

# The Boar in the symbolic and religious system of Baltic Slavs in the Early Middle Ages

Kamil Kajkowski

*The starting point for the title problem is the passus in Thietmar's of Merseburg Chronicle related to Abodrit's sedes idolatriae in Retra/Radogošč. This is one of the really few recorded myths associated with the symbolic perception of reality by the Baltic Slavs or the western Slavs in general. This myth, i.a. certifies a supernatural perception of the wild boar as an animal associated with the chthonic world (underworld). However, it seems that his role could be seen in a larger perspective. On the basis of written, archaeological and linguistic sources there was made an attempt to clarify the role of the wild boar in the pre-Christian belief system of the North-Western Slavs. The main questions that the author set himself in the analysis of available resources are: 1. what was the role of wild boar in the mediation with the supernatural world, 2. can we treat him as an animal with sacred connotations, 3. with which of the Slavic gods can he be related, 4. whether and to what extent the wild boar can be perceived as an animal with protective powers, or last but not least 5. did he play any role in the funeral rites and visions of world beyond?*

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The importance of animals in the symbolic and religious system of Western Slavs of the early Middle Ages is a subject seldom discussed in the literature. In many cultures, these creatures played an important role not only in symbolic thinking, but also in ritual and magic activities. According to specialists in religious matters, the study of the animal's importance *is one of the keys to every civilization* (Margul 1996, p. 8). *Religious feeling directed toward the animal is no different from the worship directed toward the mythical, legendary, historical, or even living human characters. If only the faithful addresses the animal with pious awe and boundless love, that is, with the same spiritual attitude, which comes into play with the followers of one God, or anthropomorphic deities, we are dealing with qualitatively identical religious experiences* (Margul 1996, p. 13). For each region of the world these were different species determined by the ecology of the specific area of the globe. Mostly, the animals were wild, free-living, which stimulated ambivalent feelings - fear, admiration and curiosity (cf. Margul 1987, pp. 218, Zadrożyńska 2000, p. 25). Following the line of thinking of Rudolf Otto (1993), these characteristics need to awaken a sense of holiness, evading human cognition. In the area of the early medieval European *barbaricum* for such animals were regarded primarily the wolf, bear and boar (cf. Griffiths 2006, p. 154). The attention of these considerations is focused on the latter.

Boar played an important role in the beliefs of many peoples of Indo-European origin (Kempiński 2001, pp. 120–121; Lindow 2001, p. 153; Bartnik 2008, pp. 96 and ff.). The purpose of this paper is an attempt to find answers, and a similar role which can be attributed to this animal in the beliefs of the Baltic Slavs.

Proof of this seems to appear in the passage recorded in the chronicle by Merseburg Bishop Thietmar (975–1018). The author mentions that *whenever they are threatened* [Abodrits - note K.K.] *by severe pain of a long civil war, from the aforementioned lake a mighty boar, foaming, glistening in the canines comes out and in front of everyone is fond of wallowing in a puddle of terrible shock* (Thietmar ... VI, 24). The Chronicler observes, however, that this information should be combined with old times, sometimes derived *from antiquity, which was forged with the various false stories*. So we can assume that Thietmar wrote a story referring to the most distant past of the Abodrits' community, most likely part of the myth. The lake surrounding the divine shrine, Radogošč's *sedes ydolatriae*<sup>1</sup>, was a reservoir of the transcendent powers. The place within which advice was sought and the will of the gods was manifested. The boar should be seen as a mediator proclaiming it. In the words of Jacek Banaszekiewicz (2001, pp. 408–409) *the mighty wallowing beast causes shaking of the earth, makes the observers aware of the blind, destructive force, which soon will take possession of the country. The effect of horror is compounded by other, so to speak light, phenomena associated with the show. If the shaking of the earth is reminiscent of a lightning strike, it also well explains, within this interpretational convention, the further characteristics of the boar, because these resemble lightning. The white fang of the beast throws flashes, the froth on the animal's face is shining. The great boar seems to embody the storm, proponent of the will of the gods*<sup>2</sup>.

