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**PARALLELS IN THE INDO-IRANIAN AND OLD SLAVIC MYTHOLOGICAL MODELLING OF THE WORLD (A SOLAR ASPECT)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the article is to present a comprehensive study results on the parallels of the solar aspect formation of the world mythological modelling among the Indo-Iranian peoples and the ancient Slavs as an inherently ambivalent worldview phenomenon. The pre-Christian beliefs image of the Slavs became an inseparable component of the folk dualism system and is manifested in calendar to this day, funeral, wedding poetry and rituals, in sacred and socio-cultural terminology of modern Ukraine population. This study aims at elucidating the world solar model formation and place in the pre-Christian beliefs of the Slavs. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity and comprehensiveness in combination with the use of general scientific methods – analysis, synthesis, abstraction. The specificity of the research topic and sources used led to an interdisciplinary application of such methods as historical, comparative linguistics, structural anthropology, comparative mythology, ethnographic analogy, as well as semiotic and hermeneutic.*

Culture reception as a secondary modelling system, in which its individual components are fragments of a cultural text consisting of separate codes that express their meaning only in a context of reading within a text and interaction with other texts, led to the use of the above-mentioned methods. Owing to the use of these methods, it was possible to trace the mythological ideas formation evolution, to carry out the analysis of social, religious, ritual terms, to elucidate a primary meaning of funeral rites elements, and, finally, to reconstruct a solar model of the world mythological structure among the ancient Indo-Iranians and the Slavs. The above-mentioned reconstruction is of a metaphysical nature, the basis of which is the myth and its ritual derivatives interpretation. At the same time, the authors, represented the ethno-historical issues, and following K. Ivanhorodskiy's admonition, they tried to be as careful as possible in their conclusions, "because the past is an insidious advisor for a modern image vision", (Ivanhorodskiy, 2018, p. 149), in spite of the fact that a modern postmodern interpretation of a human being considers him/her as a product of all previous eras. **The scientific novelty** of the research consists in singling out a solar model of a mythological space structure among the ancient Indo-Iranians and the Slavs, which was of an utmost importance in the context of the basic "law" implementation in both ethno-cultural traditions. **The Conclusion.** Thus, it should be stated that the image of the sun, which is presented in its various manifestations, was one of significant, and perhaps the most crucial model of the universe, in both the Indo-Iranian and the ancient Slavic mythological systems, in which the basic "law" of both ethno- and socio-cultural formations was implemented, that was expressed with the help of complementary cultural symbols. On the one hand, such closeness of the Indo-Iranian and Slavic ideas regarding the world modelling during the pre-Christian period was due to a more or less common Indo-European mythological heritage, and on the other hand, to a long-term proximity of the Slavs and their ancestors to various Iranian-speaking peoples during the period between 3000 BC – 10th century AD, in connection with which a number of solar gods from Indo-Iranian etymology emerged in the Slavic pantheon: Svaroh, Dazhbog, Khors, Veles, Perun.

**Key words:** Indo-Iranians, mythology, world model, funeral rites, Slavs, solar symbolism, tradition.

## ПАРАЛЕЛІ В ІНДОІРАНСЬКОМУ ТА ДАВНЬОСЛОВ'ЯНСЬКОМУ МІФОЛОГІЧНОМУ МОДЕЛЮВАННІ СВІТУ (СОЛЯРНИЙ АСПЕКТ)

**Анотація.** *Мета статті* полягає у комплексному дослідженні паралелей формування солярного аспекту міфологічного моделювання світу в індоіранських народів і давніх слов'ян як амбівалентного за своєю природою світоглядного явища. Цей образ дохристиянських вірувань слов'ян невіддільним компонентом увійшов до системи народного двовір'я і до сьогодні проявляється у календарній, поховальній, весільній поезії і обрядовості, у сакральній та соціокультурній термінології населення сучасної України. Це дослідження покликане розкрити особливості формування та місце солярної моделі світу в дохристиянських віруваннях слов'ян.

**Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах історизму, об'єктивності та всебічності у поєднанні з використанням загальнонаукових методів – аналізу, синтезу, абстрагування. Специфіка теми дослідження та використаних джерел зумовили міждисциплінарне застосування таких методів, як історичний, порівняльної лінгвістики, структурної антропології, порівняльної міфології, етнографічної аналогії, а також семіотичного і герменевтичного. Сприйняття культури як вторинної моделювальної системи, де окремі її складові становлять фрагменти культурного тексту, що складається з окремих кодів, які розкривають своє значення лише в контекстному прочитанні у межах тексту та взаємодії з іншими текстами, зумовило залучення всієї сукупності згаданих методів. Це уможливило простеження еволюції формування міфологічних уявлень, здійснення аналізу соціальних, релігійних, обрядових термінів, розкриття первинного значення елементів поховальної обрядовості, вреїсти реконструювання солярної моделі міфологічної будови світу у давніх індоіранців та слов'ян. Така реконструкція має метафізичний характер, основою якої є інтерпретація міфу та його обрядових похідних. Водночас, репрезентуючи етноісторичну проблематику, автори, враховуючи застереження К. Івангородського, намагалися бути максимально обережними у висновках, "оскільки минуле є підступним порадином для бачення сучасного образу" (Ivanhorodskiy, 2018, p. 149), незважаючи на те, що сучасне постмодерне тлумачення людини розглядає її як витвір усіх попередніх епох.

**Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає у виділенні солярної моделі будови міфологічного простору у давніх індоіранців та слов'ян, що набувала особливого значення у контексті реалізації основного “закону” в обох етнокультурних традиціях.

**Висновки.** У результаті проведеного дослідження можна констатувати, що образ сонця, який представлений в його різних проявах, був і в індоіранській, і в давньослов'янській міфологічних системах однією зі значущих, а можливо, і найважливішою моделлю всесвіту, в якій реалізувався основний «Закон» обох етно- та соціокультурних утворень, що виражалася через комплементарно замінювані культурні символи. Така близькість індоіранських і слов'янських уявлень про моделювання світу в дохристиянський період була обумовлена, з одного боку, більш-менш спільною міфологічною індоєвропейською спадщиною, архетипічністю природи цих уявлень, а з іншого, тривалим сусідством слов'ян та їх предків з різними іраномовними народами в проміжку між III тис. до н. е – X ст. н. е., у зв'язку з чим у слов'янському пантеоні з'явилася ціла низка богів, наділених солярними ознаками, з індоіранською етимологією: Сварог, Даждьбог, Хорс, Велес, Перун.

Серед перспективних для подальшого дослідження аспектів проблеми, на нашу думку, можна виділити поглиблене дослідження солярної символічної складової пантеону слов'янських богів і, зокрема, бога Сварога, який ототожнювався з богом-ковалем грецької міфології Гефестом.

**Ключові слова:** індоіранці, міфологія, модель світу, поховальний обряд, слов'яни, солярна символіка, традиція.

**The Problem Statement.** Due to Volodymyr the Great, who baptized Kyiv residents in 988, a new worldview formation among the population of Ukraine-Rus' emerged – a folk dualism in which the Christian and pagan mythological plots, symbols and rituals were combined syncretically. The basic features of a new worldview form developed by the 14th – 15th centuries and it is preserved by large till nowadays. At the same time, this phenomenon is a vivid example of the complexity of the Slavic peoples' cultural genesis of a spiritual (mythological and religious) component evolution, which was closely related to ethnogenetic processes and phenomena. The ethnogenetic processes and phenomena study is determined by methodological and theoretical complexities of interaction of the post-Soviet heritage and introduction of postmodern innovations (Ivanhorodskyi, 2018, pp. 147–149). The Slavic peoples' ancient ethnic history complexity, in particular the Ukrainians, is determined by three main aspects: 1) significant periods of incorporation into the ethno-linguistic conglomerations, similar to the Balto-Slavs; 2) lingering evolutionary processes through the passage of the proto-, and early Slavic stages of the ethnic differentiation formation; 3) neighbourhood and interaction at each of the specified stages with neighbouring ethnic communities, which was accompanied by linguistic and cultural borrowings. Borrowings occurred at different levels: a direct contact among speakers of cultures and languages; penetration of material culture objects, including coins, even from fairly remote areas as a result of trade and exchange processes (Mielczarek, 1989; Mielczarek & Orlyk, 2019; Orlyk, 2020; Orlyk, 2021a; Orlyk, 2021b; Orlyk & Orlyk, 2020; Orlyk, 2022; Orlyk & Mekh, 2022a; Orlyk & Mekh, 2022b; Nikolaev, 2020; Peter & Stolba, 2022), finally, mediated through third-party informants. The Indo-Iranians of the Northern Black Sea steppes were one of such ethnic conglomerations, with whom the Slavs ancestors lived in 3000 BC – the first centuries of 1000 AD (Balushok, 2004, pp. 61–64). As a result of the above-mentioned interaction, several dozen words related to religious, ritual, healing and evaluation spheres penetrated from the Iranian to the Slavic languages (Heishtor, 2015, pp. 65–67), i. e. those that determined worldviews and value orientations. At the same time, there is a discrepancy between these two linguistic and ethnic communities (the Indo-Iranians and the Slavs) as they differ not only in different state of ancient mythological heritage preservation, but also in historically determined time of their ethno-

