# The Angels are among us. A Study of the Writings of Paulinus of Nola<sup>1</sup>

## Anioły są wśród nas. Studium pism św. Paulina z Noli

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**Abstract:** Paulinus of Nola (c. 355-431) is undoubtedly one of the most interesting yet least known figures of early Christianity. Born into a wealthy senatorial family from Bordeaux, Paulinus gave up wealth, a career as a civil servant and the practice of secular poetry to follow St. Felix on the path of Christian faith. One of its elements was the belief in the existence of angels. In the case of Paulinus of Nola, this belief took on a very concrete expression. The aim of this article is to show, on the basis of an analysis of the surviving letters and songs, the angelology of St. Paulinus, which took on above all a pastoral aspect and showed very concrete manifestations of the action of angels for the benefit of the human beings.

Keywords: Paulinus of Nola; angel; letter; poem; care

Jean Daniélou, in his book on patristic angelology, a fundamental work in this field, points out that concerning the Fathers "in angelology, their attention was focused less upon the nature of the angels and their function as adoring spirits than upon their missions to humanity at different moments in the history of salvation"<sup>3</sup>. They were first and foremost interpreters of the Scriptures<sup>4</sup>, in which angels were sent with a mission to announce God's truths and plans<sup>5</sup>. Paulinus of Nola also

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> J. Daniélou, *The Angels and their Mission According to the Fathers of the Church*, tr. D. Heimann, Allen 1957, p. viii.

See Daniélou, *The Angels and their Mission*, p. viii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See e.g. Gen. 16:9; 19:5; Judg. 6:14; 2Kgs. 1:3; Ezek. 40:3; Matt. 1:20; 2:13.19; 28:7; Luke 7:24; 9:52; Jas. 2:25. Cf. E. Langton, *The Ministries of the Angelic Powers According to the Old Testament and Later Jewish Literature*, London 1936; W.G. Heidt,

belongs to this tradition<sup>6</sup>. He was not a great theologian and dogmatist, but rather a pastor and spiritual guide for many people seeking the way to God. In his letters, but also in his poems, he made numerous references to various passages of Scripture, including those that speak of angels. He was aware of his own incompetence and ignorance, and he himself asked his more theologically knowledgeable colleagues about questions concerning angels. He is thus an example of the contemporary angelology in search of its expression, and at the same time an author who brings to it a lively perspective on this fundamental function of the angels, known from the historical scriptural testimonies that were the subject of analysis by the writers of the time. Since the angelological themes in the work of Paulinus of Nola have never been studied, and above all because of the above-mentioned new approach to the contemporary mission of the angels, it is worth studying the angelology of the Nolian as it appears in his letters and poetic works.

Angelology of the Old Testament. A Study in Biblical Theology, Washington 1949; Angeli e demoni nella Bibbia, ed. P.G. Bortone, L'Aquila 1998. This way of thinking we can find as well in Tertullianus, De carne Christi 14, 3; Eusebius Caesariensis, Praeparatio evangelica VII 16; Eusebius Caesariensis, Demonstratio evangelica III; Athanasius, Contra arianos oratio III 12; Gregorius Nyssenus, Contra Eunomium I; Ambrosius, De Spiritu Sancto I 10; Hieronymus, Commentarii in Isaiam VI 6; Gregorius Magnus, Homiliae XL in Evangelia 34, 8, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See J. Pałucki, *Pismo Święte w pasterskiej posłudze Paulina z Noli*, RT 50/4 (2003) p. 139-147.