Interestingly, some researchers are trying to derive the name of Radogošč from this animal. It is supposed to refer to the others characterized by a root derived from the pre-Indoeuropean \*rod-, \*rad-, that is »to peel«, »to bury«<sup>3</sup> (Ślupecki 1994a, p. 53). One should also pay attention to another detail that appears in the description of the temple by the Merseburg priest. According to Thietmar's words, the sacred building was to be decorated from the outside with carvings of gods and goddesses (Thietmar VI, 23–25). Leszek Ślupecki sees here rather minor gods, heroes or ancestors (1994b, p. 62). However, it seems that these carvings can be interpreted as a visualization of mythical events. Decorative paintings were also supposedly covering the walls of the Triglav temple in Szczecin. According to the description of one of the hagiographers of St. Otto of Bamberg, Herbord (II, 32), these were the images of people, birds and wild animals. Here, one can also trace these to the implementation of an ideological sanctuary program in the form of mythological themes (cf. Ślupecki 1994b, p. 79; Rosik 2010, p. 267). To the

<sup>1</sup> Till now it could not be determined where the main cult complex in Radogošč could be located. Attempts at location cf. Engel 1969; Schmidt 1999; Ślupecki 1994b, pp. 55 – 59.

<sup>2</sup> In this context it is significant that in the perspective of symbolic thinking of pre-Indo-European people, the name of the boar was to be coincident with the name of Svarog (Kempiński 2001, p. 473), the deity, whose powers it is difficult to bring to one transcendent realm. According to researchers, it had both the chthonic and heavenly (blacksmith) competences.

<sup>3</sup> This includes, apart from Radogošč: Gross Raden, Radzikowo, Radunica etc. In turn, Karol Modzelewski derives the name of Radogošč from the method of fortune telling, described by Thietmar, which consisted of digging the lots by priests. In here, it was about the resolution of doubtful cases or »advice« (»radzić« in polish) (Modzelewski, 2004, pp. 386–387). Other ways to derive the names with the suffix \*rad see: Slivka, 2004, p. 152; Ślupecki 1994b, pp. 59–60.

list of temples decorated with symbolic motifs (fictional?) one should add Svantevith's sanctuary in Arkona. We owe the description of *kącina* (pagan temple) to the Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus, who refers to reliefs adorning the divine shrine, but does not specify what they depicted (Saxo ... XIV, 39). One might think that this was a similar ideological program that occurred in other temples, whose descriptions have reached our times<sup>4</sup>. Perhaps we can suspect here some way of creation of worship places in the form of buildings, common to Baltic Slavs? Whether on the temples' walls, among the images of animals, the boar appeared is difficult to guess. However, taking into account the words of Thietmar on the boar coming out of the lake in the hinterland of the temple in Radogošč, this hypothesis can be taken into account.

