

Medieval Saint Ploughmen and Pagan Slavic Mythology¹

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The author makes an attempt to interpret fragments of tales that were layered by folk tradition upon an official church interpretation of some saints in the Slavic environment from the perspective of new comparative mythology by Georges Dumézil and his school. Attention is mainly focused on the leitmotif of ploughing a certain space around by the saint. Similar leitmotifs can also be found in dynasty legends of Western Slavs, a ritual correlate of these tales has been preserved in several regions of Central and Eastern “Slavic” Europe almost till the present time in the form of ploughing around the village to protect against the plague and natural catastrophes. Looking for the common meaning of these tales and corresponding rituals inside of the system discovered by Dumézil and reconstructing a three-functional Indo-European ideology, researchers connected them mainly with the third function of fertility and production, out of the presumption that it was typical agrarian magic. The author proposes an alternative interpretation that reveals the possible position of these tales and rituals within the legal pole of the first function of religious sovereignty.

In this article we would like to present the fragments of tales which medieval folk tradition built up on the basis of the official church interpretations of saints of the Slavic world; we will interpret them from the perspective of Georges Dumézil and his school of new comparative mythology. The object of our interest is the motif of ploughing done by a saint, as well as the fragments of further tales which could possibly be related to this motif. In dynasty tales of the Western Slavs there were similar motifs interpreted in a similar way: Přemysl, a ploughman, a hospitable ploughman Piast, also Hungarian kings – ploughmen St. Stephen or Matej Korvín, who were given the same attributes by the folk tradition.² A ritual correlate of these tales has been preserved in many locations of central-East Europe almost until today in the form of ploughing the village around as a protection from the plague and life destruction.

Looking for a common meaning of these tales and rituals related to them inside a system of three-functional Indo-European ideology discovered and reconstructed by Dumézil, the researchers connected it mainly with the third function of fertility and production, taking the standpoint that it is a typical agrarian magic. We will propose an alternative interpretation which reveals a possible place for these tales and rituals within the legal sphere of the first function of religious sovereignty.

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² KOMOROVSKÝ, J.: *Kráľ Matej Korvín v ľudovej prozaickej slovesnosti*. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1957, p. 41–49.

Dumézil's research showed an important common feature of the majority of Indo-European religious systems, which is the division of gods into three groups related to "a specific society order and systematic concept of magic-and-religious existence, where every type of deity has a particular function and mythology related to it."³ This kind of three-part systematic reorganization of the whole magic and religious life was roughly accomplished before the division of proto-Indo-Europeans. The last, or rather the most-known outgrowth of this archaic ideology is a medieval doctrine about three kinds of people. According to the same code (the first function of religious supremacy, the second function of war, the third function of fertility and production) the epic heroes were distinguished. The aim of our interpretation attempt is to show that in folk legendary presentation some saints and mysterious dynasty founders were divided this way as well.

Other important, but less known discoveries by Dumézil are connected with the inner dualism of the first Indo-European function of religious supremacy. We believe that ritual ploughing as a motif, which Slavic oral tradition strikingly often added to the official church legends, can reveal its meaning only against the background of this dualism; hence it is not productive to interpret it within the third function of fertility and production, which has for the present dominated in studies based on Dumézil's discoveries.⁴

Indo-European religious dualism was based on the idea that "supremacy is dual, it has two faces, one of which is more cosmic, more mysterious and terrible, another is more human, closer connected to the law, and more religious ..."⁵ The inner dualism of the first function of religious supremacy has found its probably most pure, most archaic and best documented expression in the Indo-Iranian pantheon, where it is most vividly seen. Here, "theology puts at the first level of its three-functional hierarchy not a single god, but two closely-connected supreme gods, one of which is more cosmic, mysterious, fearful, and the other one, whose name means 'agreement', who is more turned to a human being, cares for law and is more benevolent."⁶ One of them is "a guileful, sinister, and restraining god" of distant lands, the other is "a benevolent protector of agreements."⁷ The first is called Varuna, the other is called Mitra.

³ ELIADE, M.: *Šamanizmus a nejstarší techniky extáze*. Praha : ARGO, 1997, p. 321. (Translated by M. G.)

⁴ For example, BANASKIEWICZ, J.: *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu. Studium porównawcze nad wszesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi*. Warszawa : Państwowe Wydawnictwo naukowe, 1986, p. 40–85. The author presented his argument in a chapter with a characteristic title *Trzeciofunkcyjny charakter Piastowskiej tradycji dynastycznej: król Oracz-Zywieciel i jego małżonka* (Three-functional Character of Piast dynasty tradition: King, the Ploughman and the Breadwinner, and His Wife). Dumézil himself assigns the figure of a hero from Russian epics Mikula Seljanin, the ploughman, to the third function. (DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýtus a epos I*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 2001, p. 660–664.) The same interpretation of dynasty legends of Western Slavs is given by Le Goff: "Many medieval dynasties had as a legendary ancestor a king, a farmer and food producer ... Among the Slavs, Přemysl, a forefather of the Czech Přemyslovcs (Přemyslovci), according to the chronicler Kosma, he was called up from the ploughing to be made a prince, as can be seen on the fresco of St. Katherine's cathedral in Znojmo dating back to the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., or Piast, a founder of the first Polish dynasty, called by Gallus Anonymus a ploughman, an arator, a peasant, an agricola ... (LE GOFF, J.: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 2005, p. 323). (Translated by M. G.) Similar ideas are expressed by Merhautová and Třeštík: "We can hardly doubt that originally Libuše and Přemysl were gods – in what way can they be put into the Indo-European and Slavic three-functional system? Despite expectations, they surely do not belong to the first juridical function – the function of a ruler; Přemysl's ploughing and the whole meaning of the "sacred wedding" points to the third function." (MERHAUTOVÁ, A – TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Románské umění v Čechách a na Moravě*. Praha : Odeon, 1983, p. 28). (Translated by M. G.)

⁵ DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýty a bohové Indoevropanů*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 1997, p. 19. (Translated by M. G.)

⁶ DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýty a bohové Indoevropanů*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 1997, p. 18. (Translated by M. G.)

⁷ PUHVEL, J.: *Srovnávací mythologie*. Praha : NLN, 1997. (Translated by M. G.)



Persian Mitra killing a bull, marble basrelief
(ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Митра. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1988, р. 155) (TOPOROV, V. N.: Mitra. In: Mify narodov mira 2.)

Varuna “includes all that is inspired, unpredictable, frenetic, quick, mysterious, terrible, dark, ordering, and totalitarian (iunior), etc.”. Mitra includes all that is “restrained by rules, exact, grand, slow, legal, friendly, clear, liberal, measuring according to the merits (senior), etc.”⁸ “From the Old Indian texts it becomes clear that Mitra is a god close to the society of people and originates from this world, while transcendental Varuna has his throne in another afterlife world. Mitra guards the day, while Varuna guards the night. Mitra watches over the agreements and makes the relations between people easier. Varuna, a dreadful wizard, rules with strong magic. Mitra is friendly to a man, while unpredictable and quick-tempered Varuna is violent, irritating and fearful. Mitra is connected to peace, prosperity up till the limits of pastoral idyll. Varuna has vivid military, wild, even savage character; it is a god of a conquering war.”⁹

According to Toporov, a researcher of Indo-European culture, the differences between Mitra and Varuna create a clear and certain system of contradictions: Mitra is connected with well-being, while Varuna is connected with the contrary; Mitra is connected with the right side, Varuna is connected with the left. Mitra is close (connected with “internal”), Varuna is distant, external, Mitra is connected with the East, the sun, the day, summer, and fire. Varuna is connected with the West, the Moon, the night, winter, and water. Mitra is connected to the cosmos, Varuna is connected with chaos, Mitra is connected with the collective, Varuna is connected with the individual, Mitra is connected with the social, Varuna is connected with the natural, Mitra is connected with law, Varuna is connected with magic. That is the reason for these figures to be the basic qualifiers in a model of the world of Vedic Hindus.¹⁰

The division of competence in religious matters into magic (Varuna) and law (Mitra), which has its expression also in space division into two opposite spheres, is not only a Hindu issue. Functionally identical pairs of contradictions, both antagonistic and complementary, have been disclosed by Dumézil and his followers in religious traditions of other

⁸ CURTIUS, E. R.: *Evropská literatura a latinský středověk*. Praha : Triáda, 1998, p. 191. (Translated by M. G.)

⁹ DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýtus a epos I. Trojfunkční ideologie v eposech indoevropských národů*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 2001, p. 626. (Translated by M. G.)

¹⁰ ТОПОРОВ В. Н.: Митра. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, р. 157–158. (TOPOROV, V. N.: Mitra. In: *Mify narodov mira 2. Enciklopedija v dvuch tomach.*)

Indo-Europeans, but also in their heroic epics, where many 'retired' myths have often been turned to, mainly after being rejected by the new religious practice.¹¹

Dumézil understands this double religious function as a special Indo-European pair theologeme, which within the system of three functions is responsible for the first function of religious supremacy, which divided itself two parts of the all-mighty world order. We can also put it like this: it divided the world into two parts – human and non-human. In this connection what becomes interesting is an attribute of Iranian Mitra as a “border delineator”¹² as well as “a lord of a wide pastureland”.¹³ The “pastureland”, most likely appears here as a synecdoche, standing for “a part out of entity”, meaning the entity of the human world, definitely presenting its border or a periphery organ. Iranian Mitra is at the same time connected to the fire altar as a heart and sacred centre of a state.

