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## **PAGANISM OF PRUSSIAN: SACRED CASTE *TULISSONES, LIGASCHONES***

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The text of the Christburg Treaty is unique as the sole written source providing information about the performers of funeral rituals for Prussian nobles. We find reflections of the rituals of the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* in the funeral customs, folk beliefs and folklore of later eras (and in some cases until today). The origins of the titles *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* are disputed even among linguists, however all scientists agree on the nature of the functions of these servants of the cult. No matter how we call them (supplicants, explicators of signs, *vaidiluèiai*, holy men, masters of the spirits, mourners, *žyniai* or fortune-tellers), their basic duty is to guide the spirit of the deceased and to serve in rituals of burial. Functionally, the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* are comparable (identifiable) with the Prussian hierophant described in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and called the *krivis* (*Criwe, crywe kyrwaito*), and with the soldiers, servants and barons who mourned their noble chiefs and leaders abundantly attested in 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century sources, and the mourners (women, men, loved ones, relatives) who mourned at peasant funerals attested in the literature of the 15<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Most of the funeral rites ended with the burning of the deceased body. In antiquity for example some thinkers equated the soul directly with fire. The second reason was that the soul was separated (liberated) from the body when the body of the deceased was burnt. Therefore, the soul could move faster to another underground world. Prussian also believed that next to the deceased should burn the most necessary things and they will serve them as before. Particular attention was paid to the horse of the deceased owner. The horse had to deliver the soul of the deceased to the underground kingdom. The main part of the funeral was that the participants had to perform terrible rituals, wail, mourn, scream and howl with powerful voices, screech. Most often relatives had to sing songs or scrim special expressions nevertheless mourning and lamentation is performed not out of sadness, but more out of a sense of necessity. Some of the rituals are used up to this day for example when a person dies, he needs to be kissed, all guests must praise him and sing songs of mourning for his life, to make others cry; the deceased never should be condemned, for it is said, the spirits of the dead come in the night to avenge for desecration.

In all cases they sought to serve fittingly the deceased by performing the necessary ritual guaranteeing passage from this to the next world. With the advent and spread of Christianity, the tradition of songs of mourning at the funerals of the nobility (and later of the common people as well), together with the singers of songs of mourning, were slowly pushed out by Catholic and Protestant hymns and sermons delivered during funerals. Some rituals have remained up to this day in the form of traditions, including the well-known phrase: about dead speak only good or do not say anything. Some other elements of funeral ceremonies are condemned by the Catholic Church and are recognized as superstitions.

*Key words:* the Treaty of Christburg, *tulissones, lygaschones*, mourners, preachers of sermons.

**Introduction.** An inscription on the Latin original of the peace treaty between the German Order of the Cross and the Prussian tribes of 1249 reads:

“Promiserunt eciam, quod inter se non habebunt de cetero *Tulissones* vel *Ligaschones*, homines videlicet mendacissimos histriones, qui quasi gentilium sacerdotes in exequiis defunctorumve tormentorum internalium promerentur, dicentes malum et bonum et laudantes mortuos desuis furtis et spoliis, immundiciis et rapinis ac aliis visiis et peccatis, que, dum viverent, perpetrarunt; ac erectis in celum luminibus exclamantes, mendaciter asserunt, se videre presentem defunctum per medium celi volantem in equo, armis fulgentibus decoratum, nisum in manu ferentem et cum comitatu magno in aliud seculum precedentem; talibus consimilibus mendaciis populum seducentes et ad ritus gentilium revocantes”<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately this is the only source providing any information about these two actors in Prussian funereal rites, the subject of contradictory evaluations by researchers. While Praetorius at the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century does mention these Prussian *žyniai*, his information is not authentic. It was most likely the fruit of speculation (and even that is controversial) based on this same text of the Christburg Treaty. In this regard, in one place Praetorius writes that the *Tilusseji* or *Tilussûnei* “were a kind of *vaidilučiai* who performed slightly lower functions of the *vaidilučiai* at the residences of the nobility and other Prussian residents, although after the reign of the *krivis*, they likely were the most exalted; their tasks were the same as those of the other *vaidilučiai*, except that when they cast spells or acted in the role of *vaidilučiai*, they murmured strangely, but in general they were silent, and also warned others to keep silent while they performed their functions as *vaidilučiai*”<sup>2</sup>. In another passage, Praetorius says the *Tullussûnes* and *Lingussûnes* cannot be differentiated from other fortune-tellers (wax-workers, foam-readers, stargazers, etc.) because all of them knew how to read the future from signs seen in the constellations, air, water, foam, wind and so on, and of whom, Praetorius says, there was still an abundance at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, sudarė Norbertas Vėlius (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1996), t. 1, 239. Leonas Valkūnas translates this text into Lithuanian more or less like this: “They also promised not to maintain among them the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys*, the greatest liars and hypocrites. These pagan priests who buried the dead have earned the sufferings of hell, when speaking of good and evil, they praise the dead for their thefts and extortions, their evil deeds, their seizures and other flaws and sins which they did when they were alive. Raising their eyes heavenward, shouting, they lyingly claim they see the spirit of the departed here, flying on a stallion in the midst of heaven, arrayed with shining weaponry, carrying a falcon upon their hand and going with a large contingent into the other world. With these and similar lies they draw people into error and pull them back into pagan customs” (see *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 240–241).

<sup>2</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, sudarė Norbertas Vėlius (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003), t. 3, 268).

<sup>3</sup> Here Praetorius retells the story of wizardry witnessed by N. Cintijus, claiming the wizard was performing the functions of the *Tilussûnis*. Cintijus said he had met “near Vainotai an old Samogitian, late one summer evening, when the sky was very starry, standing between oak trees and occasionally grabbing at the air with both hands, but saying not a word. This Samogitian, as the priest watched, stood there for more than an hour, and yet this priest perceived that every once in a while the man was secretly murmuring something. But the man stood as if frozen and his whole body was so still that one

**1. Attempts to Determine Functions and Origin of Titles.** Until now scholars have called the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* fortune-tellers, readers of signs, clairvoyant bards, supplicants, *žyniai* (priests), mourners of the dead and judges of the dead.

Praetorius, who, as noted, did not record authentic material about the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* during his lifetime, was the first to try to explain the origins of these titles and the functions they performed in funereal rituals. His belief is that they were *vaidilučiai* or fortune-tellers, that the title *Tilusseji, Tilussūnei* was connected with the Lithuanian word *tylėti* “to be silent”, and that *Lingussūnes* was connected with the Lithuanian *linguotī*, meaning to hang in the air, or to float in the air without the flapping of wings...<sup>24</sup> Of course these sorts of explanations of the origin of the titles for the performers of funeral rites would today be called folk etymologies.