From the Merseburg bishop's records, one can see that the boar was emerging from the lake, suggesting a relationship of this animal with the chthonic realm. The aquatic environment was in fact probably related to the domain of power of underground creatures (Kajkowski 2006). A deity associated with the chthonic world in Slavonic beliefs is Veles (Gieysztor 2006, pp. 137 et seq.) The cult of this deity seems to be common to all Slavonic nations in the middle ages. Toponomastic research shows that the worship of the deity can be discerned not only in the Slavic East, but also to the south (Wasilewski 1958, p. 149) and west - including the Pomerania region (most recently: Kowalski 2010). For our discussion, essential is the relationship of Veles with the boar, namely that animal's hair - the bristles. Veles was supposed to be staying overseas or in the swamps (see Uspieński 1985 for more), which directs attention to the boar conveying god's will by coming out of the Radogošč lake. A fresco, located in the north tower of the cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev (11<sup>th</sup> century) is worth mentioning here. The painting shows a figure with a shield and an axe attacking a man armed with a stick or a spear. The latter creature has the head completed with a pig/boar face. This scene is most often interpreted as a duel of clowns, though the discussed headgear can also be interpreted as a form of helmet. According to Marek Cetwiński and Marek Derwich (1987, p. 116), one can discern here another meaning. Namely, the rite or its residues in ludic/desacralized form, where a man with the head of boar/pig could act as a chthonic being fighting with an opponent - a thunder-wielding creature (which is to be symbolised by an axe, an attribute assigned in many cultures to these kind of beings). This would, therefore, be a visualization of the archaic myth of cosmology, in which the messenger of the underworld god was the boar, or in such a way as the ruler of the underworld has been depicted himself.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, so far the sacred relics of the building where they exist as residues described by chroniclers decorating the walls have not been found. Exceptions here are laths, recorded, among others, in Gross Raden or Wrocław; and the findings of Peter Herfert in his research: »Arkona - das letzte grosse Ur- und Altenkirchen Heiligtum der Nordwestslawen. Frühgeschichte Rügens« (SA). However, they lack any forms of narrative representation in the form of reliefs or paintings. In general, from early medieval times there were almost entirely no works of art. *This denies us the possibility to analyse the existing undoubted relationships between art, mythology and religion* (Dulnicz 2008, p. 309). This is due to two reasons: first, the materials used to create such objects were organic, which could not keep up to modern times in their entirety. Second, these monuments were destroyed during an evangelistic expansion in the area which clearly is confirmed by the records of chronicles. Remembering the relics of the pagan temple in Wrocław, in the context of the title issue, one should mention that within the building there were found numerous bones of piglets. It is very significant that in all probability it was built under the influence, or even the inspiration of the Veleti, during the disorder called pagan reaction in the Piast's state (30s of the 11<sup>th</sup> century) (Moździoch 2011, p. 140).

Some researchers considered the synonym of Veles's in a North – West Slavonic Triglav (cf. Gieysztor 1982, p. 125). It results from one of the domains which was subjected to its sovereignty - the aquatic domain. The connections of this deity with the underworld (eg. Brückner 1985, pp. 342 ff; Gieysztor 2006, pp. 137–155, 232; Rosik 2010, pp. 260–261) have to be confirmed by a black horse used for fortune telling in the temple of Szczecin as well as his night journeys (Cetwiński, Derwich 1987, p. 16). Another argument that uses the dependency: chthonic deity - the boar, is the Szczecin name itself, to be derived from that animal hair (»szczecina« - »bristles«) (Hering, 1844, pp. 5–6). This was to be confirmed by the description of this city as a *Brustaborg*, in the Scandinavian sagas, which means »castle of bristles« (Cetwiński, Derwich 1987, p. 91).

The domain of the underground and the boar connects with the Polabian deity, whose name was mentioned in *Knytlingasaga* as *Tjarnaglofi*. There were several attempts to explain this theonym. Some researchers saw here a variant of Triglav (Brückner 1985, pp. 128–129). However, the literature is dominated by the theory explaining it as *Czarnogłowy* (Blackhead) (eg. Moepert 1915/1916, pp. 196–197; Łowmiański 1986, p. 199; Gieysztor 2006, p. 153)<sup>5</sup>. According to M. Cetwiński and M. Derwich a silver moustache on Korzenica (Garz) idol of this deity (cf. Brückner 1985, p. 193) was even remoulded by anthropomorphizing the form of tusks (canines) of the boar (1987, s. 87)<sup>6</sup>.

