

## THE WORLD OF THE DEAD AND NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE BOOKS OF PRE-MONGOL RUS

*The article reconstructs Old Russian Christian ideas about the ability of the dead to influence (stop, or, on the contrary, provoke) large-scale natural phenomena and the world of the living in particular. The author describes the social environment in which such ideas were formed, which influenced all the original literature of the 12th–13th centuries. In the paradigm of that time, the mechanisms of miraculous influence on the world were subject not so much to the living / dead dichotomy as to ideas about the closeness of man to God. A deceased righteous man, regardless of official canonization, kept his significance after death and was able to influence the world with his prayers. At the same time, the influence of the unholy dead on the world of the living always appears in the Old Russian sources as a criticism of the unbelievers, who consider the activity of the dead to be the deception of demons. The tendency to explain the non-anthropomorphic phenomena by the activity of the dead also depended on the understanding of the capacities of good and evil. Medieval preachers struggled with the idea that demons could affect crop yields, as it was incompatible with the Christian worldview. In Old Russian sources, demons often caused harm associated with physical effects on a particular person (diseases, ulcers, wounds, etc.). The chronicle of 1092 about the attack of demons on Polotsk should be considered as a development of these trends, and this attack is associated by modern researchers with a natural disaster (epidemic).*

**Keywords:** *dead man, Old Rus, nature, saints, demons, knyaz*

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