T. Narbutas, who should be considered a follower of Praetorius, said in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century “the *lygašonys* and *tulisonys* (*Lingussones* and *Tilussones*) were funeral *žyniai* whose task was to perform funeral rituals and to report what happened to the soul after death”. The former, according to Narbutas, came from the “the Old Prussian word *linguot*, meaning to fly in the air on outstretched wings, while the latter come from the same language from the word *tilussut*, meaning to murmur”<sup>25</sup>.

Late 20<sup>th</sup>-century mythologists Eliade and Beresnevičius qualify *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* in a similar way (calling them “clairvoyant bards” belonging to the class of ecstasies or magicians akin to the shamans of Asia, whose function is to guide the soul of the dead into the next world)<sup>6</sup>.

The observations of scholars in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century are somewhat at odds with the conclusions by the aforementioned scholars. V. Mannhardt believed *tulisonys* (from the Latinized Polish word *tuliczynę*) meant “pacifiers, comforters”, and that *lygašonys* was the Prussian correspondence for the same word<sup>7</sup>. Mierzyński said *lygašonys* and *tulisonys* might have been readers of natural signs. Mierzyński

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might think he had grown from the earth”. After some time the Samogitian “began to bow to all four directions of the world. That took about a quarter of an hour, then the man dropped to his knees, kissed the ground three times and after that stood up and thrice yelled terribly: «Way! Way! Way!»” From the rest of the story it turns out the Samogitian was a magician who was supposed to determine the whole truth about a certain person who had disappeared without a trace. And that’s what he did: the wizard determined the subject had been injured, but was already healed and would soon be coming home. A half year later he did: “the relative appeared back home”. Praetorius concludes the Samogitian described in the story had performed the duties of the *Tilussūnis*, but adds that “such a prophet they also call a *žvaigždžiūronys* (Sweigdzurunis), which in German means a prophet, an astrologer who knows how to read the future from the stars” (see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, sudarė Norbertas Vėlius (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2003), t. 3, 269–270).

<sup>4</sup> Matas Pretorijus, *Prūsijos įdomybės arba Prūsijos regykla*, parengė I. Lukšaitė (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2006), t. 3, 399.

<sup>5</sup> Teodoras Narbutas, *Lietuvių tautos istorija* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1998), t. 1, 296.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Lietuvių mitologija*, ed. Norbertas Vėlius (Vilnius: Mintis, 2003), t. 3, 446; Gintaras Beresnevičius, *Trumpas lietuvių ir prūsų religijos žodynas* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2001), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm Mannhardt, *Letto-Peussische Götterlehre* (Riga: Lettisch-Literarische Gesellschaft, 1936), 45.

derived the former from the word *liga* or the root *lig-* “to read a fortune”, “to decide, solve”, and the latter from the root *tul-* “to turn, to translate, to solve, to explain”<sup>8</sup>. Bertuleit (Bertulaitis), most likely inspired by Mierzyński, also derived the title of *lygašonys* from the Lithuanian word *liga*<sup>9</sup>.

Bronislava Kerbelytė published an article in 2008 about the titles of performers of rituals and defined *tolisonos* as readers of natural signs and *ligusones* as supplicants (reciters of prayers)<sup>10</sup>, noting, however, that no words similar to *tulisonos* have been found, whereas *ligusones* appears similar to the Latvian word *lugšana*, meaning supplication, prayer<sup>11</sup>.

In any event, what should be considered the best etymological explanations of the words *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* to date were made by Būga, Toporov and Mažiulis. The linguist Būga associated *tulisonis* with Old Prussian *tuldīsnan* “joy” and explained the *tulisonys* had been “priests and mourners of the dead [i.e., singers of pagan funeral dirges]”<sup>12</sup>. Mažiulis expanded upon the etymology proposed by Būga, claiming *\*tuldīsna* “joy” with the suffix *\*-snā-* was derived from Prussian causative *\*tuldītvei* “to cause to be joyous, to inspire joy”, and claimed further, with some reservations, that the latter was cognate with Prussian *\*tul-*, akin to Lithuanian *tilti* “to stop making noise, to stop talking, to grow silent”, perceiving the following shift in meaning: to cause to be joyous < to calm, to pacify < to make quiet<sup>13</sup>. If we accept the etymology proposed by Mažiulis, then we can consider *tulisonis* at least partially related to the name of the Prussian god of death, the dead and the underworld, Patalas<sup>14</sup>. In that event *tulisonys* would have been simply performers of funereal rituals and guides to the realms of Patalas, to the world of the dead and the afterlife.

Toporov originates *lygašonis* in the Prussian words *līgint* “to try, to judge”, *lijgan* “verdict, judgment”, and *\*ligan* “trial”, and assigns to the *lygašonis* the functions of judge of the good and bad deeds of the dead and arbiter of the dead’s future fate, and even compares this with the god *Ligiczius* described by Łasicki<sup>15</sup>. Prussian *lijgan* and *\*līgintvei* are cognate with Lithuanian *lyginti* “to make level, to level, to make

<sup>8</sup> Antoni Mierzyński, *Źródło do mytologii litewskiej* (Warszawa: Druk K. Kowalewskiego, 1892), t. 1, 97.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Bertuleit, “Das Religionswesen der alten Preussen mit litauisch-lettischen Parallelen,” in *Sitzungsberichte der Altertumsgesellschaft Prussia* 25 (1924): 92.

<sup>10</sup> See *Mažosios Lietuvos enciklopedija* (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2000), t. 1, 235.

<sup>11</sup> Bronislava Kerbelytė, “Dvasregiai lietuvininkų ir lietuvių sakmėse,” *Res Humanitariae* 3 (2008): 95.

<sup>12</sup> Kazimieras Būga, *Rinktiniai raštai*, sudarė Zigmas Zinkevičius (Vilnius: Politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1959), t. 1, 92.

<sup>13</sup> Vytautas Mažiulis, *Prūsų kalbos etimologinis žodynas* (Vilnius: Mokslo, 1997), t. 4, 203–204.

<sup>14</sup> See: Rimantas Balsys, *Lietuvių ir prūsų dievai, deivės, dvasios: nuo apeigos iki prietaro* (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2010), 228, 229.

<sup>15</sup> Владимир Топоров, *Прусский язык. Словарь: L (laydis - \*lut- & \*mod-)* (Москва: Наука, 1990), 227–230.

straight; to make just, fair, equitable”<sup>16</sup>. Mažiulis believes Baltic *\*līgin-*, “to make level, to level, to make straight; to make just, fair, equitable”, over time became for the Prussians *\*līgin-* “to mete out judgment, to issue a verdict; to hold a trial”<sup>17</sup>.

Kerbelytė opposes this last explanation, pointing out the etymology of this word “does not coincide with the context of the fragment which concerns us: seers only observe the soul of the dead, but do not judge the soul, nor determine its fate”<sup>18</sup>.