Staying in the area of written sources, it is worth mentioning a fragment in the so-called Gall Anonymous chronicle. Although it does not relate directly to the lands within the remit of interest to the present consideration, their proximity and the content of which is helpful in understanding the meaning of the wild boar in the Baltic or Western Slavs symbolic culture in general, does provoke the need for its recall. An event concerns the Duke Boleslaw III Wrymouth, who along his way encounters a giant boar. Let us see what the chronicler says about that: *Once the Mars child [i.e., Boleslaw], sitting at breakfast in the forest, saw the huge boar, passing and hiding in the thick of the forest; immediately jumped up from the table, seized a spear and rushed after him, attacking him boldly alone, even without a dog. And when he approached the forest beast, and he wanted to inflict a blow on her neck, one of his knights came running from the opposite side<sup>7</sup>, who stopped his arm raised to strike, and wanted him to hurl down the javelin. Then, Boleslaw, roused with anger and courage, fought victoriously and miraculously a double duel: with the man and the beast* (Gall ... II, 11). The quoted thread, apart from elements of historical matter, presents a way of thinking that is likely to be raised through the lenses of pagan mythological themes operating then (cf. Lapis 1986, p. 17). It seems that this passage of the chronicle deals with a description of some kind of initiation of the young prince<sup>8</sup>. It is completed with his fight with another animal with a strong symbolic meaning - a bear, that Gall described in the next chapter of his work (Gall ... II, 12). Most likely, these events, along with the associated scenery<sup>9</sup>, can be connected with membership of the prince in the union of young men (*Männerbünde*) (for more information: Banaszekiewicz 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Leszek Moszyński, in turn, derived the name from the culture of the Christians (1990).

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that in ancient mythology the boar was devoted to the natural satellite of the earth because of the teeth in the shape of the new moon (Graves, 1982, pp. 230–232).

<sup>7</sup> In the literature it is assumed that it could have been the assassin who was sent by Sieciech.

<sup>8</sup> For more on the battle with the boar and its symbolism in the dimension of predestination of the prince to take over the power see: Banaszekiewicz 1999, p. 17 et seq; cf. P. Kowalski 2000, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup> An event takes place in the world of nature, beyond oecumene, which was associated with the spiritual world, *orbis exterior*, that is with sacrum (cf. Campbell 2007, p. 121).

Boar or bear are animals that are an attribute of courage and militancy (Pastouerau 2006, p. 75); they are also the animals associated with the transcendent world. Their killing is not only an act of bravery but also a sign from god/gods proving the value of the young man. In the pre-Christian value system of various nations, to kill one of these animals was an essential condition for admission to the union of men (Kiersnowski 1990, p. 62).

On the basis of those topics, the boar appears as a messenger of the transcendent realm. In the case concerning the account of Thietmar regarding Radogość, it is a mediation animal, imparting the will of one, probably the main, Abodrit deity. In the second thread (Gall) the supernatural powers carry the maturity and abilities to take over the power by the Piast prince.

More light on the main theme is shed by the archaeological sources. Unfortunately, we do not know whether any part of the wild boar (tusks, jaws, skulls) were elements adorning the shrines of the Baltic Slavs. Archaeology attests only one such case, but for the area of the eastern Slav lands. In Ukraine, near Kiev, the trunk of an oak was discovered, in which the boar jaws were implanted; the second trunk, contained tusks of this animal. According to investigators, the two findings come from one sanctuary. Importantly, both trees have not been cut down, but slid across to the edge due to the process of washing over the bank (Welyczko, Ryczka 1995, p. 93). Perhaps, such marking of trees, which were a part of the sacred grove or single specimens identified as exceptional, was common to all Slavic areas. It is possible that it could also be a local variant. At this stage of research, and with so very few sources, that cannot be determined.