## 1. Nature of the angels

In his writings, Paulinus, using primarily Scripture<sup>7</sup>, reveals the nature of angels. Emphasising that they are "created as pure spirit", that they are "created without bodies", that they feed on the heavenly bread – the bread of angels¹0 – and are clothed in the garments of God's glory¹¹, Paulinus argues for the incorporeality of angels. They are immortal creatures who live forever with God in heaven¹². And it is with their dwelling place that Paulinus links the very essence of their present mission and nature. Angels play an essential role in the thought of Paulinus of Nola at the moment of human death¹³. The spirit that leaves the buried body is lifted into the arms of an angel¹⁴. It is the angel's hands that lift the deceased through the clouds up to heaven¹⁵. The miracles that happened around St. Felix's tomb (e.g. the snow that covered the ground) are signs that he is already enjoying the light and peace of the angels who dwell in heaven¹⁶. Paulinus used poetic images of the transition from earthly to heavenly life in describing

On the exegesis of Paulinus of Nola see S. Leanza, Aspetti esegetici dell'opera di Paolino di Nola, in: Atti del Convegno. XXXI Cinquantenario della morte di S. Paolino di Nola, Roma 1983, p. 67-91; R.A. Rallo Freni, Il testo dei Salmi nell'utilizzazione dell'opera di Paolino di Nola, in: Atti del Convegno. XXXI Cinquantenario della morte di S. Paolino di Nola, Roma 1983, p. 231-252; A. Swoboda, Egzegeza alegoryczna Pisma świętego w listach Paulina z Noli, VoxP 32-33 (1997) p. 261-268; G. Di Palma, Paolino di fronte alla Bibbia, in: Mia sola arte è la fede: Paolino di Nola teologo sapienziale, ed. L. Longobardo – D. Sorrentino, Biblioteca Teologica Napoletana 21, Napoli 2000, p. 151-166; M. Wysocki, Biblia i nadzieja na jej dobre tlumaczenie, VoxP 69 (2018) p. 721-733; M. Wysocki, The Symbolism of Biblical Birds in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola, in: The Bible in the Patristic Period, ed. M. Szram – M. Wysocki, Studia Patristica 103, Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2021, p. 165-173; M. Wysocki, Letters as a School of the Christian Exegesis. A Study of the Selected Early Christian Latin Letters of the 4th and 5th Century (Augustine, Jerome, and Paulinus of Nola), VV 41/2 (2023) p. 339-351.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 6, ACW 36, 250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 16, 214; 24, 683.

<sup>11</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, Carm. 31, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 24, 941-942.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> This is not a new view of angels as guides of the souls of the dead. Paulinus here follows the common view of the Fathers of the first centuries, see Danielou, *The Angels and their Mission*, p. 95-105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 31, 40.

See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 33, 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 18, 140-145.

Felix's passage to God: "Then bands of angels, their columns representing the seven tiers of heaven, met him as he sped in heavenly triumph to the presence of the King, the person of the highest Father" or Baebianus' life and death: "See how the gate of sunny heaven lies open to the merits [...] the angel who flies before [him]" Paulinus, on the other hand, emphasised the role of the angel in describing the visions of his own death in a poem of consolation after the death of Celsus: "[...] then an angel may be kind to my coming, and bear me off to set me triumphant in the arms of the patriarchs, far from the hell that rages in yawning anarchy" Finally, in accordance with the Scripture, angels will play an important role on the Day of Judgment, when the presiding angel will give the sign of the Lord's coming from the lofty throne of the Father with the sound of the trumpet<sup>20</sup>, and when a separation will be made among all mankind, through whom the avenging angel (*ultor angelus*) will pass, leaving those who are marked with the sign of the cross<sup>21</sup>.

In discussing the nature of angels in the writings of Paulinus of Nola, it is worth noting a problem that preoccupies the Nolian's mind and which he addresses in a letter to Augustine<sup>22</sup> asking for clarification<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 18, 141-144, ACW 40, 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 33, 123-126, ACW 40, 344.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 31, 472-474, ACW 40, 324.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 31, 561-562.