This is only partially correct. The judgment of the dead for their earthly acts, good and bad, is usually one of the privileges of the highest god (or gods) in many of the old religions<sup>19</sup>. In the Prussian religion, however, there appears to be an exception to this rule. The ability of the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* to see the dead traversing the vault of the heavens allows us to consider them comparable to the hierarchically supreme servant of the Prussian cult, the *krivis*, who, according to von Dusburg, was also able to see the dead and to tell how they return to visit their loved ones<sup>20</sup>, and furthermore, based on Grunau and other chroniclers of the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the *krivis* was “the herald of the will of the gods”, and had, it seems, the right to participate in the judgment of the dead and the determination of their fate in the afterlife<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> See: Reinhold Trautmann, *Die altpreussischen Sprachdenkmäler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910), 370; Jānis Endzelīns, *Senprūšu valoda* (Rīga: Universitātes apgads, 1943), 203; Kazimieras Būga, *Rinkiniai raštai*, sudarė Zigmās Zinkevičius (Vilnius: Politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1959), t. 1, 111; Ernst Fraenkel, *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg-Göttingen: C. Winter, 1962), bd. 1, 370; Владимир Топоров, *Прусский язык. Словарь: L (laydis - \*lut- & \*mod-)* (Москва: Наука, 1990), 231–244.

<sup>17</sup> See: Vytautas Mažiulis, *Prūsų kalbos etimologinis žodynas* (Vilnius: Mokslo, 1996), t. 3, 59–60.

<sup>18</sup> Kerbelytė, “Dvasregiai lietuvininkų ir lietuvių sakmėse,” 95.

<sup>19</sup> As far back as the eschatology of the Egyptians there was trial of the spirit of the dead. Judaism and later Christianity took their concept of postmortem trial from Zoroastrianism. The image of the judge-god is affirmed in written sources and folklore ascribed to the Prussians and Lithuanians. Of interest is a passage from the Bykhovts Chronicle (ca. 1520–1530) about a deity resident on a mountain-top who judges the living and the dead, and legends from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century concerning a god who sees justice is done and who punishes or forgives. Both these latter sources, incidentally, show signs of a synthesis between beliefs from the pre-Christian and Christian religions.

<sup>20</sup> On the *krivis*'s ability to see the spirit of the departed visiting the earth, Peter von Dusburg wrote: “...when the parents of the dead went to this pope, the *krivis*, and asked if on such and such a day and such and such a night he hadn't seen something going into their dwelling, he without hesitating used to tell them what sort of clothes the late man was wearing, about his horses and weapons and contingent, and further, seeking greater credibility, he used to add that the dead man had, it seemed, left one or another kind of mark on the door-frame [when he passed through] with a spear or some other tool” (see *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 344).

<sup>21</sup> In the Grunau Chronicle (1529) where he describes the events of 523 and the laws, it is announced: “Third, we must feel respect and fealty towards our brightest gods [i.e., Patulas, Patrimpas and Perkūnas – R. B.] and our Krivių kirvaitis (criwo cyrwaito), because they will give us, after this life, beautiful women, many children, sweet drinks, good food, white clothes in summer, warm cloaks in winter, and we will sleep in large, soft beds and will laugh and dance because of our healthiness. From the evil, from those who do not worship them, they will take everything they have, and will torture them much there” (*Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, sudarė Norbertas Vėlius (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 2001), t. 2, 93).

In a monograph published in 2012 Rolandas Kregždys in effect surveyed the etymologies of the names of the cult servants discussed here (*Tulissones* ← Pr. \**d/tulinōsīs* “lord, master, keeper of the spirit (spirits)”; *Ligaschones* ← Pr. \**gališōnīs* “saint, priest of the dead”) and simultaneously their functions. He came to the conclusion that “mourners, according to their social status, should not be placed with the *žyniai*, but rather with the group of people outside the sacred sphere who knew how to sing the lamentations [funeral dirges]”, and therefore the “*Tulissones* / *Ligaschones* could not be placed even formally among the representatives of the lamentation tradition”<sup>22</sup>.

In summary it should be noted that the origins of the titles *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* are disputed even among linguists, whereas there is general consent on the nature of the functions of these servants of the cult. No matter what we call them (supplicants, explicators of signs, *vaidilučiai*, holy men, masters of the spirits, mourners, *žyniai* or fortune-tellers), their basic duty remains the same: to guide the spirit of the deceased appropriately or, as Jonas Šliūpas puts it, to serve “in rituals of burial”<sup>23</sup>. For the Prussians as for many other nations of that period, funeral rituals were not perceived as bidding farewell to the dead, but as the beginning of another life by the deceased, “with the pleasant and merciful gods”. The quality of that next life was perceived as possibly depending on how loved ones performed the required burial rituals.

Agreement on functions raises another, not less important question: why do the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* disappear (they are no longer mentioned) in written sources from the 14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries; and why are there no traces found, according to Kerbelytė, in Prussian Lithuanian and Lithuanian folklore? After all, rituals of the old religion or at least reflections of those rituals usually are found till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and in some cases until the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and sometimes even in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to answer this question, we must return to analysis of the written sources of the 13<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and burial customs and folk beliefs connected with funerals from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the mythologems cited in the Christburg Treaty.

**Fire.** It should be noted that when the Christburg Treaty was concluded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Prussians cremated their dead and, as Gintautas Vėlius says, were probably in no hurry to renounce this practice after the conclusion of the treaty<sup>24</sup>. According to the written sources, the Prussians actually continued to burn their dead into the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup>. In other words, the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys*

<sup>22</sup> Rolandas Kregždys, *Baltų mitologemų etimologinis žodynas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, 2012), t. 1. Kristburgo sutartis, 156–215, 503.

<sup>23</sup> Jonas Šliūpas, *Lietuvių tauta senovėje ir šiandien* (Plymouth: Spauda ir kaštai “Vienybės lietuvininkų”, 1904), 430.

<sup>24</sup> See Gintautas Vėlius, “Istoriniai šaltiniai apie mirusiųjų deginimo paprotį Lietuvoje, išimtis ar taisyklė,” *Lituanistica* 1(45) (2001): 65–71.

<sup>25</sup> See *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 344.

weren't merely imagining the Prussian noble entering the next world on horseback, but were relaying this (or singing dirges to the deceased?) as they watched the smoke (or soul of the dead?) rising from the bonfire.

Worth keeping in mind is G. Beresnevičius's assumption that while the flame of the funeral fire, or more precisely the smoke rising from it, wasn't equated with the entire soul of the deceased, it really was associated with some part of it<sup>26</sup>. The Prussians weren't the first to think so, either. The Hindus believed Agni was the soul's guide to the next world and the Greeks when they began cremating the dead also believed this was a more rapid path for the soul to reach Hades<sup>27</sup>. In antiquity some thinkers equated the soul directly with fire. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Democritus described the soul as "a certain fire and warmth"<sup>28</sup>. Written sources, folk beliefs and folklore of the Balts abound with examples of the connection between the soul and fire and the soul and smoke. These examples provide a clear demonstration of how the concept of the afterlife shifted along with the tradition of cremating the dead towards a dualistic image of man himself. In this conception, the soul was separated (liberated) from the body when the body of the deceased was burnt<sup>29</sup>. The *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* observed the career of these liberated souls and sang laments for the dead.