Equally little can be said in an analysis of sacral deposits in the sanctuaries<sup>10</sup>. Often, in the description of that kind of places, the authors confine themselves to stating that animal sacrifices were made there. There is a lack of quality determination of bone remains registered during the excavations. Bones of a boar were found nearby a structure interpreted as a pagan temple in Wolin<sup>11</sup>. They were located about 50 metres from the remains of the building (pit number 4). Osteological remains had no signs of cuts or worn teeth, prompting the author of the study to consider them as sacrificial gift residues (Filipowiak 1993, p. 37). Analogous materials were obtained in the course of archaeological research in Arkona (Müller 1980). It is difficult to determine if the cult practices can be interpreted in terms of findings from the stronghold on the island in Behren - Lübchin in Mecklenburg. It is very puzzling that in the same place a wooden sculpture defined by researchers as a pagan idol was discovered (cf. Bleile 2008, p 171). Perception of the islands through the prism of a particular symbolic valorisation (cf. Kajkowski, in print a) and finding of the sculpture might suggest the existence on the island of some kind of cult centre and/or performance of rituals. It cannot be definitely determined whether the boar, along with other animals, whose remains were discovered in this place, could play a role in religious ceremonies (eg. feasts<sup>12</sup>). Boar's tusk in the context of a set of burnt animal bones, some fragments of horns, fish bones and scales were discovered within the

<sup>10</sup> I will not discuss here the remains of wild boar found within the settlement structures. In this case, it is difficult to refer to the symbolism of this animal as such. Most of the recorded residues were found among the other debris, interpreted as post consume ones, which further hinders interpretation (cf. remarks of Paulsson - Holmberg 1997, p. 164).

<sup>11</sup> It should be added that lately there was an alternative possibility of interpretation of this building (Stanisławski 2011, s. 238-239).

<sup>12</sup> The subject of cult feasts, with emphasis on the role which alcoholic beverages played, I discuss elsewhere (Kajkowski, in print b).

burnt house remains interpreted as a pagan temple or rally hall at Góra Chełmska near Koszalin (Janocha 1974, p. 99). Also interesting is the situation recorded in Kaldus, in Vistula (East) Pomerania, because here the alleged place of sacrifice (10<sup>th</sup> century) was discovered. It took the form of a stone structure (kind of altar?), the fill of which was permeated with a layer of burnt material and charcoals. Between the stones, small amount of cereal grains, fragments of pottery, not burnt elderberry seeds, and fragments of skull belonging to an adult male and animal bones were found (Chudziak 2003, p. 58). The ratio of boar's osteological remains, compared to other bones, was identified as »fairly sizable« (Makowiecki 2010, pp. 151, 195, 203).

It should be emphasized here that in the osteological remains, which were found in various places in sets containing numerous bones of other animals, boar bones were often less quantifiable than remains of sheep/goat, cattle or horse. We can assume that boars were a part of the religious ceremonies or/and cult feasts<sup>13</sup> but this was not the dominant food, which does not allow one to draw conclusions for a particular role the boar could play in here in relation to other animals valorised in symbolic terms. There is also no basis for concluding that this animal was sacrificed in entirety<sup>14</sup>.

There is a small number of sources about the sacrifices buried in the foundation of buildings, holding during or shortly after the construction of houses or major architectural developments (strongholds). Again, thanks to Thietmar, we know that the temple in Radogošč was built on the horns of wild animals. It is so significant that some scholars interpret this foundation in terms of the above mentioned sacrifices. Unfortunately we can't say whether there were also bones of a boar. Nevertheless the remains of those were found in the early medieval layers<sup>15</sup> of Gdańsk. One, registered under the floor of the house (No. 27) was a large number of bones of animals, both wild (including boar) and domestic as well as fish scales, nut shells, lumps of amber and an unfinished cube of this material. (Lepówna 1981, p. 182). Another was found at the corner of a farm building where the skull of probably a boar was lying (Lepówna 1981, p. 185). The lower part of a boar mandible was found during the excavations at the doorstep of a wicker house in Szczecin - Podzamcze (Filipowiak 1993, pp. 35–36).