In one part of the space structured in this way obligatory sacred codes are placed, the codes which run the harmony of the social and inner world, the world of peace, oriented on prosperity and fertility and peace by the law of an organized society. Another part of basically different, but also sacred codes presupposes actions outside the inner world, connecting itself to war, conquering or hunting.

Now let us pay more attention to the aspect of space within the religious sovereignty of Old Indo-Europeans, for we believe, a large part of this archaic concept of space has been preserved exactly in non-official secular interpretations of some medieval saints-ploughmen. Time and space (chronotop) of the legendary tales, which will be in the focus of our attention, is not a homogeneous chronotop like the Christian (biblical) one, which has a single creator and a ruler. It is a chronotop cut into two zones, strictly separated, for example, by a ploughed furrow, the dissimilar order of which is guaranteed by two absolutely different sovereignties. For it a division into a centre and a periphery is not essential (this kind of division corresponds to a biblical chronotop). What is essential here is a more radical and archaic division into a domestic and cultivated part of reality under the direct control of man and into a zone connected with wild and free nature which, according to Budil “inspired most various military, hunting and initiative brotherhoods and presented their most characteristic element.”¹⁴

These two spheres should be defined in mythological narration, differentiated and separated in a particular territory, which can best be done by way of ritual demarcation

¹¹ In the line of three-functional research among Slavs the self-contained hypotheses which would regard the same difference within the first function of religious sovereignty are not known to us. Despite this, we suppose that contradiction presents a corner stone of a three-functional system; since we can with reason assume its existence among Slavs, we also have to consider that the first function preserved the two dimensions mentioned. Standing on the position that until we can assume in epics (hero Volch, Volha in Russian tales (bylina)) and in pantheon (most likely Veles) Varuna, magic half of religious sovereignty, the system presupposes also the presence of its complete counterpart “x”, which existence is highly probable and perhaps necessary for the system's functioning. The existence of such a nice pagan god, who gave law and peace, embodying the benevolent spirit (and hence more appropriate for almost complete Christianization, than any other pagan god) has almost been stated by Třeštík in *Mír a dobrý rok. Česká státní ideologie mezi křesťanstvím a pohanstvím* (In: *Folia Historica Bohemica* 12, Praha, 1988, p. 23–45). The key aspects of this function have been captured by a medieval legend presentation of St. Václav.

¹² ТОПОРОВ В.Н. Митра. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p. 157–158. (TOPOROV, V. N.: Mitra. In: *Mify narodov mira 2. Encyklopedija v dvuch tomach.*)

¹³ *Oběti ohňům. Výběr z památek staroiránské a středoiránské literatury*. Selected and translated by Otakar Klíma. Praha : Odeon, 1985, p. 98–114.

¹⁴ BUDIL, I. T.: *Za obzor Západu*. Praha : Triton, 2001, p. 13. (Translated by M. G.)

of the borders. Hence, one of the arbitrary, but extremely conceptual methods of ploughing around one's residence (sometimes followed by fencing and fortifying) is proposed; occasionally this concept is taken wider as a whole human world including seasonally, for example pastures for cattle to feed on (the borders of the human world are moving, throbbing in vegetation rhythm, shrinking to the size of a house in winter, and expanding to the size of the pastures as its periphery organ in spring).

The polarity of such basically different spheres of space was studied by Vernant, a researcher of Hellenic culture, in another, Greek mythological tradition, where he shows a vivid dualism in an archaic depiction of space. The space demands a centre, a stable point with an exclusive position, starting point enabling orientation – in the Greek mythology this function is taken by a home fireplace as a stable centre and its personification – a goddess Hestia – embodying this aspect of archaic space organization. Around the fire place as a sacred centre a human world surrounds, demanding a border which would vividly separate it from a chaotic wilderness. At the border of the human world (for example, at the door, at the gate) as well as outside there exists a domain of Hermes, a god of shepherds (close to him is a Slavic “god of cattle” called Veles) and a counterpart of Hestia (her neighbour, as Vernant defined it).¹⁵ Similar dichotomies can be observed in many traditions, but the Indo-European one includes an important original element, connecting a ritual of ploughing a certain space around and fixing its centre by setting a sacred fire.

In 1941 Dumézil drew attention to a “demonstrably archaic Vedic ritual (*Śatapatha-brāhmana*, VII, 2, 2, 12), according to which the shape of space where a sacred fire should have been lit, was ploughed around ... The ploughing of each furrow is accompanied by addressing the ‘Cow of Plenty’ to soothe the desires of all the living ...” The fact that it was not a typical agricultural ritual, but something more important, is proved by a simultaneous addressing of the deities of all the three functions, first of all religious sovereignties: “Fill up (as if with milk) their desires, the Cow of Plenty, the desires of Mitra-Varuna, Indra, both Ashvins ... (desires) of animals and plants.”¹⁶ We believe it was no magic agricultural ritual related to the third function at all, but the first functional liturgical action of establishing cosmos out of chaos by its division into two zones followed by their entrustment to two deities – Mitra and Varuna. One of the ritual components is the fixation of the world centre, which is a sacred fire. A similar function has “a common fire of a village” (Hestia, Vesta) in Greek and Roman religious tradition, where it functions as a state centre and a symbol of a social union.¹⁷ Among the Scythians, the neighbours of Fore-Slavs, a similar function of a royal fireplace was documented by Herodotos.¹⁸ In an oral tradition of the Slavs (and not only Slavs) a house fireplace functions as a sacred centre of the house.¹⁹

¹⁵ VERNANT, J. P.: *Hestia a Hermés. Studie k duchovnímu světu Řeků*. Praha : OIKÚMENĚ, 2004.

¹⁶ DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýtus a epos I. Trojfunkční ideologie v eposech indoevropských národů*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 2001, p. 53.

¹⁷ VERNANT, J. P.: *Hestia a Hermés. Studie k duchovnímu světu Řeků*. Praha : OIKÚMENĚ, 2004, p. 41.

¹⁸ “When a king of Scythians falls ill, he sends for three most famous prophets who prophesy to him in the following way. Usually, they state that this or that one took a false oath on the royal fireplace, giving a name of a citizen who comes to their mind. According to Scythian habits, one takes an oath on a royal fireplace when promising a most important oath.” (HERODOTOS: *Dejiny*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1985, p. 252). (Translated by M. G.)

¹⁹ ПЛОТНИКОВА, А. А.: Очар. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 351–353. (PLOTNIKOVA, A. A.: Očág. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. М. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija. Enciklopedičeskij slovar.*)



Roman box from Čierne Kľačany depicting the foundation of Rome by a ploughman (DVOŘÁK, P.: *Stopy dávnej minulosti 3, Zrod národa. Budmerice : Rak, 2004, p. 143*).

The second component of the ritual, which is ploughing a certain space around, is less universally spread; it gives an undefined space a clear structure by shaping the world out of unbeing,²⁰ we believe it happens by dividing space into two zones: cultural human (season usage of the pastureland is its periphery organ) and a wild zone, tied to foreigners, barbarians, hermits and wild animals. Ploughing around was preserved among the Slavs until the nineteenth century²¹ as a magic rite to separate and protect a certain cultural space (usually villages) and its people from plague, epidemics and life destruction. The furrow functioned as a magic equivalent of a fortification. Ploughing around meant that a furrow was ploughed around a village symbolizing a border of no crossing.²² In such a way, with the help of a liturgical act of a semiotic nature the space was divided into one's own and alien.²³ Both components of the ritual – setting a fire and ploughing around the estate – could function as independent, though we suppose that a ritual setting of an “alive fire” and fulfilling a sacred ploughing, richly documented in connection with the Slavs, Baltic nations, and other Indo-Europeans, has its roots in a common mythological heritage. A valuable documented relic of such heritage, most likely, illustrates a ritual preserved in Bulgaria, where “the setting of a holy fire was even connected with a ploughing around the village”²⁴ as Zíbrt has described it in more details.²⁵

²⁰ TRĚŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 118.

²¹ Many examples are shown by ELIADE, M.: *Od Zalmoxida k Čingischánovi*. Praha : Argo, 1997, p. 169–172.

²² АГАПКИНА, Т.А.: Опахивание. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 345. (АГАПКИНА, Т. А.: Opáchivánie. In: ТОЛСТАЈА, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija. Enciklopedičeskij slovar.*)

²³ A detailed semiotic analysis of this binary opposition is given within the reconstructed fore-Slavic world model by ИВАНОВ, В.В. – ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: *Славянские языковые моделирующие семиотические системы*. Москва : Издательство Наука, 1965, p. 156–165. (IVANOV, V. V. – TOPOROV, V. N.: *Slavjanskije jazykovye modelirujuščie semiotičeskie sistemy*.)

²⁴ TRĚŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 143.

²⁵ “In Bulgaria in the time of cattle plague two oxen are harnessed into two ploughs and the furrow is ploughed around the village so that the oxen are moving towards each other. In the place they meet, they are killed and dug down. On this place the fire (“div oheň”) is set by means of rubbing two wooden pieces against each other. With this fire a log above fixed on two wooden columns is burnt. The construction like the gallows stands on the place of the animal burial. Under the wooden columns two brothers – the eldest and the youngest in the family – stand and hold the knives with which the oxen were killed. Around them people lead cattle for the brothers to pat each animal with the knife on the back. In another region in Bulgaria the fire is set by two left-handed men when the cattle plague begins. People lead the cattle through this fire.” (ZÍBRT, Č.: *Seznam pověr a zvyklostí pohanských z VIII. věku*. In: *Rozpravy ČAVU*, I, vol. 3, no. 2, Prague, 1894, p. 93–94). (Translated by M. G.)