It would appear the Kuršiai (Curonians) were able to read information regarding the condition, fate and journey of the soul from the smoke of the funeral fire. Chillebert de Lannoy's account of his travel from the Curonian Spit and Memel to Livonia in 1413–1414 reports the Curonians observed the direction the smoke went from the burning corpse, believing that smoke rising upwards meant the soul was saved, while smoke blown sideways portended the soul's death<sup>30</sup>.

Hieronymus of Prague (Jeroným Pražský, Hieronim z Prahi) made similar observations during his visit to Lithuania from 1401 to 1404 in a passage about the Lithuanian *žyniai* guarding the sacred fire at the temple, and how they foretold the fate of those afflicted with disease through that fire: "The relatives asked them whether the patients would die. The *žyniai* went to the fire every night, and in the morning told the questioners that they had seen the shadow of the afflicted next to the sacred fire, which when it warmed itself showed the signs of life and death: a patient who would recover would stand with his face toward the fire, while those who stood with their backs to the fire would surely perish"<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Gintaras Beresnevičius, "Sielos fenomenologijos įvadas," *Lietuvos kultūros tyrinėjimai* 1 (1995): 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 75, 106.

<sup>28</sup> See Aristotelis, *Rinktiniai raštai* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1990), 327.

<sup>29</sup> See Marija Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė, "Pomirtinio gyvenimo išvaizdavimas Lietuvoje proistoriniais laikais," *Gimtasai kraštas* 5, sąs. 30 (1942): 6–7; Gintaras Beresnevičius, "Sielos fenomenologijos įvadas," *Lietuvos kultūros tyrinėjimai* 1 (1995): 84.

<sup>30</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 513, 514.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 594.

Praetorius, as noted earlier, discovered nothing at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in any way connected with *tulisonys* and *lygašonys*. Nor could he have, because the dead hadn't been cremated for three centuries by then, but were buried in the ground instead. On the other hand, he didn't discover anything because he wasn't looking in the right places; he was seeking anything connected with the titles of the wizards known as *tulisonys* and *lygašonys*, and failed to notice the *žvakonys* and *dūmonys* who clearly were proximate to the psychopomps described in the written sources in the 13<sup>th</sup> century: "The Szwakones (*žvakonys*) are explicators of signs who observe the indications of the flame and its smoke, [the name] having come from [the word] *Szwake* [Lith. *žvakė* "candle"], they are also called *Dumones* (*dūmonės*) from *Dumai* (*dūmai*, "smoke") because they watch the smoke of the flame, and once at the beginning of my priesthood, it happened to me personally, when I was administering the sacred sacraments to an old woman who was lying ill in Aukštynlaukiai; wax candles were lit; after Communion one woman immediately extinguished the candles; one of my aides wanted to go to them and disperse the smoke so that it wouldn't cause annoyance; she stopped the aide, and she herself observed the indications of the smoke, and predicted whether the [patient] would heal, or die; none of this could I see, for at that time I was making a prayer for the patient and giving her comfort, but I heard the woman saying this person would not die from the illness, but would recover, which is how it did happen"<sup>32</sup>.

Foretelling the future from candles lit or extinguished next to the patient remained popular into the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many cases of this are described by Jonas Balys: "If you blow the candle next to the patient out and the smoke rises upwards, then the patient will likely die..."; "If you bring the priest out and put out the candles and the smoke rises straight up, the patient will go straight to heaven"; "When candles burn next to the patient, you need to look at your shadow: if the shadow has no head, you will die soon"<sup>33</sup>.

By analogy with the candles by the deathbed and at the funeral, candle fortune-telling traditions at weddings arose: "If when the vows are being made the candle flame flutters to the side of the groom, that means he will die first, and if it bends towards the bride, then she will die first"<sup>34</sup>.

Many more and different beliefs from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been recorded with fire and smoke connected in one way or another with the journey of the soul to heaven, or at least with the prophecy of death:

"If a fire has been extinguished in the oven and it revives (even one coal), then someone in that courtyard will die"; "Take a match and place it nicely upon the table, and after lighting it observe which way the flame bends: in that direction someone not

<sup>32</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 3, 271.

<sup>33</sup> Jonas Balys, *Raštai*, parengė Rita Repšienė (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2004), t. 5, 137, 138.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

distant has died”; “The soul of the dead person, until “Angelus Domini” has been sung, paces the house and watches who is singing laments for the dead, and how. Just before [leading the body out] when “Angelus Domini” is sung, the soul singing lamentations is the first to exit the house and sits on the chimney. It sits on the chimney until the body is taken to the grave and buried. When the oven is kindled the next morning, it travels upon the smoke to judgment in heaven”<sup>35</sup>.

It is possible some dream interpretations are also connected with meeting the ancestors and a successful journey to the other side. For instance, to see smoke rising straight up from the chimney in a dream is supposed to mean happiness and concord will reign in that house<sup>36</sup>.

**Horse.** It’s known the Romans, Dacians, Greeks and others held horse races on the day of a funeral. It is likely the Prussians adopted this practice from them as well<sup>37</sup>. It doesn’t seem to be a coincidence that the Christburg Treaty talks about the soul travelling to heaven on a horse. A number of mythologists and archaeologists subscribe to the idea the horse should be understood as a medium facilitating the journey to the next world in the mythology of the Balts (and in that of many other peoples as well)<sup>38</sup>. Some archaeologists prefer to explain the shared human and horse graves in three ways: 1) the horses are grave goods guaranteeing productivity and are disposed of with their owner; 2) the grave is that of a noble with his stead; 3) the stallion is a means to reach the posthumous world<sup>39</sup>. Unfortunately, there are no data supporting the idea horses were sacrificed as grave objects for their owners in the written sources. On the contrary, all the written sources which treat the subject of horse and rider being disposed of by cremation say only nobles and warriors were dealt with in this way, often indicating the function of the horse and other funerary objects.

The cremation of such a noble Prussian with stead, weapons, clothes, slaves, servants, dogs and falcons in the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries were described in Peter von Dusburg’s chronicle dealing with the events of the 13<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>40</sup>; Philippe de Mézières’s tractate *Songe du vergier* aka *Somnium viridarii* [“The dream of the old supplicant”] of 1389 describes the funeral of a king<sup>41</sup>; the Livonian

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<sup>35</sup> Jonas Balys, *Raštai*, t. 5, 37, 143.

<sup>36</sup> *Sapnų kalba* (Vilnius: Algarvė, 1997), 74.