See Paulinus Nolanus, Carm. 24, 141-142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> On the exchange of the letters between Augustine and Paulinus see J. Desmulliez, Les lacunes de la correspondance entre Saint Augustin et Paulin de Nole, "Revue des Études Anciennes" 53/3-4 (1951) p. 253-300; P.M. Courcelle, Correspondance entre saint Augustin et saint Paulin de Nole, "Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France" 1950-1951 (1954) p. 204-205; Y.-M. Duval, L'entrée en relations épistolaires d'Augustin d'Hippone et de Paulin de Nole, in: Epistulae antiquae: III, Actes du IIIe Colloque international "L'épistolaire antique et ses prolongements européens Université François-Rabelais", Tours, 25-27 septembre 2002, ed. L. Nadjo – E. Gavoilles, Louvain – Paris – Dudley 2004, p. 397-419; C. McCann, 'You know better than I do'. The dynamics of transformative knowledge in the relationship of Augustine of Hippo and Paulinus of Nola, "Studia Patristica" 43 (2006) p. 191-194 = 'Tú conoces mejor que yo': el dinamismo del conocimiento transformador, en la relación de Agustín con Paulino de Nola, "Augustinus. Revista trimestral" 52 (2007) p. 133-137.

Augustine's answer to Paulinus' questions in his *Ep.* 45 is *Ep.* 95 in the Augustinian epistolarium. However, Augustine does not give Paulinus an exhaustive and comprehensive answer. He points out that one can speak of angels as wholly spiritual entities in the same way that humans are said to be souls (in the collective sense), and does not resolve whether angels have a body, although he tends to do so in his answer. Regarding

When Paulinus speaks of angels as creatures who have a spiritual body, he reflects on the interpretation of the passage in 1 Corinthians 13:1 and states that "angels have speech peculiar to their nature or [...] to their race"<sup>24</sup>. He even states that "the angels [...] are said to have tongues with which they certainly sing praises and render thanks unceasingly to their Creator"<sup>25</sup>. Paulinus therefore asks Augustine: "Express your views about these immortal voices of heavenly creatures as of those who dwell above the heavens in the sight of the Most High; decide by what kind of tongues their voices give utterance"<sup>26</sup>. For his part, he says that this speech "is higher than human sensation and speech accordingly as the created angels and their station transcend mortal dwellers and their earthly abode"<sup>27</sup>; in addition, by analogy with the speech of God, he points out that "there can be utterance without a tongue being both the weak and the mighty member of the body. It is in fact possible, because this member has been given

voices and singing to the glory of God in the eschaton, Augustine suggests that the whole creation will be singing to God, not just souls but spiritual bodies as well. Cf. Augustinus, Ep. 95, 8. On the angelology of St. Augustine see K. Pelz, Die Engellehre des heiligen Augustinus, Münster 1912; B. Lohse, Zu Augustins Engellehre, ZKG 70 (1959) p. 278-291; J. Pépin, Influences paiennes sur l'angélologie et la démonologie de saint Augustin, w: Entretiens sur l'homme et le diable, ed. M. Milner, Paris - La Haye 1965, p. 51-74; O. Lechner, Zu Augustins Metaphysik der Engel, in: Studia patristica. Papers presented to the Fourth International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1963, v. 9: Classica. Philosophica et ethica. Theologica Augustiniana. Post-patristica, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1966, p. 422-450; J. Pépin, La doctrine platonicienne des anges et des démons. Influences sur l'angélologie et démonologie de saint Augustin, in: J. Pépin, Ex Platonicorum Persona. Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin, Amsterdam 1977, p. 27-38; H. Oleschko, Angelologia augustyńska, "Topos" 5-6 (1999) p. 39-52; H. Oleschko, Angelologia św. Augustyna: zagadnienia metafizyczne, w: Księga o aniołach, ed. H. Oleschko, Kraków 2002, p. 206-220; M. Stanula-Boroń, Zagadnienia etyczne w angelologii św. Augustyna, in: Księga o aniołach, ed. H. Oleschko, Kraków 2002, p. 221-231; E. Klein, Augustine's Theology of Angels, Cambridge 2018; C.C. Simut, Angels: Augustine and the Patristic Tradition - The Reality, Ontology, and Morality of Angels in the Church Fathers and Augustine, "Southern Baptist Journal of Theology" 25/2 (2021) p. 57-74; G.D. Wiebe, Fallen Angels in the Theology of St Augustine, Oxford 2021; D. Ho-Lun Wong, The Emergence and Implication of the Role of Angels in Augustine's Understanding of Creation: The Extension and Mirroring of Christ, "Religions" 14 (2023) p. 322.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 6, ACW 36, 250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