The Plough which could have been used in ritual ploughing around the town of Zvolen. (BALAŠA, G.: *Mestské múzeum vo Zvolene. In: Krásy Slovenska (tematické číslo 700-ročný Zvolen)*, vol. 22, 1943–44, no. 9, p. 193–196).

An interesting epic piece which serves as a very consistent mythological explanation of the ritual meaning is preserved in a folk tradition of the Eastern Slavs in etiological stories about the origin of the so-called Dragons' banks (old fortified lines in the Middle Dniپر – *Podniprovyje*) or rivers – the bed of the Dniپر. (Here we would like to make a digression saying that a similar epic piece is preserved not only among the Eastern Slavs; an example of it can be found close enough. It is an old legend from Zvolen, a fragment of which was mentioned by Terézia Vansová in her novel *A Curse (Kliatba)*: under the gate of Zvolen fortification a huge plough is dug down, a plough with which the giants ploughed out a bed of the river Hron.²⁶ Similar etiological legends about the origin of famous extremely large medieval banks in Bína near the Hron, where “the devil ploughed by a women”²⁷ or a legend written down by Ján Botto under the title *A Myth of Turiec (Báj Turca)*,²⁸ which tells how Turiec became habitual only after an old lake, which was covering Turiec, was let out by the “priest Turan” with the help of a plough harnessed with “a hundred giants.”)

In Ukrainian folklore there is a more detailed story about God, who sent down to the earth a dragon (Zmij) who demanded human sacrifices. When it came to the tsar, the latter escaped from the dragon saying a prayer and hiding in a smith forge, where the saints Boris and Gleb had been forging the first plough for people (in these legends a mythological ploughman is at the same time a smith who forged the first plough). The saints caught the dragon by its tongue with the heated pliers, harnessed it and ploughed a furrow by it – the furrow since that time has been called Dragons' banks;²⁹ they did not kill it then, rather tamed it. Another variant of this entry was adjusted to the official cult of another pair of saints, which is analyzed in detail and with numerous references to secondary sources by Třeštík in his monograph *Myths of the Czech Tribe (Mýty kmene*

²⁶ Mgr. Zora Myslivcová who works in the State Gallery in Banská Bystrica drew our attention to an interesting detail in connection with this story. In the fund collection of the Museum of Forestry and Wood in Zvolen there is a quite mysterious Zvolen plough, the function of which Gejza Balaša, unfortunately, not completely, commented the following way: “A plough by which the local town moats were ploughed.” (BALAŠA, G.: *Mestské múzeum vo Zvolene. In: Krásy Slovenska*, vol. 22, 1943–44, no. 9, p. 193–196). As far as we learnt in the museum, there is no evidence about the plough usage, hence the ritual function cannot be extracted from it; it could mean that the relicts of ritual ploughing have been preserved recently in Zvolen. The plough is atypical enough for doing moats, they could be moats around the town fortification. It is just a hypothesis, which for the time being can be neither supported, nor completely rejected.

²⁷ DVOŘÁK, P.: *Stopy dávnej minulosti 3, Zrod národa*. Budmerice : Rak, 2004 , p. 264.

²⁸ БОТТО, J.: *Сúborné dielo*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1955, p. 302–306.

²⁹ ПЕТРУХИН, В.: Пахарь, ора́тай. In: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 357–358. (PETRUCHIN, V. J. Páchar, orátaj. In: TOLSTAJA, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija. Encyklopedičeskij slovar.*)

Čechů).³⁰ He draws attention to a group of Ukrainian and Byelorussian legends mostly from the Middle Dniپر region, which tells about the ploughing of the primary furrow around the world. The legends tell how the “holy smiths” Kuzma and Damian (Kosmas and Damián) released people from the pressure of a horrible dragon (Zmij) by flattery, harnessing it into an enormous plough and ploughing a huge furrow, which can be seen even today as Dragons’ banks. This folk tradition turns the saints Kuzma and Damian into smiths and ploughmen without any direct basis in their own legendary tradition: “The reason is simple: the similarity between the words ‘Kuzma’ and ‘kuznja’ – (in Ukrainian) a smith forges.”³¹ Within the tradition Kuzma and Damian often appear as a single figure – Kuzmodemjan.

In Bulgarian apocrypha *How Christ Ploughed and How King Prov Called Christ His Brother* (*Kak Christosъ plugomъ oral a Kak Provъ carъ Christa bratomъ zvalъ*), the full text of which was published in a study by Mazon, a French Slavist,³² the country is ploughed around even by Christ himself. Beside the character of Christ in the text there is also an interesting pair of characters: a blind king Selevkij (*Selěvkyi*) and his son Prov (*Provъ*). We suppose that Christ’s ploughing in the apocrypha means planning out the space, defining its double nature and demarcation of the human world borders. A motif of a ploughing Christ as a pagan relic can suggest that in the text there could have been hidden other relics, probably even an entire transformed myth. We will try to show some interpretation possibilities of this puzzling text, full of pagan symbolism, coming out from our hypothesis about the first-function character of the ritual ploughing (we do not want to conceal that the translation of the text was problematic for us, and also the context of its composition is not completely known;³³ that is why we propose risky and shaky hypotheses, which should be judged further by more qualified Slavists).

According to the plot, Christ will be in direct contact only with one of the characters – tsar Prov, who was looking for a remedy for his blind father Selevkij. A ploughing Christ would pick him up, throw him over the furrow and give him a magic fish as a remedy for his father’s blindness. Selevkij and his wife, thanks to this fish, would regain their health and would convert, though they would not see Christ himself for only their son was allowed to see him. Tsar Prov, close to Christ (calls him ‘brother’) and to people (takes taxes for his remote father who, being disqualified in the human world because of his blindness, leaves this work to be done by his son) has an eloquent name, most likely pointing to the performance of law, hence to a kind legal part of the religious sovereignty function. An analogous name has another deity from another part of the medieval Slavic world: a god of Polabe Obodrits Prov, who belonged to the first and main gods of Oldenburg country, of which informs the Slavic Chronicle (*Chronica Slavorum*) of a priest Helmond of Bosau

³⁰ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003.

³¹ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 121. (Translated by M. G.)

³² MAZON, A.: *Mikula, le prodieux laboureur*. In: *Revue des Études Slaves* XI. 1931, p. 149–170.

³³ In old lists of forbidden books the story about Christ ploughing is assigned to a Bulgarian bogomil pope Jeremiah (Jeremiáš). Legends and songs on this topic are frequent in Russia and in Eastern Slavic countries. The connection between the Bogomil sect and pre-Christian religions in Bulgaria were analyzed by HAVIERNÍK, P.: *K možným vztahom bogomilstva a predkrestanských náboženstiev v prvom bulharskom cárstve*. In: *Pohanstvo a krestanstvo*. Ed. R. Kožíak a J. Nemeš. Bratislava : Chronos, 2004, p. 139–146.



Christ crucified slaying the Dragon, first half of the 13th century, Germany (KOUTSKÝ, K.: *Draci středověkého světa*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 2005, p. 97).

(approximately 1108 – 1177).³⁴ In another study³⁵ we have already tried to define the place of this Polabian deity within the assumed three-function system; its “individual centre” was, most likely, “Mitrian”, a juridical part of religious sovereignty.

In the case of tsar Selevkij we, most likely, have a “talking” name, but talking a more complicated language using cryptic techniques, particularly anagrams, words which are first put into letters and then fixed in writing, coded and pushed into some other words. Anagrams are also used often enough in pseudonym creations (the so-called *anagranonym*, a common kind of it are *anonyms* – turned names, understood only by the initiated).³⁶ Let

³⁴ ГЕЛЬМОЛЬД: Славянская хроника. Москва : Издательство Наука СССР, 1963. (GELMOLD: *Slavjanskaja chronika*.)

³⁵ GOLEMA, M.: *Stredoveká literatúra a indoeurópske mytologické dedičstvo*. Banská Bystrica : Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2006.

³⁶ These kinds of cryptic techniques are richly documented in many mythological traditions. The names of deities would ‘break into pieces’ and would be put in different parts of the text, hidden in other words. After this operation only a poet or an experienced listener may synthesize a name of a deity again by means of backward combination of its parts from anagrams. The cases of *telescoping*, anatomization or other means of hiding deities’ names are frequent. For example, an old Indo-European myth about a god Thunder Thrower (Hrombijca) who defeats his enemy by means of cutting him into pieces and throwing them around the world, is reinforced in texts by cutting the enemy’s name into pieces and hiding it inside other words. (ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Имена. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p.508–510.) (ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Имена. In: *Mify narodov mira 2*.)

us now ask the question of who could be hidden under the “pseudonym” Selevkiy (Mazon directs attention towards the fact that it was not a historical figure, for the derivation from the Seleukovecs is hardly possible). If we read backwards the first five letters of the name Selevkiy, we will get *teonym* Veles, which may be quite accidental, but is not necessarily due to chance. To present another mythological name – an *anonym* – in a similar way was the aim of Toporov, a Russian scholar, when interpreting a name of “Solovej-Razbojnik” from Russian bylina, an antagonist of Ilija Muromec, who defeated enemies with a horrible whistle, a relative of the Dragon, Falcon with horns (Solovej) in the Byelorussian epic. Ilija strikes him in the right eye, partially blinding him, and cuts him into pieces. Toporov comments on the name “*Solověj*”, which, according to him, is connected, if not genetically, then anagrammatically, by the intentional sound similarity accompanying the meaning similarity, with the name of god Volos (Veles), an antagonist of the Thunder Thrower (Hromobijca);³⁷ it is enough to take the first five letters of the name Solověj and read them backwards.