<sup>37</sup> Hadrianas Daikovičius, *Dakai* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1973), 111–112.

<sup>38</sup> See Gintaras Beresnevičius, *Dausos* (Vilnius: Gimtinė, Taura, 1990), 127–129; Vladimir Toporov, *Baltų mitologijos ir ritualo tyrimai* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2000), 222–234; Andrei V. Zinoviev, “Horses from Two Burials in Samland and Natangen (Second Century, Kaliningradskaja Province, Russia),” *Archeologia Baltica* 11 (2009): 50–55.

<sup>39</sup> See: Mykolas Michelbertas, *Senasis geležies amžius Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Mokslas, 1986), 226; Rasa Banytė-Rowell, “Aistiškiosios laidojimo apeigos Lietuvos pajūryje lyginamosios religijotyros kontekste,” *Lituanistica* 1 (53) (2003): 29.

<sup>40</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 344.

<sup>41</sup> It is said that when their [the Prussians’] king has died, “his barons array him in armor and set him upon a stallion, which is also armored, and they stack fir logs around the king...” (see *Baltų religijos*

Chronicle of approximately 1358–1378 described the funeral of King Algirdas<sup>42</sup>, the New Prussian Chronicle of 1394 that of duke Kęstutis<sup>43</sup>, and the Bykhovts Chronicle (the 1520s) the funeral of the legendary duke Šventaragis<sup>44</sup>.

According to the written sources of the 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries (see the Polish Annals, Albert von Bardovik's Chronicle, Wigand von Marburg's Chronicle and Grunau's Prussian Chronicle), even prisoners of war were cremated with their armor and horses in honor of the elder Prussian gods<sup>45</sup>.

The importance of funerals with funeral objects, especially horses and weapons, is accurately portrayed in the Rhyming Livonian Chronicle: "And even there, in the other world / They would all have arms there, / For they may also there need / To go on a raid ... Spears, shields, armor, horses / Helmets, visors, swords / Burn they as they will"<sup>46</sup>. Peter von Dusburg says much the same thing about the essence of such funerals when he points to the Prussian belief that "burnt objects rise together with them and will serve them as before"<sup>47</sup>.

In European countries where the dead were no longer cremated, mediaeval knights were nonetheless buried in luxurious clothing and with expensive weaponry<sup>48</sup>. Likewise, the horse often remained an essential element in the funeral of a knight<sup>49</sup>.

The functions of the medium-horse as guide to the other world are reflected in the folk beliefs, customs and oral traditions of the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

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*ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 452). It is believed the king mentioned in this source could have been Gediminas (see Alvydas Nižentaitis, *Gediminas* (Vilnius: Vyriausioji enciklopedijų redakcija, 1989), 98–105).

<sup>42</sup> It was said the funeral for king Algirdas was very grand and according to the customs of that time "different items and eighteen stallions were burned" (see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 421).

<sup>43</sup> Duke Kęstutis's funeral in Vilnius was described where together with the duke were burned "horses, clothes, weapons ... hunting birds and dogs..." (see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 469).

<sup>44</sup> According to the legend, Šventaragis's son Skirmantas "following the order of his father ... burnt up the body of his father, and his stallion, upon which he rode, and his clothes, which he used to wear, and his beloved [slave], to whom he was kind, and the falcon, and his hunting dog" (see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 380).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 270–271; 273–274; 456.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>48</sup> Michel Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu. Od roku 1300 po współczesność* (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2005), 59.

<sup>49</sup> In Sarmatian funerals, for example, which were widespread within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, an emphasis was placed upon a rider who impersonated the dead (first mentioned in Poland in 1370 at the burial of Casimir the Great in Cracow), and the so-called *archimimus*. This latter imitated the dead not just in dress and manner, but also symbolically: riding his horse into the church, waving a spear, falling loudly from the horse. This tradition is first mentioned in 1548 during the funeral of Sigismund the Old in Cracow (see Alfons Labudda, *Liturgia pogrzebu w Polsce do wydania rytuału Piotrkowskiego (1631)* (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1983, 152; Mindaugas Paknys, *Mirtis LDK kultūroje XVI–XVII a.* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2008), 81).

centuries. It is for this reason that the spirits of the dead in legends and beliefs out of all possible animals feel and see the horse most frequently, and people can see the spirits of the dead by using parts of the horse saddle and bridle<sup>50</sup>. There was the belief that “if you want to see a soul, you need to, as the person is dying, place the harness on wall, and then you will see it”; “in order to see the spirits of the dead, you have to place the harness of a horse on your head and go to the graveside, then you will see all the souls that are there”<sup>51</sup>.

For the same reason, the behavior of a horse becomes a portent of death or recovery, or of short life versus long life. Thus the health of a patient (whether he is to live or die) was decided by the behavior of the horse used to carry the priest to the patient, by observing whether the horse pricked up his ears (meaning he is listening to the spirits) or lowers his ears, whether the horse shakes or not, whinnies or not, stamps the ground with his hoof, stands with head lowered, and so on<sup>52</sup>. Even on a wedding day, a horse can predict which of the betrothed will die first: “If on the ride to the church ceremony the horse kneels for the groom, he will die first; and if for the bride, she will die first”<sup>53</sup>.

**2. *Tulisonės, Lygašonės and mourners.*** Researchers have tried before to equate the *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* with mourners [singers of funeral dirges], but usually provide no arguments<sup>54</sup>. B. Kerbelytė casts scorn upon this theory, saying the comparison or equation is quite distant from the text of the Christburg Treaty, which says the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* do not mourn, but “speak of good and evil...”<sup>55</sup>. It’s difficult to consider this a weighty argument. On the one hand, the Prussians likely weren’t themselves describing the rituals they performed. This is demonstrated

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<sup>50</sup> Kerbelytė has discussed extensively all actions and other circumstances facilitating the viewing of the souls of the dead based on legends recorded in the Lithuanian regions (see Kerbelytė, “Dvasregiai lietuvininkų ir lietuvių sakmėse,” 86–89). It is noted that *dvasregiai*, i.e., people able to see the spirits of the dead, usually acquire this talent (or extreme burden?) accidentally, unintentionally, for example, by coming into contact with an animal or human able to see the spirits, by using a specific item connected with the funeral ceremony, by being born on a Thursday, and so on. There have been attempts to associate *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* with those who can see the dead (see: Norbertas Vėlius, *Mitinės lietuvių sakmių būtybės. Laimės, laumės, aitvarai, kaukai, raganos, burtininkai, vilktakiai* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1977), 268), but one tends to agree with Kerbelytė that the legendary material doesn’t support such a continuity. Another no less important reason not to connect the *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* with the seers of the spirits of the dead is that their jobs and duties are different. The former (*tulisonis* and *lygašonis*) are performers of rituals, while *dvasregiai* are merely passive observers.