Unmistakable evidence of thinking in terms of symbolic and magic terms of the early medieval Baltic Slavs are findings of the amulets. The function of these objects was to protect the owner against the influence of the hostile forces of chaos (Russell 1995, pp. 41–42) or, in the case of those made of bones/parts of animals – by way of the *pars pro toto* principle – to give the human wearing it the characteristics (vitality and strength) of a particular species. Even in the later Middle Ages it was believed that amulets were derived from the forces of heaven and were more effective than conventional medicine methods (Jaguś 2003, p. 20). In the words of Richard Kieckhefer, amulets and their healing powers *better served psychological than physical objectives: ensuring the health of the spirit rather than the body* (Kieckhefer 2001, p. 47). These items could be made in the course of ritual activities or have a sacred character because of the substance from which they were made (Mauss 2001, p. 99). The latter were the products of animal origin, among

<sup>13</sup> It is worth mentioning that the sacrifice of a pig was done by Prussians as late as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Sikorski 2010, p. 284).

<sup>14</sup> Such testimony we have for the Prussians (Sikorski 2010, p. 302).

<sup>15</sup> Because of the new dating of the oldest strata of early medieval Gdańsk, the chronology proposed for the reported findings is outdated.

which the objects made from the bones of wild boar can be found. Amulets of teeth/tusks of these animals were found by archaeologists across the western Slav lands - both in the settlements (where they probably have been lost by the owners) and in the cemeteries. In the Pomerania region, the well-known are the ones, among others, from Barwino (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century) (Szołdrska 1953, p. 11), Cedynia (Malinowska - Łazarczyk 1982, vol. 1, p. 55, table XXVIII:1 and table XXVIII:4; vol. 2, p. 166–167; 189–190) or Cewlino (Łosiński 1958, p. 266). In this discussed context it is worth mentioning the extraordinary discovery that was recorded in the external face of the shaft of the stronghold in Gniezno (10<sup>th</sup> century). It was a boar's head carved in wood (Hensel 1956, p. 354). This detail, in the opinion of most researchers, should be treated as a symbolic act of binding with the apotropaic sphere (cf. Wawrzeniuk 2007, p. 265).

The actions embedded in the religious and magic sphere can be also connected with some of the musical instruments (more on this subject: Kajkowski 2010, p. 258 et seq.) Some researchers consider the so-called »hetkas« - oblong objects, often made from the pig's/boar's metatarsal bone, with a drilled hole in the middle. These are relatively common items found during archaeological excavations at sites dating from the earliest phases of the early Middle Ages. There are known from Gdańsk, Wolin, Szczecin, Kamień Pomorski, and Kolobrzeg (Kajkowski 2010, pp. 267–268). The vast majority of scholars see them as objects of utility and interpret them as a form of fasteners to fasten clothing. Others allow the possibility of using them as so-called *rotating bones*, ie. aerophones used in magical rituals<sup>16</sup>. The present author has not heard of any other instruments made of pig's/boar's bone in the Baltic Slav lands. It is worth mentioning here the interesting discovery noted at the early medieval cemetery in Dziekanowice (site 22) in Great Poland. In one of the graves (45/92) an adult male was found. He was buried along with (presumably) the whistle and props made from pig jaw interpreted as »tarło« - the object to extract a characteristic sound. It should be added that the inventory registered at the deceased caused the burial to be considered as the resting place of a person engaged in music or related to the traditional rituals still cultivated by local people during the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> century (Wrzesinski 1998, p. 67)<sup>17</sup>.

Another problem, to which some space should be devoted in the context of the issues raised here, is the occurrence of boar bones in graves or near them. In the study area, the osteological remains are relatively rare. It is characteristic both of Pomerania (Kuczkowski, Kajkowski, 2012) and for the Elbe Slavs (Pollex 2010, p. 195). Bones of boar occurred in just a few cemeteries (Zoll Adamikowa 1975, p. 264–265, 267, 270; Pollex 2010, p. 195). All this means that, similarly to the sanctuaries, the analysis of finds of this kind within the funerary sites gives no foundations to claim about a special role of the boar during the funeral rites (cf. Makowiecki 2010, p. 204).