It seems to us that *Solověj* and *Selevkiy* are the anonyms of the same Slavic pagan deity which appeared in the result of cryptic technique usage in the process of transformation of the two most important myths. The first myth has already been thoroughly reconstructed as a version of a basic Indo-European myth about the fight of Thunder Thrower (Hromobijca) with his enemy. In Slavic mythology it is about the fight of Perun and Veles.³⁸ It has been stated that within the Slavic pantheon it tells about the pair with the oldest (Indo-European) roots³⁹ and the strongest resistant ability against the changes of religious reality. Due to cryptic and transformation techniques, this pair reappeared after the decay of the pagan pantheon in Russian bylinas, surviving the beginning of Christianity as a pair of heroes with a “new” epic identity. Perun was transmuted into a figure of Ilija Muromets (whose name refers to St. Elias, associated with a storm) while a supreme magic god (Veles?) was transmuted into a hero Volch or Volg,⁴⁰ the wizard, turning into animals, but also into a demonic antihero *Solověj – Razbójnik*.

In another myth about a division of the world between two sovereigns by means of ploughing a border furrow, which probably has its roots also in the Indo-European tradition, there appears a supreme magic god with a new, already human identity and a new name – a blind tsar Selevkiy; by his side there stands another supreme god of law – “Christ’s brother” – tsar Prov, transmuted by epics and closer to people. Both figures are complementary, separated only by a furrow over which Christ, the ploughman, threw the

³⁷ ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Соловей-Разбойник. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p. 460. ИВАНОВ, В. В. – ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: К проблеме достоверности поздних вторичных источников в связи с исследованиями в области мифологии (Данные о Велесе в традициях северной Руси и вопросы критики письменных текстов). In: Труды по знаковым системам, Выпуск 6, Тарту, 1973, p. 46–82. (ТОПОРОВ, В. В.: *Solověj-Razbójnik*. In: *Mify narodov mira 2*; IVANOV, V. V. – TOPOROV, V. N.: K probleme dostovernosti pozdnych vtoričnyh istočnikov v svjazi s issledovanijami v oblasti mifologii (Dannye o Velese v tradicijach severnoj Rusi i voprosy kritiky pismennyh tekstov). In: *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*, v. 6, Tartu, 1973, p.46–82.

³⁸ ИВАНОВ, В.В. – ТОПОРОВ, В.Н.: Исследования в области славянских древностей. Лексические и фразеологические вопросы реконструкции текстов. Москва, 1974. (IVANOV, V. V. – TOPOROV, V. N. *Issledovanija v oblasti slavjanskich drevnostej. Leksičeskije i frazeologičeskije voprosy rekonstrukcii tekstov.*)

³⁹ JAKOBSON, R.: *The slavic god Veles and his Indo-European cognates*. In: Studi lingvistici in onore di Vittore Pisani, Torino, 1969, p. 579–599.

⁴⁰ PUHVEL, J.: *Srovnávací mythologie*. Praha : NLN, 1997, p. 279; also DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýtus a epos I. Trojfunkční ideologie v eposech indoevropských národů*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 2001, p. 660–664.

tsar onto his side (as if “converting” him). After that, the tsar brought his father magic fish, its bile would return to Selevkiy his eyesight, its viscera, which had the might to drive out the devils from the human souls, would be consumed by all, because the old tsar’ wife was also possessed as well as the son (*Prov?*) was not healthy. The old tsar Selevkiy converts and orders all people in his house and kingdom to believe in Christ (but to see Christ is not allowed to him for only *Prov*, Christ’s brother, had been thrown over the furrow of the guarded human world). A kind of “conversion” was probably done not only to a person, but also to the name of the old tsar (Toporov points out⁴¹ that the personal name usage in the text could be identical to what is done to the bearer of this name, for example, when Thunder Thrower (*Hromobijca*) cuts his enemy to pieces, the same is done to the name of his enemy in the text: it is also cut into pieces, preserving itself in other words). It is possible hence, that the original name of Veles together with his bearer became an anonym, turning from *Veles* to *Selev-kiy*. The author of apocrypha could have tried on his own synthesis of old myths and gospels, similar strategies were not out of practice in the times of Christianization.⁴² In apocrypha *Prov* makes Christ his brother, and himself a son of Selevkiy; it is indeed a refined synthesis of two different legends, pleasant to the ear of those listeners who are not willing to reject the old religious practice, telling a model story of Christianization (pagan gods are transformed into rulers, due to magic fish their souls are cleansed and they accept Christianity, finally even ordering people to do it). Similar to St. Elias, the functional heir of pagan Perun (in epics Elias’ name sibling Ilija Muromets, the embodiment of the second Indo-European war function), who had to take up periodical cutting of Veles (*Solověj*) at the time of a storm in the first myth; in the second myth the not less important binding and harnessing of Veles (“the god of cattle” characteristically substituted by oxen) into a plough with a further ploughing is taken on by Christ, “a brother” of a young tsar (together with him they present juridical part of the first function of religious sovereignty; that makes them brothers). Both myths can be interpreted in a coherent and meaningful way as a certain application of the three-functional ideology.

In connection with the folk legend about St. Kuzma and Damian, *Třeštík* points out an important difference between killing dragons (or other non-human monsters) and their taming, binding, harnessing, which, as we believe, has its origin in another archaic myth: “While all the heroes who fight with a dragon always kill it, Kuzma and Damian only bind him and then harness,”⁴³ we are adding that afterwards they divide the world into two parts with the help of it. It is not productive enough to connect this type of heroes – the tamers – to the second function of war power, for its “individual centre” was most likely (as for Christ, the ploughman, in the apocrypha) “mitrian”, a juridical part of religious sovereignty.

Another similar piece, being considered a Slavic cosmogonic myth in changed clothes (“creolized” if we use a *true*, though maybe a somewhat politically incorrect term of Indoeuropeists Toporov and Ivanov), is known from ethnographic sources from the

⁴¹ ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Имена. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p.508–510. (ТОПОРОВ, V. N.: Imená. In: *Mify narodov mira*.)

⁴² KOŽIAK, R. – NEMEŠ, J.: Pro praefatione alebo niekoľko poznámok k výskumu cirkevných dejín. In: *Pohanstvo a kresťanstvo*. Ed. R. Kožiak a J. Nemeš. Bratislava : Chronos, 2004, p. 9–13.; SLIVKA, M.: K náboženskému synkretizmu v strednej Európe. In: *Pohanstvo a kresťanstvo*. Ed. R. Kožiak a J. Nemeš. Bratislava : Chronos, 2004, p. 147–162; KOŽIAK, R.: Írski misionári a počiatky kresťanstva u Slovanov v stredovýchodnej Európe. In: *Pohanstvo a kresťanstvo*. Ed. R. Kožiak a J. Nemeš. Bratislava : Chronos, 2004, p. 103–124.

⁴³ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů..* Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 123. (Translated by M. G.)

Balkans and the Eastern Slavs' territory. According to it, the world is made of two kinds of being – God and Devil. A man Adam was created and taught to plough by God. Both creators afterwards make a deal; here, we suppose, it is necessary to interpret it not as an expression of weakness of the benevolent powers guarding the human world (as it was common to interpret among Christian missionaries), but as their enormous cosmogonic success: with the division of the world, a ritual ploughing which is omitted or hardly marked here, which would have been done by both powers, could have made this deal visibly on the ground. Other versions tell about binding the Devil by a chain (the motif adjusts also a biblical piece about Archangel Michael), the Devil tries to set himself free, but every year with the first thunder on the day of St. George (Juraj), he is again enchained.⁴⁴

The Egyptian mythological fund proposes a remarkable analogy which could clear up the myth mentioned above. In connection with it Assmann points out special symbols of duality formed by means of narration: both brothers Hor and Sutech substitute more than just a geographical division into Higher and Lower Egypt. “Hor embodies civilization; Sutech embodies the wilderness, Hor order, Sutech disorder. The entity can be installed only by reconciliation of both opposed principles and the reconciliation is possible only if one subdue the other one. **Law, culture and order must fight and win, they cannot be established spontaneously. They cannot be established in a way that they absolutely demolish all the chaos, disorder, wilderness and violence, but they can bound it.** The myth then does not give a foundation for certain permanent order, but for the unfinished project which is the binding of chaos and establishment of the order ... **This myth** is not told only for a moral or an entertainment. It functions both ways. **On the one hand, it plans out the world, which is divided onto two parts and can be kept in action only by uniting the two parts into one higher entity, thanks to which the order will keep the advantage over chaos, culture over wilderness, law over violence.** (The bold type – M. G.) At the same time the myth mobilizes energy needed for the installation of entity and continuation of the world movement.”⁴⁵

In ancient Old Slavic versions of the myth about world division a different figure than that of a dragon slayer can be traced. That is a figure of a dragon “tamer”, the one who would measure his strength with it, would tame it or harness it, make it agree to the world division, with the further confirmation of both sides, for example by a common ploughing around as if establishing mutual borders. Most likely, it was a mythological being (or beings, which divided for themselves the aspects of this function) with a high position in the pantheon, whose competence makes a logical and consistent entity only then, when experimentally put into a concept frame of the three-functional ideology, to the frame of a juridical part of religious sovereignty in particular. This dragon tamer and ploughman was not a protector/patron of the warriors, but the keeper of the sacred, sovereign in the world of people, a professional to make agreements, who left sovereignty behind the furrow to his agreed partner of demonic, non-human, and zoomorphic (dragon, bull, wolf) character in an agreed way. He guaranteed and embodied a kind, legal and benevolent aspect of the function of religious sovereignty. Similarly as Mitra from Irani Avesta, the direct descendant of a Vedic Mitra and a bearer of his numerous functional competences (beside being a source of the light and fire, having an interesting attribute “*karšō.rāzah*”, which in Russian means “*выпрямитель*

⁴⁴ TŘEŠTÍK, D. *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p.125.

