschichtlichen Vereinigung für die Mark Brandenburg zu ihrem hundertjährigen Bestehen 1884-1984*, ed. Eckart Henning, Werner Vogel (Berlin, 1984): pp. 9-55.