In the present topic, the toponymy should also be taken into account. It turns out that with the extremely small number of names, which may correspond to the genesis of the early Middle Ages (cf. Słupecki 2011, p. 313), some refer to a boar/pig, and, as it seems, the symbolism or ideological significance of this animal for the then communities. The

<sup>16</sup> Here should be mentioned the theory, which holds that some »hetkas« could be toys (Kowalska 2011, p. 74).

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the No. 4 burial of Fyrkat in Denmark is interpreted as *völva's* burial. A woman buried here, among other items linked to the sphere of magic, had a lower swine jaw with her posthumous equipment (Price 2002, p. 155).

name of Szczecin and its possible connection with the pre-Christian cult has already been mentioned earlier. Some researchers claim that the name Parsęta<sup>18</sup> (one of the major rivers of Pomerania running into the Baltic Sea) was derived from the expression *prosię* (piglet). The first records of its name appear in the 12<sup>th</sup> century sources<sup>19</sup>. According to Andrzej Chłudziński (2008), from the same root as the river's name, *such names of places like Parskowo and Parszczyca near Puck* (eastern part of Pomerania) *and Parsowo near Koszalin* (western Pomerania region). Also the name Parsęcko (village near Szczecinek) is secondary and derived from the name of the river Parsęta<sup>20</sup>.

A similar etymology is shown for the strait Świna (pig) (between the Wolin and the island of Uznam and Karsibór). The name was noted at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (1182) (Babik 2001, pp. 585–586)<sup>21</sup>.

It is difficult to answer the question, of what were the reasons for giving to flows and water basins names derived from the specimen that is the field of our interests (and only to them - other names were due to the location near them!). Some light is shed by the legends recorded by folklorists. We know that the Woświn (Wo-świn – świn/świnia – pig in polish) lake was supposed to be dug by a boar or a sow with young wild boars (Knoop, 1885, p. 89, cf Łysiak 2010, p. 26 ff., 61). A similar story circulated for Parsęta and the quite distant river Wieprza<sup>22</sup> (Eastern Poland, right tributary of the Vistula; wieprz – hog in polish) (Kieres - Kramek 2008, pp. 17–19).

It seems that we can try to look for dependency: water – the chthonic world – the animal as a messenger/mediator. Boar emerged from the lake forming a part of the poly-nomial cult centre in Radogość predicting the next events. According to late legends, the

<sup>18</sup> According to another theory, the name is to be of Indo-European origin - from the word \*pers-, *pryskać* (splatter) (Cf. Chłudziński 2008, p. 283).

<sup>19</sup> Parsandi – 1159 (Chłudziński 2008, p. 283).

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that on the island of the no longer existing lake in Parsęcko (name recorded quite late - as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century), a probable centre of pagan cult has been located, where next to the stone pavement, the remnants of a wooden pole construction of the building, cautiously interpreted as the remains of the temple, were found (Chudziak 2010, p. 304). Due to the late record of the name of this village it is difficult to conclude about the relation between that centre and the figure of a boar.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that the same name is given to a castle in Silesia. According to legend, it was to be inhabited by the family of Świnki (von Schweinichen), whose coat of arms legend derives from the legendary Czech princess Libuša. According to this tale, set in the year 712 (!), Biwoj, the then squire of Libuša, had hunted or captured alive, a giant boar and deposited it at the feet of the queen, for which he received a coat of arms and lands (Freyer 1994/1996). According to Czech chronicler Kosmas, Libuša was a fairy, therefore a person making contact with the supernatural world (Kosmas I, 4). According to Jacek Banaszkiwicz, the figure of a legendary ruler of the Czechs may be the transformation of the deity (the goddess) of a chthonic character (Banaszkiewicz 1986, p. 70). The relationship of a boar with this transcendent realm has already been mentioned by the present author. One can even add that the boar made at the foot of Libuša perhaps could be treated as a sacrifice. The same Kosmas (I, 11) describes a doubt of the Czechs in the victory in the approaching battle. The prophetess, to whom they went to for advice, instructed them to sacrifice a donkey. In the words of the chronicler, the Czechs, after the consumption of a part of animal sacrificed to gods, acquired boar characteristics. I believe that this passus can be taken as a topic narrative motif based on the Holy Bible (cf. Freudenberg 2005). In line with the idea that »like-causes-like« I guess that quite probably the sacrificed animal could be a wild boar (assuming that this message is based on the mythical or legendary story located in the optics of symbolic perception of reality by the community to which this transfer is related). In this context it is worth mentioning the findings recorded within the area interpreted as a shrine in the town of Hrabsko (Czech Republic). The group of objects dating from the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century consisted of fragments of pottery, iron needle, and bones of animals - including boar (Turčan 2001, p. 99).