⁴⁵ ASSMANN, J.: *Kultura a paměť*. Praha : Prostor, 2001, p. 148. (Translated by M. G.)

линий (границы)”,⁴⁶ what we would translate as “a delineator of borders”) could have been “the lord of the wide pastureland,”⁴⁷ that is, peripheries of the human world used by seasons, presenting its problematic and discussible border zone (or synecdoche as well, that is an indirect name of a whole human world expressed by naming its most important part).

Pierre Toubert’s expression corresponds to this kind of border zone – the pastureland – adequately: “The border has a linear character only in an abstract meaning, in reality it is a zone. Its static is only apparent. It is always a result of movement and within the space it only materializes the state of fragile harmony... The border is never a fortification, simple wall; it is always an alive membrane or a periphery organ... It may seem that the border produces often enough special types, for example, ‘a warrior – a peasant’. This way or the other, it creates a style of life, based on violence and disbelief in norms and dominating social mechanisms dominating in the central parts. The border world then is a world of the so called out law.”⁴⁸

Persian Mitra, the lord of the wide pastureland and the establisher of such “fragile” borders, simultaneously annually was catching (it means chaining) and killing an enormous bull; according to Eliade, it was a constituent part of an archaic, already Indo-European myth, the ritual form of which was a basic element at the celebrations of the New Year, so the episode had a cosmogonic meaning.⁴⁹

In a further presentation we will focus on St. George, the warrior and the martyr, with whose name Slavic folklore tradition connected the relicts of interesting pagan rites and a rich mythological topoj,⁵⁰ which is not rooted in the official church tradition. In Slavic folklore traditions there are two images of St. George. One of them is close to an official church cult of a dragon slayer and a Christian warrior, pointing rather to a possible connection to the second military Indo-European function; the other one connected him with the raising of cattle (the protector of the cattle) and farming, apparently with the third function of fertility and production. Among Eastern and Southern Slavs this image is connected with the beginning of spring, with the first pasturing of the cattle. In Croatian songs on the day of his holiday the green St. George comes on a green horse; Slovenes on that day open the arable land with a wooden key; Bulgarians and Serbs walk around the fields ritually with an aim to protect;⁵¹ we would add here that it is possible to interpret this action also saying that this is a possible, arbitrary means to explain and anew set the borders of the human and non-human worlds. But the most interesting aspect to us is a different original element added to the official cult among the Slavs and Baltic peoples, according to which St. George is defined as “a wolf shepherd”. Still in the 19th century in cer-

⁴⁶ ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Митра. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p. 155. (ТОПОРОВ, V. N.: Mitra. In: *Mify narodov Mira*.)

⁴⁷ This constant attribute is repeatedly added to the name of Mitra in the hymnic poem of Avesta (Jašt 10) Ku roctě Mithrově. In: *Oběti ohňům. Výběr z památek staroiránské a středoiránské literatury*. Edited and translated by Otakar Klíma. Praha : Odeon, 1985, p. 98–114.

⁴⁸ TOUBERT, P.: *Střed a periferie*. In: *Encyklopedie středověku*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 2002, p. 729. (Translated by M. G.)

⁴⁹ ELIADE, M.: *Od Zalmoxida k “ingischánovi*. Praha : Argo, 1997, p. 124.

⁵⁰ АВЕРИНЦЕВ, С.С.: Георгий. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва : Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p. 273–275. (AVERINCEV, S. S.: Georgij. In: *Mify narodov mira*.)

⁵¹ ТОЛСТОЙ, Н. И.: Георгий. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 103–104. (TOLSTOJ, N. I.: Georgij. In: TOLSTAJA, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija*.)

tain regions of Russia a wolf was often called “a dog of St. George”;⁵² the following Russian proverb has been preserved “What a wolf has in its jaws, was given to him by St. George.”⁵³ According to a Russian legend, which has its parallels in Bosnia, Slavonia, and Bulgaria, one shepherd noticed the grass being trampled down under the oak tree and climbed it up to learn what was happening there. From the oak he saw St. George riding a horse, accompanied by a pack of wolves. They stopped by the oak, and from there St. George was sending wolves in all directions, telling them what they may gorge. Finally, only an old, lame wolf was left, which St. George allowed to take “the one, who sits on the oak tree.” In two days the shepherd climbed down to be gorged by the lame wolf. An interesting interpretation of similar motifs on the basis of mythological images of the Baltic and of the Slavs was given by Lithuanian researcher Marija Gimbutasová, who sees behind the folkloric image of St. George an archaic “lord of wolves,”⁵⁴ who appears in epic transformation in a Russian bylina epos in an image of Volha Vseslavievich, a warrior, phenomenal hunter and great conqueror, who could turn into a wolf.⁵⁵ We would like to present a different hypothetical interpretation of this motif. St. George is not a lord of wolves, but he has an agreement with that lord about the division of the world, by which St. George can manage, limit, and paralyze his power, define what a demonic lord of wolves can or cannot take by means of his demonic servants in a human world. In folk tradition St. George also protects the cattle and people from the wolves (in official church tradition he centres the human world, that is shown by a localization of his shrines,⁵⁶ and as a soldier guards its borders similarly to a folk “wolf shepherd”); if he allows his demonic contractual ‘partner’ to gorge something, it is interpreted as a punishment for the moral misdemeanour, due to which the guilty one appears to be behind a protective ‘covering’ of an important ‘contract of all contracts’, which has a tragic consequence for the punished. We think that a folk St. George is more similar to another character of Russian bylina epos – Mikula Seljanin, a phenomenal ploughman from Russian bylina (his name can be related to St. Mikuláš – St. Nicholas⁵⁷). The above mentioned “lord of wolves” (not the shepherd of theirs), a phenomenal hunter and conqueror Volha Vseslavievich, and Mikula will “divide the world” in such a way that he will make him a taxman and a governor of three Russian towns (that is a governor of the human world, someone similar is tsar Prov in Bulgarian apocrypha) while Volha himself, being incompetent in the sphere of the human world (he and his retinue cannot take Mikula’s plough out of the furrow), goes away (we suppose back to his realm outside the human world). Similarly, another character from Russian bylina epos with an eloquent name Dobrynya (a very special hero, who does not like weapons – he fights with a ‘monk’s cap’, he does not like to fight and to kill, he excels in politeness and settles con-

⁵² BUDIL, I. T.: *Za obzor Západu*. Praha : Triton, 2001, p. 44.

⁵³ ТОЛСТОЙ, Н.И.: Георгий. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 104. (TOLSTOJ, N. I.: Georgij. In: TOLSTAJA, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija*.) (Translated by M. G.)

⁵⁴ BUDIL, I. T.: *Za obzor Západu*. Praha : Triton, 2001, p. 44.

⁵⁵ We paid attention to this character of bylina epos in the thesis for habilitation as docent already mentioned. (GOLEMA, M.: *Stredoveká literatúra a indoeurópske mytologické dedičstvo*. Banská Bystrica : Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2006)

⁵⁶ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 72.

⁵⁷ ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Русский Святогор: свое и чужое. In: *Славянское и балканское языкознание. Проблемы языковых контекстов*. Москва : Издательство Наука, 1983, p. 107. (TOPOROV, V. N.: Russk. Svjatogor: Svoe i čužoe. In: *Slavjanskoje i balkanskoje jazykoznanie*.)

flicts successfully) draws up the eternal and unbreakable contract about the world division with the dragon Gorynič.⁵⁸

According to the original mythological script, the wolves had two 'patrons' – St. George (originally a mythological being or beings, personifying benignant powers, with which the Christian saint is associated in folklore interpretation) in the human world (that is the world behind the magic furrow) and a demonic ruler in the wild world – in Latvian tradition it is Velinas, a god of death, magic and the underworld (functional and lingual equivalent of Slavic "cattle god", who we interpret as Veles, a god of animals and wilderness), in Christian interpretation identified with the devil, considered to be the creator of the wolves, honoured also as a herd protector against wolves, to whom plentiful animal sacrifices were given.⁵⁹ He is a lord of wolves, but of another kind. He is a rank superior over them.

In order to provide for life's necessities, a man has to cross the borders of such a human/non-human world, though full of risks which demand him to maintain correct relations with both sovereigns. For example, in the Russian North a shepherd was considered to be a magician related with a so-called *lešij* ("леший") (a zoomorphic ghost of the woods close to Veles⁶⁰) and other dark powers. It was believed that the shepherd made a deal with *lešij*, according to which the shepherd gives a promise to bring him the best cow, and to keep to many prohibitions, like not picking berries and mushrooms in the woods, not shooping the flies and gnats, and not destroying the anthill. To confirm the deal, the shepherd walks around the herd with a lock and a key in his hands, digs down the text of the contract at a distant spot, makes a groove across the road with a knife (a modest equivalent of the ritual ploughing) for the evil powers not to cross this border.⁶¹

If we take into consideration the folk interpretation only, St. George is not the Dragon slayer, as well as the patron of the knights, the medieval heirs of Indo-European understanding of warrior embodying the second function of war powers; nor is he a perfect hunter.⁶² The imagination of pagan Slavs at the threshold of Christianization more often addressed the episode of the official legend, according to which St. George would first only wound the dragon, making it in such a way disabled to move and thus would tame it; then he would say to the liberated girl the following: "Don't you hesitate and throw your belt over its maze! When she did it, the dragon followed her as a most meek dog."⁶³ We suppose, in this very point of the action the relicts of pagan tradition were added, due to which in folk tradition St. George had the competence of the wolf shepherd, "centring" the space of the human world, setting and protecting its borderland as well as its important part, i.e. the pasture, having made a deal with the lord of the wilderness. This hypothesis, which we

⁵⁸ *Ruské byliny*. Selected and translated by Ján Vladislav. Praha : SNKL, 1964.