by God the duty of speech, that He has termed the words and utterance of angels created without bodies their 'tongues'". Discussing angelic tongues, Paulinus presents one possible interpretation of the Apostle's words: "[...] Paul may have used the phrase 'tongues of angels' in distinguishing between voices and ways of speaking, just as when discoursing on the diversity of charism he counts diverse kind of tongues amongst graces bestowed"<sup>29</sup>. Paulinus also suggests that this might be a tongue available only to those in heaven and not yet available to the people of the world, and they would speak it as immortals according to their state of grace in heaven, united with the choruses of Angels, Powers, Dominions and Thrones, when people will be clothed in spiritual bodies and speak in words that are not human but angelic and heavenly<sup>30</sup>.

It is clear from the above that Paulinus is part of this current of biblical exegesis in the early Church's teaching on angels, but at the same time he goes further, attempting to probe more deeply into the nature of these heavenly creatures.

## 2. Activities of angels

As can be seen from the above reflections on the nature of angels, their primary nature, defined by their very name – messengers – is their activity, which is revealed in being God's messengers to human beings. Paulinus of Nola recognises and understands this aspect of the nature of angels and often refers to biblical examples of their activity, but he does not stop there and shows how angels in his time act in carrying out their tasks. It is a most interesting perspective and awareness of the presence of these heavenly creatures in the life of humans.

In his writings, Paulinus many times recalls the mission and works of angels and their direct involvement in the lives of the people. It was through the hand of an angel that God restrained Abraham's right hand raised to strike a blow against Isaac<sup>31</sup>; it was the hand of an angel that assisted Habakkuk who was to provide food for the prophet Daniel<sup>32</sup>; it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 7, ACW 36, 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 45, 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 29, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 16, 187-189.

was through an angel that Elizabeth gave birth to her son<sup>33</sup>; and finally, it was an angel who announced to Mary the conceiving of the Saviour<sup>34</sup>, and it was the angels who on the night of the Nativity greeted with the shepherds the born Saviour and sang in heavenly joy where later "a mixed crowd of harlots and eunuchs lamented for Venus' lover", showing the destruction of Christ's birthplace by the pagans<sup>35</sup>. Such mission and tasks of angels described in the Bible find continuity in later centuries. For Paulinus, the action of angels towards his spiritual father and patron, St Felix, was of particular importance<sup>36</sup>. In describing his life, the Nolian referred directly to the miraculous interventions of angels in the New Testament, such as the release of St. Peter from prison (cf. Acts 12:7n). In the same way, St. Felix was freed from prison<sup>37</sup>. The care and actions of the angels, based on biblical stories, were also to be applied

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, Ep. 29, 7. Cf. A.V. Nazzaro, L'Annunzio dell'Angelo a Zaccaria (Lc 1, 5-25) nelle parafrasi di Giovenco (1, 1-51) e Paolino di Nola (carm. 6, 27-107), in: "Munera amicitiae". Studi di storia e cultura sulla Tarda Antichità offerti a Salvatore Pricoco, ed. R. Barcellona – T. Sardella, Soveria Mannelli 2003, p. 283-306; A.V. Nazzaro, La "Laus Sancti Johannis" di Paolino di Nola: tra parafrasi ed esegesi, "Impegno e Dialogo" 13 (2001) p. 343-357; A.V. Nazzaro, La nascita di Giovanni Battista (Lc 1,57-80) nelle riscritture metriche di Giovenco (1,105-132) e Paolino di Nola (C. 6,179-228), "Impegno e Dialogo" 15 (2006) p. 133-146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> See A.V. Nazzaro, *L'Annunzio dell'Angelo a Maria (Lc 1, 26-38) nelle riscritture metriche di Giovenco (1, 52-79) e Paolino di Nola (Carm. 6, 108-38)*, in: *La poesia tardo-antica e medievale. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Perugia, 15-16 novembre 2001*, ed. A.M. Taragna, Centro Internazionale di Studi sulla poesia greca e latina in età tardoantica e medievale. Quaderni 2, Alessandria 2004, p. 19-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 31, 3, ACW 36, 128.