<sup>51</sup> Balys, *Raštai*, t. 5, 202.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>54</sup> See Aleksander Brückner, *Starożytna Litwa. Ludy i Bogi. Szkice historyczne i mitologiczne* (Warszawa: Druk K. Kowalewskiego, 1904), 40; Renata Balčiūnaitė, “Laidotuvių raudos: pirmosios problemos,” *Liaudies kultūra* 4 (1994): 12; Aušra Žičkienė, “XIII–XVII a. rašytiniai šaltiniai apie raudojimo būdus,” *Tautosakos darbai* 9(16) (1998): 171; Rūta Grumadaitė, “Mažosios Lietuvos raudų regioninis išskirtinumas,” *Lietuviai ir lietuvininkai. Tiltai, priedas* 29 (2005): 61.

<sup>55</sup> Kerbelytė, “Dvasregiai lietuvininkų ir lietuvių sakmėse,” 93.

by the lexicon of those who drafted and wrote the document. On the other hand, the *tulisonis* and *lygašonis* don't just "speak" but also "praise the dead", and "raise their eyes to the sky as they shout ... strengthening". It is entirely credible that behind these characterizations of the activities of the performers of the rituals there lies some kind of ritual action, not discarding for the moment the possibility of funeral laments and mourning. This possibility is enhanced in later sources (see the 1426 order to the Prussians, the Book of the Sūduvians, Strykowski, J. A. Brand) where mourning is described using a rather varied lexicon. According to the authors of these sources, the funeral participants *perform terrible rituals, wail, mourn, scream and howl with powerful voices, screech*.

Another matter of equal importance was addressed in an earlier chapter: the *lygašonys* and *tulisonys* *speak, by shouting affirm, and praise* not just anybody, but the dead nobility and warriors who have attained glory in military action. Mykolas Biržiška was probably the first to point out the *tulisonys* and *lygašonys* "exalted the military achievements of the dead"<sup>56</sup>. Aušra Žičkienė, after weighing the points made by Biržiška and other researchers, formulated the hypothesis that the written sources were talking about two different kinds of worship of the dead. One was "improvisational lamentations, performed expressively, of an everyday nature" which actually, though somewhat changed, survived right up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the other being "works performed by men (sometimes accompanied by *kanklės* [a stringed musical instrument]) of exceptional standing in society (beggars, *žyniai*) which exalted the military actions, achievements and victories of the deceased"<sup>57</sup>.

This hypothesis is completely plausible. Similar songs of mourning are known from Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. The myths of antiquity abound with examples of how the Greeks mourned their dead heroes Hector, Achilles and Patroclus<sup>58</sup>. This also tells us the significance of this sort of mourning: so the soul may find rest in the kingdom of Hades more quickly. In other words, mourning and lamentation is performed not out of sadness, but more out of a sense of necessity. Only after completion of all the rites of mourning could the soul of the deceased again become that which it was during life. This would have been especially important to the nobility, rulers and famous

<sup>56</sup> Mykolas Biržiška, *Lietuvių dainų literatūros istorija* (Vilnius: Lietuvių mokslo draugija, 1919), 6.

<sup>57</sup> Žičkienė, "XIII–XVII a. rašytiniai šaltiniai apie raudojimo būdus," 174.

<sup>58</sup> According to the myth, the shade of Patroclus appeared in a dream and asked Achilles to perform the funeral rites as soon as possible, so that his soul might reach the kingdom of Hades more quickly. After singing a song of mourning to Patroclus, Achilles held luxurious games with horse racing in honor of the dead man (see: Nikolajus Albertovičius Kunas, *Senovės Graikijos legendos ir mitai* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1984), 287). The author of the Iliad portrays in similar manner how Hector was mourned with songs of mourning. The importance of the mourning tradition is displayed in Sophocles' play *Antigone*. Scholars of literature believe the mourning song was one of the most important sources for the tragedies of antiquity (see Henrikas Zabulis, "Tragiškojo veiksmo raida choro giesmėje," in *Antikinės tragedijos. Eschilas, Sofoklis, Euripidas* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1988), 516).

warriors. The information Długosz provided on the reason for the courage of the Jotvingians supports this idea. He said it was claimed the Jotvingians were a very belligerent, but equally thirsted for glory, and weren't afraid to fight a much more numerous enemy because they held the expectation that when they fell "relatives will praise them in song for their glorious battles"<sup>59</sup>.

It seems that these funeral rituals, an essential component of which was the performance of lamentations exalting the military achievements of the deceased, were described in at least several written sources, besides the Christburg Treaty of 1249 discussed earlier, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and even in some sources from the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries which deal with the events of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

One such source is the Ancient Chronicle of Livonia (1225–1227) which notes that the Curonians "for three days rested, burned the dead and mourned them" after a battle<sup>60</sup>. The Rhyming Chronicle of Livonia (1290–1296) in noting the passing of the brother of Lithuanian magnate Lengvenis says Lengvenis forced one of the crusaders to carry "right to the borders of Lithuania / The severed head of the Komtur [commander]", because "he was hurrying to the country / to perform sacrifices for his bother / and to mourn his death"<sup>61</sup>. The same chronicle provides an account of a similar type of mourning for soldiers who fell at the battle of Durbė:

"After returning to the country,  
The Sembiens felt  
That many soldiers  
Had lost glory.  
With horrible laments  
They long mourned them"<sup>62</sup>.

Philippe de Mézières discusses in his tractate *Somnium viridarii* of 1389 the mourning tradition upon the death of a noble leader (as noted earlier, most likely grand duke Gediminas)<sup>63</sup>. Strykowski in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century reaffirms that Gediminas was "mourned with simple lamentations, similar to hymns, with an enumeration of his goodness and courage"<sup>64</sup>. Sadly, no authentic texts or even text fragments of this sort of mourning and praising of the dead has come down to us in these written sources.

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<sup>59</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 568.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 453.

<sup>64</sup> *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 2, 559.

**Table 1. Mourning of warriors and leaders in the written sources**

Source, year	Type of source	Performers of songs of mourning	Notes
Christburg Treaty (1249)	Authentic information	Tulisonys, lygašonys	Raised eyes to sky
Ancient Livonian Chronicle (1225-1227)	Authentic information	Curonians/Kuršiai (warriors?)	
Rhyming Livonian Chronicle (ca. 1290)	Authentic information	Warriors mourn those fallen in battle	
Philippe de Mézières (1389)	Authentic information	Barons (subordinates) mourn king	
Jan Długosz (15 <sup>th</sup> century, second half of)	Authentic information	?	Events of 1264 described. Warriors hope to be mourned.
Maciej Strykowski (1582)	Might have used Philippe de Mézières's information or another source unknown today	?	Enumerate the good qualities and courage of the deceased while mourning

Another important fact is that the nobles and warriors of the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries were not mourned by women, as has been stated incorrectly in the past<sup>65</sup>, but by specialized *žyniai* (*tulisonys*, *lygašonys*) or their fellow soldiers, subordinates or barons (see *Table 1*). According to these same written sources, the traditional ceremonies for the mourning of nobles more or less died out in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the possible reasons for the changes to the tradition is contained in the text of the Christburg Treaty itself: the Prussians promise not to maintain the performers of such rituals. But it was the Prussian nobility, who often sought rights and privileges for themselves, who undertook this promise and signed the agreement. The Prussian elite who signed the agreement also received certain guarantees: nobles who adopted the Catholic faith and swore loyalty to the order “were guaranteed personal freedom, the freedom to own and dispose of their property, to become clerics and knights, and to use the defense of the courts”<sup>66</sup>. The common people, on the other hand, are usually not so quick to reject ancient traditions. This explains the presence in written sources from the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries and from written descriptions in the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See: Gintaras Beresnevičius, *Dausos* (Vilnius: Gimtinė, Taura, 1990), 182.