⁵⁹ BUDIL, I. T.: *Za obzor Západu*. Praha : Triton, 2001, p. 44. Also JAKOBSON, R.: The slavic god Veles and his Indo-European cognates. In: *Studi lingvistic in onore di Vittore Pisani*, Torino, 1969, p. 579–599.

⁶⁰ ИВАНОВ, В. В. – ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: К проблеме достоверности поздних вторичных источников в связи с исследованиями в области мифологии (Данные о Велесе в традициях северной Руси и вопросы критики письменных текстов). In: *Труды по знаковым системам*, Выпуск 6, Тарту, 1973, p. 46–82. (IVANOV, V. V. – TOPOROV, V. N.: К проблеме ... In: *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*.)

⁶¹ ПЛОТНИКОВА, А. А.: Пастух. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 354. (PLOTNIKOVA, A. A.: Pastuch. In: TOLSTAJA, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija*.)

⁶² In such a way his functions are presented by BUDIL, I. T.: *Za obzor Západu*. Praha : Triton, 2001, p. 42.

⁶³ VORAGINE, J. de: *Legenda aurea*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1984, p. 157. (Translated by M. G.)

propose for further discussion, could help shed light more consistently or more precisely in comparison with others, on the exceptional position and modifications of this saint's cult among the Slavic medieval peoples, for example, constructing his shrines at the spots of previous cult places in the middle of the inhabited space.⁶⁴ We can name some of the important locations, for example, the Říp in Czechia, a legendary middle part of Czech country, the Wawel peak in Cracow, where at the place of a mysterious dragon cave the shrines to Archangel Michael and St. George, the dragon slayers, were built.⁶⁵ We can also mention medieval Hungarian Veszprém, a residence of the oldest Hungarian bishop, with an old, most likely, Old Moravian church of St. George, and a less old, already Hungarian church of Archangel Michael.⁶⁶ We believe that St. George and Archangel Michael only in late interpretations became the patrons of knights and ideals of all medieval heroes fighting with dragons. At the earliest stage of Christianization among the Slavs they were probably connected with a religious sovereignty, with the law.

At the places mentioned above, beside St. George we can find another competently close character of a “dragon binder”, but not a saint – Archangel Michael. We think that while looking for the pagan aspects of St. Michael's cult in the Middle Ages, important discoveries were found in the location of the Michalský hill in Olomouc. Jozef Bláha found out that the very Michalský hill was the “ideological and cosmic centre of the local community (oikumena),”⁶⁷ during the Middle Ages in the surroundings of the local shrine of St. Michael's meetings, courts and periodical fairs were held; something similar including enthronement of a ruler is recorded about the royal Wawel.⁶⁸ Bláha reports on more important records about the neutralizing function of dedicating former pagan places to Archangel Michael, paying attention to Michael's cult modifications especially in the regions of Middle and Eastern “Slavic” Europe.

Bláha also focuses on other interesting mergings of the saint and the archangel – St. Michael and St. Nicholas – in the Slavic environment, which mostly Russian researchers dealt with. Many characteristics were shifted onto St. Nicholas; onomastic contamination of names of both saints is recorded in the Olomouc necrology of 1236.⁶⁹ In folk tradition of the Eastern Slavs St. Nicholas is the “higher” among the saints, he can even heretically substitute for God (or Christ) on His throne; in Russian on St. Nikolaj Zimnij's Day (St. Nicholas' Day) it was habitual to prepare a feast with beer, specially made for that day. It was done according to a sacral ritual or habit, the breaking of which would mean the breaking of the whole world order.⁷⁰ We have to add here, that in the Russian bylina epos beer is prepared by a namesake of St. Nicholas – ploughman Mikula Selyanin – who shares the world

⁶⁴ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Mýty kmene Čechů*. Praha : NLN, 2003, p. 200. Also SLÁMA, J.: Svatojiřské kostely na raně středověkých hradištích v Čechách. In: *Archeologické rozhledy* XXIX, Praha, 1977, p. 269–280.

⁶⁵ KOUTSKÝ, K.: *Draci středověkého světa*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 2005, p. 101.

⁶⁶ STEINHÜBEL, J.: *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*. Bratislava : Veda, 2004, p. 116.

⁶⁷ BLÁHA, J.: K některým pohanským aspektům kultu sv. Michala ve středověku. In: *Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Philosophica – Aesthetica*, 23, Historia artium IV., p. 37–49.

⁶⁸ BLÁHA, J.: K některým pohanským aspektům kultu sv. Michala ve středověku. In: *Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Philosophica – Aesthetica*, 23, Historia artium IV., p. 44.

⁶⁹ BLÁHA, J.: K některým pohanským aspektům kultu sv. Michala ve středověku. In: *Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Philosophica – Aesthetica*, 23, Historia artium IV., p. 44.

⁷⁰ БЕЛОВА, О. В.: Николай. In: ТОЛСТАЯ, С. и коллектив: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь*. Москва : Международные отношения, 2002, p. 321–322. (BELOVA, O. V.: Nikoláj. In: TOLSTAJA, S. M. et al.: *Slavjanskaja mifologija*.)

with demonic Volha.⁷¹ St. Nicholas in Russian folk exorcism protects against the wizards, charms and spells, diseases, weapons, a fire dragon flying towards girls, cures people and cattle; much like St. George, he is a protector of the cattle (i.e. a kind of pasture guard).⁷² Contrary to the “horrid” St. Ilja (Elias – the attribute points to the second function of war powers, St. Elias (Ilja Gromovik) among Eastern and Baltic Slavs inherited a lot from Perun, a pagan warrior of heaven, patron of ruling army units, a horrible thunder-thrower, a liberator of atmospheric water), St. Nicholas is defined as a “merciful” saint embodying the mitrian pole rather than an old war function. St. Nicholas’ cult was first of all a folk one, plebeian, blurring on the periphery with the relicts of pagan cults and connecting with the pre-Christian personifications of powers of blissfulness.⁷³

In oral tradition of not only the Eastern Slavs there is shaped a group of saints related by a juridical characteristic: St. George, St. Nicholas, St. Kuzma and Damian, St. Boris and Gleb, as well as Archangel Michael and, finally, even Christ.⁷⁴ This group of saints, who

⁷¹ The name Mikula is connected with the name of St. Nicholas (sv. Mikuláš), the protector of Russian people (ТОПОРОВ, В. Н.: Русский Святогор: свое и чужое. In: Славянское и балканское языкознание. Проблемы языковых контекстов. Москва: Издательство Наука, 1983, p. 107.) (TOPOROV, V. N.: Russkij Svjagotgor: Svoe i čužoe. In: *Slavjanskoje i balkanskoje jazykoznanie*.)

⁷² According to O. V. Belova (note 70) “the main functions of St. Nicholas (sv. Nikolaj) (the protector of the cattle and wild animals, farming, beekeeping, connection with the outer world)... show, that in folk thinking the remnants of the pagan cult of god Vesel are preserved.” Considering pagan Veles to be a demonic and zoomorphic sovereign lord of the wilderness, we believe, St. Nicholas embodies in folk thinking his complementary, closely connected to him, neighbouring mitrian, loving antipode.

⁷³ АВЕРИНЦЕВ, С. С.: Николай. In: Мифы народов мира 2, Энциклопедия в двух томах. Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1988, p. 217. (AVERINCEV, S. S.: Nikoláj. In: *Mify narodov mira*.)

⁷⁴ St. Archangel Michael (Michal) and St. George (Juraj) are connected competently by Hudák, in connection with the cult of Archangel Michael in Medieval Slovakia he points out that St. Michael was comprehended as a symbol of victorious fight with infernal powers, that is also with a pagan tradition, and simultaneously he could substitute competently close pagan deities. “The church made attempts to Christianize the old belief not with violence, but in succession to using home belongings, building its churches first at the places of former pagan sacrificial places to have a guarantee that those would not appear clandestinely. To this function of St. Nicholas’ patrociniun points also the reality: the shrines dedicated to him are usually built on the most high hills (the same can be said about the neighbouring countries, for example, in Krakow, Olomouc, and Sopron) surrounded by the cemetery. This kind of buildings (patrociniun) also appears later, retardedly in 16th – 17th century, in a way that always as a patron of new settlements, organized by means of inner colonization (the borderlands of Orava, Liptov, Spiš and Kysuce)... At the beginning of Christianization a patrociniun of St. George was of similar character, which in the time of its second wave, at the peak of the Middle Ages, received the shape of knights’ protector.” (HUDÁK, J.: *Patrociniá na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Umenovedný ústav, 1984, p. 19). (Translated by M. G.) In other studies Hudák also understands St. George and St. Michael’s patrociniuns as similar: “The oldest patrociniuns (churches given under saint’s patronage) in Slovakia date back to the times of Christianization, i. e. the 9 – 10th century A.D. As evidence of Christianization achievements in Slovakia can serve the St. Michael’s patrociniun, which in Slovakia is the most frequent out of a group of hagiological patrociniun, including angelological as well as St. George’s, whose name bears the oldest preserved sacred building – Kostolany pod Tribečom, which after its second wave in the period of high Gothic acquired rank plasticity (the protector of the knighthood, the patrociniun of castle chapels)” (p. 460). We would like to add here, that something more interesting for us is the first wave of honouring the saints. The honouring of the same saints was continuing also in Hungary: “New Christianization in the 10 – 11th century and its stabilization in the 12 – 13th century is represented by missionary patrociniuns (Michael, George)” (p. 57). Similarly, Sláma differentiates two phases of St. George’s cult: “At the beginning this saint was taken as a patron of warriors and fortified towns, in the time of the Crusades it became the symbol of perfect knighthood, and a patron of nobility. Then the St. George’s honouring culminated.” (SLÁMA, J.: *Svatojiříské kostely na raně středověkých hradištích v Čechách*. In: *Archeologické rozhledy XXIX*, Praha, 1977, p. 270). The author next gives an interesting note: “Among patrociniuns of several dozens of churches, built in the early Middle Ages in Czech territory in approximately thirty castles, the most numerous is a group of churches named after St. George. Though the