<sup>36</sup> About St Felix in the works by Paulinus see A. Ruggiero, La luce della santità di Felice via all'amore di Cristo negli scritti di Paolino di Nola, in: Atti del Circolo culturale B. G. Duns Scoto di Roccarainola. Trentennale del Duns Scoto 1999. Venticinquennale degli Atti, Roccarainola 1999, p. 61-70; A. Basson, Felix, the ascetic hero in Paulinus of Nola's Carmen 15, in: Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition in Honour of W. J. Henderson, ed. F. Basson – W.J. Dominik, Frankfurt-am-Main – New York 2002, p. 133-149; D. Lefebvre-Bocage, Les rapports entre saint Félix et Paulin de Nole, in: Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne, Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne. Actes de la quatrième Petite Journée de Patristique, ed. P.-G. Delage, Royan 2012, p. 69-87; A. Jenik, Martyrium oder Askese? Felix und Maximus im 4. "Natalicium" (= "carm." 15) des Paulinus von Nola, "Philologus. Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption" 160/1 (2016) p. 84-132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 15, 238-257.

to Paulinus' dear ones, such as his visitor Nicetas of Remesiana<sup>38</sup>, for whom he expressed such a wish:

May Raphael be sent to fly near you; as once the angel attended Tobias to the Medes, so may he accompany Nicetas as far as the Dacians. May the Guide who once led the fleeing Jacob to safety from the presence of his arrogant brother, likewise guide Nicetas His servant, for he similarly is a fugitive. What the patriarch did once, Nicetas does continually, fleeing from the world towards the walls of high heaven. The ladder which Jacob saw the angels alternately ascending and descending Nicetas strives to mount as his life overtops the clouds<sup>39</sup>.

Of course, these are biblical topoi and images widely used by early Christian writers, but Paulinus, compared to his fellow theologians, refers remarkably often in his works to the care and action of angels in the lives of various people<sup>40</sup>.

There is, moreover, an extraordinary testimony in his writings which seems very interesting with regard to the role and presence of angels in the life of Paulinus' contemporaries. It is contained in Letter 49, addressed to Macarius<sup>41</sup>, a high imperial official and consul of Campania<sup>42</sup>. This letter concerns the property of a friend of Paulinus, a ship full of goods that had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See W. Kirsch, Paulinus von Nola und Nicetas von Remesiana: Zur Literaturauffassung zweier Coriste des 4 Jahrhunderts, in: Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium: Proceedings of the Byzantinogical Simposium in the 16th International Eirene Conference, ed. V. Vavřínek, Prague 1985, p. 189-193; A. Gattiglia, Paulin de Nole et Nicéta de Rémésiana: voyages et pélerinages de rang élevé, in: Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana (ACIAC), Bonn 22-28 Settembre 1991, v. 12, Città del Vaticano 1995, p. 805-814; J. Grzywaczewski, Związki Nicetasa z Paulinem z Noli, "e-Patrologos" 1/3 (2015) p. 14-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carm.* 17, 141-154, ACW 40, 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> On the guard angels in the early Christian thought see S. Longosz, *Opiekuńcza funkcja aniołów w nauce Ojców Kościoła (zarys problemu)*, in: *Księga o aniołach*, ed. H. Oleschko, Kraków 2002, p. 151-205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> See S. Mussfeldt, *Bleibende Fragen. Zu Adressat und Datierung von Epistel 49 des Paulinus von Nola*, "Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie" 135 (2007) p. 206-215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> See F. Foerster – R. Pascual, *El naufragio de Valgius. Estracto comentado de la epistola 49 de San Paulino de Nola. Con aportaciones de Olimpio Musso y Marcos Mayer*, Barcelona 1985; J. Rougé, *Periculum maris et transport de État: la lettre 49 de Paulin de Nole*, in: *Hestiasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerti a Salvatore Calderone*, ed. M. Mazza *et al.*, Studi Tardoantichi 2, Messina 1986, p. 119-136.