<sup>22</sup> The river of that name flowing onto South Baltic Coastland cannot be taken into consideration in these deliberations. This name was given to it until after World War II, replacing the German name Wipper.

boar (or pig) were to be creators of riverbeds or lakes. If these stories are considered to be reminiscent of myths, the figure of the animal in question, clearly links to the supernatural sphere set in the telluro – aquatic realms, the domain of chthonic powers<sup>23</sup>. At the same time it is difficult to talk about some special role of boar in tackling the sacrifices. Archaeological sources, recorded within the religious centres, show that, indeed, these animals were part of religious sacrifices, but they constituted only a small percentage compared to the remains of other species to which devotion was paid in the religious celebrations. Similar conclusions arise from the analysis of the remains of the foundation sacrifices and those discovered in the funerary areas. A slightly better situation is present with magic nature. Relatively many amulets were made of boar bones, the role of this animal is also confirmed by items intended for the extraction of sounds (assuming, of course, such use of »hetkas«), most likely used for apotropaic acts.

The boar appears therefore as an animal with strong connotations with the spiritual world, as is indicated by the threads quoted in chronicles (myths) and in the legends<sup>24</sup>. Archaeological sources confirm the role of this animal in the pre-Christian rituals, but it must be emphasized that it was undoubtedly lower than in magical practices.

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<sup>23</sup> In the songs found on the Slavic lands sometimes the motif of boar digging golden grain in the orchard, which is read as a symbol of spring (Moszyński 1939, p. 1445).

<sup>24</sup> For the area and period in the interest of the present paper, there are no topics identified for areas such as Eastern Slavs (Byliny...) on the theriomorphy, specifically the magic ability to change a man into the boar. It is worth mentioning that they are also known from west Slavic folklore (Góra 2000, pp. 255–256).

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## **Dzik w systemie symboliczno religijnym Słowian nadbałtyckich wczesnego średniowiecza**

Kamil Kajkowski

Punktem wyjścia w omówieniu tytułowego zagadnienia jest przekaz Thietmara dotyczący obodrzyckiej *sedes idolatriae* w Radogoszcy. Jest to jeden z nielicznych zanotowanych mitów związanych z symbolicznym postrzeganiem rzeczywistości przez Słowian nadbałtyckich czy Słowian zachodnich w ogóle. Poświadcza on nadprzyrodzone postrzeżenie dzika jako zwierzęcia związanego ze światem chtonicznym. Wydaje się jednak, że jego rola mogła być postrzegana w szerszej perspektywie. Na podstawie źródeł pisanych, archeologicznych i językoznawczych została podjęta próba wyjaśnienia roli dzika w systemie wierzeń przedchrześcijańskich Słowian zachodnich zamieszkujących obszary nadbałtyckie. Podstawowymi pytaniami jakie autor postawił sobie przy analizie dostępnych źródeł będą: jaką rolę dzik odgrywał w próbach mediacji ze światem nadprzyrodzonym; czy można go traktować jako zwierzę o konotacjach sakralnych; z jakimi bóstwami można je łączyć; czy i w jakim zakresie postrzegano dzika jako zwierzę o mocach apotropaicznych; czy odgrywał jakąś rolę w obrzędowości pogrzebowej i wizji zaświatów.