according to folk legendary tradition were granted the similar attributes, who were acting in similar roles and tales, can be enlarged without any interpretation of violence by the name of Czech saint Prokop, the founder of Sázavský monastery. According to a folk tale put down in the 19th century, St. Prokop not only drove the devils out of his hermit cave and expelled them to an empty place (the Lobec mountain, that is, he divided the spheres of influence with them),⁷⁵ but also in his cave he harnessed the devil and ploughed with it a so-called Devil's furrow between Sázava and the village Chotouň, his birthplace, a furrow can be seen even today.⁷⁶

Similar epic themes connected to ploughing can be found not only in the folk legends, but in Slavic dynasty legends. We suppose they are fragments and variants of the same archaic piece and we also hope that in the case of dynasty legends the factor that assisted in their arrangement was the three-functional ideology (in different shapes and different degree). Within the three-functional ideology discovered by Dumézil the ploughing motifs in dynasty legends are usually interpreted as symbolic expressions of the third function of fertility and production. A mythological plough is in principal interpreted as an agricultural tool, that is, as the third-functional appliance (granted in certain stories magic power). On the contrary to this frequent interpretation, we suppose that the first plough, a prototype of the plough,⁷⁷ was first of all a very important liturgical first-functional requisite used, for example, in case of voting or confirmation of the sacred chief and in simultaneous symbolic enchainment, harnessing the zoomorphic monster or animal (for example in the case of Czech Přemysl Oráč (Přemysl ploughmen) in Kosma's *Kronika česká* (The Czech Chronicle)⁷⁸ this task was fulfilled by ordinary spotted oxen, which most likely substituted Slavic "Cattle god" Veles, and then eloquently sneaked away from the human world and totally disappeared in the rock). This requisite was first used by two sides, cooperating and contracting, when defining the human world; the plough was left and given to the third function as an agricultural appliance only later. After this first-functional output the sacred ruler would mostly take "centring" the human world (the "liturgical" reli-

time of highest honouring and spreading of the St. George's cult in the Czech territory is the end of the 12th century, the buildings are considerably older." (p. 277); then everything confirms the older and less known form of the cult of the protector of fortified (previously probably ritually ploughed around) towns. In this connection, it is interesting that both St. George and Archangel Michael are found together again in the palace of the oldest Hungarian bishop in Veszprém. At Veszprém castle "... St. George's church was the most ancient probably among all the Hungarian churches which were standing in the times of prince Imrich († 1031). It was older than the neighbouring St. Michael's church. When in the previous epoch the church was hardly ever built, the rotunda had to be built already in the 9th century and serve Veszprems Christians also after the conquering of the Zadunajsko (Behind-Danube-region) by the Hungarians." (STEINHÜBEL, J.: *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*. Bratislava : Veda, 2004, p. 116) (Translated by M. G.); it has to have even an older origin – Great Moravian. The beginning of the Veszprém episcopacy as well as St. Michael's church building is connected with the coming of missionary bishop Bruno from St. Gallen to Hungary in the year 972, who christened the prince Gejza and the other Arpádos. Gejza's younger brother, the future Prince of Nitra, "received at christening the name Michael, after Archangel Michael, who became also a patron of the episcopacy founded at the same time." (p. 115).

⁷⁵ *Dvě legendy z doby Karlovy (Legenda o svatém Prokopu, Život svaté Kateřiny)*. Ed. J. Hrabák, V. Vážný. Praha : Nakladatelství ČSAV, p. 52.

⁷⁶ KADLEC, J.: *Svatý Prokop český strážce odkazu cyrilometodějského*. Praha : Benediktinské arcidiocesi sv. Vojtěcha a sv. Markéty, 2001, p. 41–42.

⁷⁷ The ancient Scythians, the neighbors of fore-Slavs, but also and contemporary Osetins, the descendants of the Scythians; this first plough was golden and red-hot, it fell down to earth together with an axe and a bowl, and other functional talismans; they could be touched only by the youngest, the third son of the king.

⁷⁸ *Kosmova Kronika česká*. Translated by Karel Hrdina. Praha : Svoboda, 1975.



Přemysl the Ploughman, a fore-father of the Czech family of the Přemysls, a fresco from St. Katherine's rotunda in Znojmo, beginning of the 12th century
(<http://www.znojemskarotunda.com/ikonsamo.htm>)

gious function of a plough could have been actualized in annual or protective rituals, then the sacred ruler or his plenipotentiaries would come back to repeat the ploughing).

This kind of ploughing presented a basic first-functional output needed for the duality of the first function to become obvious and entrenched in space. The frame was only opened to the third (as well as the second) function to be discovered: the basic cosmogonic conditions were created for it to start functioning (for example, Mikula, the ploughman, from the Russian bylina epos after his ploughing output would leave the plough for the farmers and would go “to centre” the human world, collect taxes and see that the law was kept in three Russian towns, which were left for him as for a more competent controller by his anti-pole Volha, a demonic hunter and conqueror, who could turn himself into animals).

In his interpretation of a social legend of the medieval Scythians recorded by Herodotus, Dumézil tried to connect the plough with the third function. The Scythians received from heaven three golden and red-hot “functional talismans” as Dumézil calls them: a jar (religious function), an axe (war function) and a plough (fertility and production function). We believe that the richer Slavic mythological material, though fragmentary, can make this interpretation more precise: a golden plough primarily referred to a legal pole of the first religious function and at the same time, secondarily, also to the third function, it was a symbol which revealed and pointed to a mutual proximity of both functions, their common inclination to peace and prosperity.

Something very similar is noticed by Vernant, the Hellenist researcher, in his brilliant three-functional interpretation of Hesiod's myth about generation changing (golden and silver generation are connected with religion, bronze and heroic generations are connected with war, and an iron generation is connected with fertility and production). According to Vernant: “The first and the third functions, the kings and the farmers, are connected by a mythological and real chain. Hesiod's interest is aimed at problems dealing with the first and the third functions and questions common for both of them ... This combination is clearly illustrated in that part of Arat's poem, where this author borrows from Hesiod the myth of iron generations: the rule of Diké (the goddess of justice – note M. G.) appears here inevitably connected with cultivation (agricultural) activities. Golden people (a personified religious function – note M. G.) do not know any arguments and fights: ‘the cattle, the plough and Diké herself, which gives deserved estates, provide them with everything in plenitude.’ Bronze people (a personified function of war – note M. G.), who forge a sword of war and violence, kill oxen and eat them.”⁷⁹ We would add that mythological

⁷⁹ VERNANT, J. P.: *Hestia a Hermés. Studie k duchovnímu světu Řeků*. Praha : OIKÚMENÉ, 2004, p. 130. (Translated by M. G.)

Přemysl (an embodiment of justice) does not kill and eat his oxen (as contract partners), but would set them free and soothe his hunger in a characteristic primeval function way – with bread and cheese served on an “iron table” – a plough.

We believe that in a similar way the rite of a new prince ‘crowning’ can be interpreted among the Carinthian Slavs, where the rite was preserved in a modified way until the 15th century. Before the prince-to-be was supposed to be seated on a stone throne amid St. Mary’s field (*Gospovetske field*), he was **dressed in peasant clothes, seated on a mare, and led around the stone throne three times** while the people present were singing Slovene *Kirieeleison*. The ceremony was finished with a service in the main Carinthian church of St. Mary (Gospa Sveta), which was built near by in the year 760.⁸⁰ We believe that the symbolism of peasant clothes in this ritual does not stress the peasant origin of the prince’s power. On the contrary, together with other symbols (a mare, a stone throne) it shows how by means of the primary agreement between two poles of religious function (a prince riding a saddled, “tamed” mare) a protected human space was drawn in the country (by triple going or riding around which is equal to a ritual ploughing). Only then could this space be filled in with the third function, chronologically younger. After this ride the agreement partners separated and in a characteristic way occupied their domains: the prince was ritually seated on a stone throne (an equivalent of a holy fire as a state centre) in the middle of the human world and a holy horse most likely went to a zone behind its borders.

The plough in the analyzed tales was most likely a symbol of a primeval deal about the division of the world between the kind and human and juridical (the plough mastering) pole of religious sovereignty on the one hand, and the magic, horrible, demonic, non-human and zoomorphic (harnessed into a plough) pole of the same sovereignty.⁸¹ We

⁸⁰ TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Počátky Přemyslovců. Vstup Čechů do dějin (530 – 935)*. Praha : NLN, 1997, p. 345.