been wrecked in a storm on its sailing from Sardinia and had landed on the Campanian coast. Paulinus tells the story of the accident and the ship's journey. In the end, during this strange adventure, only one old man remained on board the ship, who was a helper under deck, in the bilge. And it is with this old man, Valgius, that God performs extraordinary things through angels, and he directly experiences the presence of angels in his life. For he was not a sailor, as an old man he was not of full vigour, he remained alone on board, and yet, with the help of God, through the action of angels, he managed to save himself and the ship. As Paulinus writes, recounting the whole incident to Macarius,

As soon as Valgius made the slightest effort, he saw the work performed by the hand of angels just as he was beginning his attempt. He had scarcely laid hands on a rope to pull it when the foresail was already billowing out on its beams, or the ship was under sail. When water poured through the holed timbers and tried to sink the ship, the use of a small scoop a couple of times emptied the water and made the ship dry, so that he had nothing to do, and he stood astonished that his work had been performed for him without any effort on his part<sup>43</sup>.

## Moreover, Paulinus points out that

Even the workers were not withdrawn from the ingenuous sight of that most innocent old man, for on numerous occasions he saw armed soldiers from the army of heaven on watch on the ship, and performing all the sailors' duties. Indeed, none but angels were suitable sailors for that ship, for its rudder was the Helmsman of the universe<sup>44</sup>.

Christ also changed the name of the old man to Victor, the name by which he would henceforth be called by men and angels<sup>45</sup>. The Lord placed the angels around Victor<sup>46</sup> to show, as Paulinus wrote, that

[...] the divine Saviour shows Himself to us by different proofs, and works on our behalf on land and sea. By the acts He performs in individuals, He tends

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 49, 3, ACW 36, 261.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 49, 3, ACW 36, 261.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 49, 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 49, 5.

the faith and salvation of many. Observe how remarkable and praiseworthy a work the Lord Jesus and His holy angels performed in one man<sup>47</sup>.

Paulinus emphasises that through such actions God saves the individual as well as many people. The awareness of such a presence of angels is very common in the writings of Paulinus. For example, those who give alms do so in the presence of angels and bring them joy<sup>48</sup>, and alms are "[...] immediately deposited in the bosom of rejoicing Lord by angels who intercepted it in flight" as merits<sup>49</sup>; angels accompany the couriers so that they would not dash their feet against a stone<sup>50</sup>; they dwell joyfully with the monks in hermitages<sup>51</sup>; angels are present among the faithful who gather in the churches built by the correspondents of Paulinus<sup>52</sup> and "in company with the holy angels, they are charmed by the unceasing praise, day and night, of Christ the Lord"<sup>53</sup>, and we ourselves are constantly fighting in the theatre of this world, in the sight of men and angels<sup>54</sup>.

Paulinus, despite his clichéd and often naïve statements, is thus a representative of what I would call a practical angelology, which can be defined by the statement in the title of this paper: Angels are among us!

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 49, 1, ACW 36, 258.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 13, 13.14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 13, 14, ACW 35, 130-131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 28, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 26, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 18, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 18, 5, ACW 35, 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> See Paulinus Nolanus, *Ep.* 24, 9; 40, 10.

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