<sup>66</sup> See: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 568.

centuries of funeral dirges performed by the peasants for their deceased loved ones (see *table 2*). Neither was the order by Semba bishop Michael Junge in 1426 to the Prussian forbidding them to sing songs of mourning effective in stamping out the tradition<sup>67</sup>. It seems the November 24, 1541 order (“Order against Heathen Superstitions”) setting forth how and where the deceased were to be buried, and thus seeking to do away with the ancient custom of holding wakes for the dead and songs of mourning, was equally ineffective<sup>68</sup>.

Unlike the songs of mourning intended to exalt military actions by the nobility, the texts of the songs of mourning of the common people is of a domestic character, “enumerating” the peasants’ morals and their usefulness, asking why the deceased has left them, asking the deceased to deliver greetings to members of the family and neighbors who died earlier, and so on. According to the aforementioned sources from the 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, women were more frequent and men less frequent mourners, and in some cases male and female mourners were hired.

**Table 2. Mourning songs by peasants in the written sources<sup>69</sup>.**

Source, year	Type of source	Performers of songs of mourning	Notes
Michael Junge (1426)	Authentic information	Males and females	Demands to forbid songs of mourning
Book of the Sūduvians (1520–1530) <sup>70</sup>	Authentic information	Males	Male’s funeral described
J. Malecki-Sandecki (1551)	Based on information from the Book of the Sūduvians		
Maciej Strykowski (1582)	Based on information from the Book of the Sūduvians		
Jan Łasicki (1582)	Based on information from the Book of the Sūduvians		

<sup>67</sup> “Also, in the future let not a single man or woman perform the horrid rites in the graveyard on the graves of the dead and their family members, let them not lament, not wail, as has been the usual practice until now...” (see *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 1, 484–485).

<sup>68</sup> See: Ingė Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje. XVI a. trečias dešimtmėtis – XVII a. pirmasis dešimtmėtis* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1999), 183–184.

<sup>69</sup> Attention should be brought to the second column of the table, from which it is possible to see that there isn’t much authentic information in the sources from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is much more repetition, rewriting, paraphrasing and compilation.

Recessus generalis der Kirchen-Visitation (1638)	Authentic information	Beggars, kanklės players	Paid in meat, bread, grain, clothes and other goods
J. A. Brand (1673–1674) <sup>71</sup>	Authentic information	Father, mother, other relatives, neighbors	If a child dies
Ch. Hartknoch (1679) <sup>72</sup>	Compiles earlier authors	?	It is noted that this song of mourning is even now (meaning, the end of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century – R. B.) often heard in Lithuania and Samogitia
Matthaeus Praetorius (end of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century) <sup>73</sup>	Might have used information from earlier authors, but much, it seems, was taken from living tradition	Females	Singing of hymns cited along with songs of mourning
Theodor Lepner (1744) <sup>74</sup>	Might have used information from earlier authors, but much, it seems, was taken from living tradition	Females, males	Major portion of funereal rites already affected by Christianity
20 <sup>th</sup> century ethnographic descriptions	From living tradition	Usually females, more rarely males, mourners could also be hired <sup>75</sup>	

<sup>70</sup> “If someone becomes ill he pays for, according to his wealth, several barrels of beer and treats the village and his friends so they would cry for him when he dies. The corpse is kept in a warm sauna or building, washed clean, dressed in white and placed on a chair in the center [of the room]. Later a half of a glass of beer is released, poured into some kind of vessel, and the horn or cup is taken up. Everyone drinks to the dead person and says: “*Kayls naussen gingethe*”, or, “I drink to you, my friend, why did you die? You had a lovely wife, animals, cows”, rhyming everything. After drinking they wish him a good night and ask him in that other world to welcome warmly their parents, brothers and friends, and to get along well with them, then they put on his clothes, put a knife in the belt at their side, tie a long scarf around their neck and tie money up in it for food” (see *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 2, 152). The information in the Book of the Sūduvians about mourning songs during funerals is repeated by Malecki-Sandecki, Strykowski and Łasicki.

<sup>71</sup> Johannes Arnold Brand provides new information in the 17<sup>th</sup> century about the still-living tradition of singing laments for the dead: “if it is a child (or just a relative), next to him sits the father and mother with other relatives and neighbors, who do not need to be called to the side of the dead, but come of their

Although, as has been noted, the content of songs of mourning intended for the nobility and common people differed, their ritual function in both cases remained the same: to usher out the dead in a fitting manner. This conclusion is confirmed by beliefs recorded from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which explain why songs of mourning must be sung for the dead and why he and the events of his life must be exalted: “If songs of mourning are not sung for the person who has died, then he will appear to people”; “When a person dies, he needs to be kissed, everyone must praise him and sing songs of mourning for his life, to make others cry, but never should he be condemned, for it is said, the spirits of the dead come in the night to avenge for desecration”<sup>76</sup>. The same attitude towards the deceased and his life and times has

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own accord, sit down around the coffin, and wail and scream with powerful voices these words: “*Ak Browlau, ak Tietelau*” [“O brother, o aunt”] and so on, “*ar ne turejus donos kwezeli*” [Don’t you have bread...] and so on. “*Kodelej numerei, kodelej mane palikaj, Ak! Ak! Kur tu nuejei asz pas tawe busu tu preg manes ne*” [“Why did you die, why did you leave me, oh! oh! Where have you gone, I am with you but you are not with me”] (*Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 3, 69).