⁸¹ The dualism present in this Scythian functional talisman caused interpretational problems also for Dumézil. (DUMÉZIL, G.: *Mýtus a epos I*. Praha : OIKOYMENH, 2001, p. 473–480.) In ancient references about Scythian plough, its two components are always mentioned – a yoke and a plough (*iugum boum, aratrum*). Along with royal Scythians, most likely specialists for religious supremacy, and nomadic Scythians, the fighters, Herodotus mentions also another two kinds of specialists for the third (?) function – Scythians, the ploughmen, and Scythians, the growers. This disproportion between the number of symbolic items (3) and division of Scythians into four functionally defined groups would probably stop being the inexplicable anomaly and become an expected result, if we try to accept the plough as a religious symbol in a more complex and “dualistic” way, that is also with human service (corresponding to the plough) and animal driving force (corresponding to the yoke), as we show it in the scheme proposed, and it is also shown in an old Iranian riddle, which we quote here: “What is that, that has ten legs, three heads, six eyes, six ears, two tails, three pairs of testicles, two hands, three noses, four horns, three backs and life, and existence of the whole world depends on it?... There is a harness with two oxen and a man.” (*Oběti ohňům. Výběr z památek staroiránské a středoiránské literatury*. Selected and translated by Otakar Klíma. Praha : Odeon, 1985, p. 255). The text of the riddle stresses the participants of ploughing, while we are more interested in the relation between them, which represents the plough and the yoke, omitted from the riddle, illustratively, imaginarily and indirectly. At this point we need to comment on our scheme beneath the article. In it we tried to concentrate on our main discoveries. The upper part of the scheme is constructed according to the differences of denotation and connotation levels in the myth about the plough. The difference between denotation and connotation level of the myth was elaborated by Roland Barthes in another context. (BARTHÉS, R.: *Mytologie*. Praha : Dokořán, 2004, p. 109–115; MARCELLI, M.: *Příklad Barthes*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2001, p. 220–225.) The lower part of the scheme is based on methodological principles of Levi-Strauss about the model constructions as tables of relations, where the relations have logical and methodological priority before the elements which they connect (LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Myslení přírodních národu*. Praha: Dauphin, 1996, p. 176–177; KANOVSKÝ, M.: *Kultúrna a sociálna antropológia*. Bratislava: CHRONOS, 2004, p. 185). The scheme gives a model of space within which the plough together with the human service and animal driving force had a function of a certain classification, the bearer of the notion and dualistic symbol of the primeval contract about the division of the world. The symbol of the plough could

can apply to it one of Claude Lévi-Strauss' important discoveries: by its "dualistic nature" the plough belonged to a group of things, which could be used as binary operator, as Lévi-Strauss put it.⁸² From the logical point of view, the plough can be related to the problem, which also is binary, hence there is a certain affinity between the object as a plough, and a problem which is according to the myth about a primeval deal being solved.

The mythological plough was at the same time the most complex, trans-functional symbol, showing not only the relation of both poles of the religious sovereignty function, but also their relation to the third function, as is shown in the scheme below (Picture 1). The ploughman had an exceptional importance in the myth: only due to his ploughing output could the human world find its place, a protected territory, in the middle of a wilderness full of demonic creatures. In oral tradition the plough, being an important liturgical requisite, after the abolitions of the old religious practice had to be again taken by some medieval saints and mythological founders of the dynasties in order to demonstrate convincingly their ability to centre the human world and to protect its borders as new representatives of the juridical pole of religious sovereignty.

indirectly name an identical in its sense contract relation between historically and culturally different pairs, always representing two functionally complementary poles of the religious sovereignty function.

⁸² LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Mýtus a význam*. Bratislava : Archa, 1993, p. 28.

DENOTATION SYSTEM

- assigning the meaning to a perceived object
- real or "terminological" code connected to logic

Plough = a farming tool, characteristic for the third function of fertility and production

- Non-Human World (disorder, wilderness, violence)
- inhabited by animals, mythological, monsters, strangers
 - wilderness, wood, water areas

Border zone

- Human World (law, culture, order)
- seasonal usage of pasture as a periphery organ of the human world
 - cultivated lands, fields
 - human settlement (fortified settlement, village)
 - dwelling
 - sacred centre of a house, state (e.g. a fireplace, stone stool, sacred building)

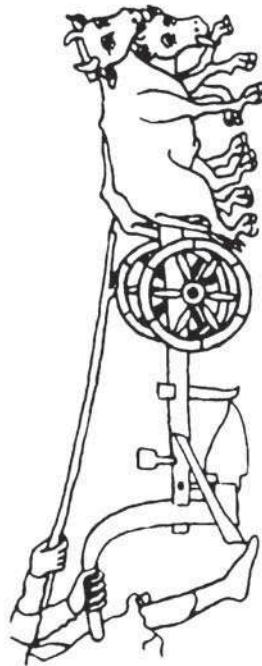
CONNOTATION SYSTEM

- systems of another meanings, adding secondary meanings and functions
- "rhetorical" code connected with myth enables wider communication, involves emotional and ideological world, pictures social and cosmologic world model

Plough = "concrete classificator", bearer of the notion, symbol of the primary agreement in Indo-European world model, first-functional liturgical requisite (confirms in a sensually perceptive way that mythological problem was solved, contradiction was overcome and the human world was excluded from non-human)

- demonic deities (snake Varuna) and epic heroes, mythological monsters, animals, (dragon harnessed by St. Kuzma and St.

Damian, devil harnessed by St. Prokop, giants who ploughed the bed of river Hron with a gigantic plough, spotted oxen of Přemysl the Ploughman, demonic hunter and conqueror Volha turning into a wolf from Russian bylinas, wolves as "dogs of St. George", dragon chained by a princess on St. George's order, mare of a Carinthian prince



- furrow as a border (magic equivalent of fortification, fence) made by a plough (symbol of agreement connecting both sides)

- St. George as a "wolf shepherd", Iranian Mitra as a "lord of wide pasture"

- Saint ploughmen (Kuzma, Damian, Prokop), ploughmen - founders of dynasties (Přemysl, Piast), characters from epos (Mikula the ploughman), who border and protect the human world

- saints "centring" the human world (St. George, St. Nicholas), founders of dynasties (Přemysl after elected a prince), Carinthian prince seated on a stone stool

Scheme

Stredovekí svätí oráči a pohanská slovanská mytológia

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Štúdia sa pokúša interpretovať (z perspektívy novej porovnávacej mytológie G. Dumézila a jeho školy) zlomky príbehov, ktoré stredoveká ľudová tradícia navrstvila na oficiálne cirkevné podanie o niektorých svätcoch v slovanskom prostredí. Zaujíma nás najmä motív oborania určitého priestoru svätcom. Podobné motívy orby sú doložené aj v dynastických povestiach západných Slovanov, rituálny korelát týchto príbehov sa zachoval na viacerých miestach strednej a východnej "slovanskej" Európy takmer do súčasnosti v podobe oborávania obce ako ochranného prostriedku proti moru a živelným pohromám. Pri hľadaní spoločného významu týchto rituálov s čiastočne zachovaným mytologickým komentárom vo vnútri systému Dumézilom objavenej a rekonštruovanej trojfunkčnej indoeurópskej ideológie ich bádatelia spájali hlavne s treťou funkciou plodnosti a výroby, vychádzajúc z predpokladu, že išlo o typickú agrárnu mágiu. Pokúšame sa o alternatívny výklad, ktorý odhalí pravdepodobné miesto týchto príbehov a rituálov v rámci právneho pólu prvej funkcie náboženskej suverenity. Nazdávame sa, že takáto rituálna orba robila zmyslovo vnímateľným staré indoeurópske rozdelenie kompetencií v správe posvätného na mágiu a právo. To sa prejavovalo aj v rozvrhnutí priestoru na dve protikladné zóny: ľudskú a ne-ľudskú, na ktoré si podelili svet dvaja veľmi odlišní suverení. V mýte o rozdelení sveta medzi dvoch suverénov pomocou vyoraní hraničnej brázd, majúcom korene pravdepodobne v indoeurópskej minulosti, sa objavuje zvrchovaný magický boh ako "zapriahnutá" bytosť zoomorfnej, často démonickéj (dračej) povahy. Prostredníctvom pluhu ho spútava a zapriaha ľuďom bližší a oveľa priateľskejší zvrchovaný boh práva – Oráč, aby spolu s ním mohol realizovať základný kozmogonický úkon. Obe tieto postavy sa navzájom kompetenčne dopĺňajú, oddelenie ľudského sveta a divočiny je v princípe ich spoločný výkon, majúci podobu zmluvy. Pluh v týchto príbehoch býva funkčne interpretovaný ako v princípe poľnohospodárske, teda treťofunkčné náradie (obdarené síce v konkrétnych verziách magickými kvalitami). Na rozdiel od tejto častej interpretácie sa domnievame, že prvý pluh – mytologický prototyp pluhu – bol predovšetkým veľmi dôležitou liturgickou prvofunkčnou rekvizitou, využívanou napr. pri volbe či potvrdení posvätného náčelníka a súčasnom symbolickom spútaní, zapriahnutí zoomorfnej obludy či zvieraťa. "Liturgická" náboženská funkcia pluhu sa však môže aktualizovať vo výročných alebo ochranných rituáloch, vtedy sa sakrálny vládca alebo jeho splnomocnenci vracajú opakovať orbu.