<sup>72</sup> Christoph Hartknoch, in describing the tradition of mourning and providing examples of the songs of lamentation, clearly used earlier sources, but one of his observations is valuable, namely, that “since those times the song of mourning about which we have told you even now is often heard in Lithuania and Samogitia”, showing this tradition was still alive in Lithuania and Žemaitija at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>73</sup> Praetorius in writing the chapter “On the Contemporary Funeral Rites of the Prussians, Nadraivian and Scalvians” might also have used information from earlier authors, but there is no doubt that Praetorius took much from living tradition. It is noteworthy the Scalvians and Nadraivians were still practicing the old funeral traditions in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. (for more, see: *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 3, 323) There is likely a merger of pre-Christian and Christian practice taking place. At the same time the functions of Patulas, the old Prussian god of death, the dead and the underworld, were being transferred to the Grim Reaper figure, the executrix of the will of the Christian God (see: Balsys, *Lietuvių ir prūsų dievai, deivės, dvasios: nuo apeigos iki prietaro*, 221–247).

<sup>74</sup> Theodor Lepner’s work “Prussian Lithuanian” also mentions the mourning customs and provides fragments of two songs of mourning. The first fragment was possibly taken from Malecki-Sandecki, or at least appears very similar, while the second, as noted by Leonardas Sauka, appears to have been recorded directly from the people (Leonardas Sauka, “XVI–XVII a. lietuvių raudos ir jų eilėdara,” *Lietuvos Mokslų akademijos darbai. Serija A* 1(35) (1971), 167). From Lepner’s description it appears the Christian funeral rites were already being practiced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although Lepner cites Hartknoch and others on the traditions of mourning among the Prussians, and notes similar practices existed and still did exist among Lithuanians. His observation on the number and gender of mourners is very valuable: “however many people there are in the family, to that extent are the lamentations sung, or rather screeched. If a woman has died, the husband begins the lamentation quietly” (see *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, t. 3, 365–367). One understands that if the husband had died, the wife would have begun the mourning, and if the woman had died then the husband, followed by the other members of the family.

<sup>75</sup> According to the ethnographers, mourners could also be hired (see: Juozas Petrušis, “Mirusiųjų apraudojimas,” *Kraštotyra* (Vilnius, 1966): 134–137; Balys Buračas, “Raudos ir raudotojos prie numirusių,” *Mūsų rytojus* 85 (1935), 4). Regarding this, Balys Buračas wrote in 1935 that 70 years earlier (i.e., around 1865), mourners were still hired in the area around Kupiškis: “At that time there was the custom in the Kupiškis region to hire specific [female] mourners to mourn the dead. The [female] mourners, in order to mourn better, so that “tears might fall like beans”, were provided [certain measures including food as payment]...”. The mourner wore specific clothing: a white head kerchief,

survived to the present time in sayings such as “Either speak well of the dead, or say nothing”, and “Speak well of the dead or remain completely silent”<sup>77</sup>.

**3. *Tulissones, Ligaschones and Preachers of Sermons.*** In the last chapter it was stated that information is no longer found regarding songs of mourning for the nobility from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Only the common people maintained this tradition. At that time the nobility, who had adopted Christianity, were compelled to practice new burial customs as well. The mandatory elements of burial rites which came into force with Christianity – the singing of hymns and giving of sermons – functionally corresponded to the custom of singing songs of mourning in the pre-Christian era. Despite changes in form, the function and style of pre-Christian ritual texts (songs of mourning) and sermons delivered at the funerals of powerful people remained more or less the same. These sermons (as in the songs of mourning) exalted the deeds of the deceased and his family and underlined examples of bravery, morality and piety in the life of the deceased<sup>78</sup>. According to scholars of literature, the ideal of the warrior-noble was propagated during the Baroque era, and so it is not unexpected that the funeral sermons characterize these people as good and brave soldiers, among other things; “tales of battles are retold in detail in which the late departed took part, and the victories they won, and their achievements”<sup>79</sup>. Orators at funerals at that time, according to Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė, “adhered to the principle contained in the Latin sentence: “*De mortuis nil nisi bene*”, either speak well of the dead, or say nothing at all”<sup>80</sup>. The same can be said of the content of eulogies and epitaphs from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>81</sup>. In tracing the burial practices of the nobility, there appears sometimes the tradition of delivering a sermon during the burial of someone who belonged to a lower class. According to Lepner, these sorts of traditions – calling a priest to the side of the dying, ringing bells upon a death, singing hymns, paying for a sermon to be said for the dead – were already being practiced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by the peasantry living in “the fear of God”. The text of such a sermon to be delivered during a funeral and listing the good works and acts of the deceased, followed

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white coverings over the inner clothing, a sort of moccasin on the feet. Using a walking stick, the mourner would walk around the corpse and sing the funeral dirges, a scarf covering her eyes. She sang the praises of all the deeds of the deceased while crying... ” (Buračas, “Raudos ir raudotojos prie numirusių,” 4).

<sup>76</sup> Jonas Balys, *Mirtis ir laidotuvės. Lietuvių liaudies tradicijos* (Silver Spring: Lietuvių ( tautosakos leidykla, 1981), 71.

<sup>77</sup> *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1970), t. 8, 269.

<sup>78</sup> Žr. Mindaugas Paknys, *Mirtis LDK kultūroje XVI–XVII a.* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2008), 162.

<sup>79</sup> Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė, *LDK katalikiškas Baroko pamokslas tarp ars vivendi ir ars moriendi* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2004), 199–200.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>81</sup> See: Eglė Patiejūnienė, *Brevitas ornata. Mažosios literatūros formos XVI–XVII amžiaus Lietuvos Didžiosios Kinigaikštystės spausdiniuose* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 1998), 205–265.

by a farewell in the name of the deceased to members of the family, relatives and neighbors, can be found in a work written by M. Valančius in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century called “Palangos Juzė”<sup>82</sup>. The function and style of funeral sermons has remained almost unchanged to this day.

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<sup>82</sup> See Motiejus Valančius, *Palangos Juzė* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1965), 62–65.

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## **ПРУССЬКЕ ЯЗИЧНИЦТВО: СВЯЩЕННІ КАСТИ *TULISSONES, LIGASCHONES***

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У статті досліджуються фольклор та народні звичаї пов'язані з поховальними обрядами та смертю, витоки яких заклали виконавці похоронних ритуалів прусських дворян т.зв. *tulisonys* та *lygalyonys*. Ці слуги культу, які залишили по собі пласт маловивченої обрядової інформації, фактично сповняли обов'язок забезпечити перехід душі померлого зі світу живих до світу мертвих. Для реалізації цієї мети т.зв. "майстри духу" влаштовували обряд тілоспалення, звільняючи, таким чином, душу від тіла. Крім того, спалювали найбільш необхідні речі, які належали померлому власнику, особлива увага надавалася коневі, який мав перемістити душу. Основна частина похорону обов'язково мала проходити у голосінні та плачі за померлим. З приходом і поширенням християнства язичницькі звичаї визнавалися забобонами (пісні жалоби) та повільно замінювалися християнськими практиками (проповіді та гімни). Незважаючи на заборони католицької церкви, деякі з досліджених обрядів застосовуються і по нині у формі традицій.

*Ключові слова:* Крістбурзький договір, *tulissones, lygaschones*, плакальники, проповідники.

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