linguistic and cultural identification in historical science. In order to elucidate the nature and scale of the Indo-Iranian cultural tradition influence, in particular, in the world mythological modelling issue there is a sense of perspective to involve the Indo-Iranian mythology and rituals in an attempt to reconstruct specific ancient Slavic mythological images and ideas of the pre-Christian era. In addition, there was the lack of a complete mythological Old Slavic heritage, hence, the authors had to use not only mythological texts and their interpretations, but also data from comparative linguistics, ethnology, and archeological research materials in the research process.

**The Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** There is a significant array of scientific literature which deals with the study of mythological ideas aspects of both ancient Indo-Iranian and the Slavic peoples and counts at least 2,5 thousand years of history, starting from Herodotus. It should be noted that the latest studies conducted by V. Saenko and D. Pikalov in the field of the Scythian mythology and funeral rites are significant. In the monograph and article, written by Valeriy Saenko, there is provided a panorama of the Scythian cosmology and eschatology reconstruction based on the data of burial structures, in particular, a chief focus was on the Scythian societies life subordination to the basic “law”, in which the solar cult and its symbolism occupied a prominent place. The Scythians eschatological ideas were also subject to this “law”, including the Afterlife modelling, with the construction of burial mounds, graves, surrounding mound structures (rivchaky, cromlechs, shafts) filled with the solar symbolism. Due to the above-mentioned, the author noted ambivalent fullness of the solar symbolism, which was focused on both the world of the living beings and the world of the dead (Saenko, 2007, pp. 15, 30, 41, 46, 52–54; 2011, pp. 76–80).

There was reconstruction of a broad picture in the research, done by Dmytro Pikalov “Mythology and Cosmogony of the Iranian-speaking Nomads from Eurasia”: the Scythian-Sarmatian cosmology and cosmogony, which was based on the principles of the main Indo-European myth theory (Pikalov, 2011). The scholars were interested in a solar symbolism of the horse in funerary rites of the Scythian-Sauromatians and Sarmatians, as well as its ambivalent nature in the research context, which allowed them to connect a funerary rite with a solar symbolism (Pikalov, 2011, p. 27). The author reduced a number of symbols found in funeral rites to one semantic series: a horse (deer) – fire – swastika – snake, some of which (swastika and snake) were associated with three zones of the mythical cosmos. According to the author, it allowed us to consider Tabitha as the personification of fire as an element associated with the three zones of space, endowed with the solar signs (Pikalov, 2011, pp. 93–106), but the author did not pursue the idea of the presence in the Scythian to the Sauromatian and Sarmatian tradition of the idea of a universal solar model of the mythological universe.

The monograph “Slavic Mythology”, written by the Polish scholar Oleksandr Heishtor stood out from the works on the Slavic mythology (Heishtor, 2015), as there was a separate section on the Slavs contacts with their neighbours (including the Iranian-speaking ones) in ancient times. According to the author, a long-term neighbourhood with the Iranian peoples had influence on the ancient Slavs development, which was of a particular importance to comparative studies of religion. The above-mentioned neighbourhood was interrupted only during the first centuries of our era. The author also noted that “the Iranian influence on the Proto-Slavs happened due to the presence of a common Indo-European heritage, enriched with specific elements that since have become characteristic of both ethno-cultural groups, distinguishing them from other Indo-European communities” (Heishtor, 2015, p. 65). In addition, the author highlighted that this neighbourhood was limited to

certain “political influences, as well as borrowing of certain elements of myths and rituals, the reason for which was a higher level of organization of the Sarmatian religious cults” (Heishtor, 2015, p. 68). As a result, there were borrowings from the Slavic languages, in particular, more than 30 words of a religious meaning, religious actions, ritual, healing terms, pejorative expressions, positive designations, which determined the position of numerous scholars, about a significant influence of the Sarmatians on the formation of the Slavic pantheon and rituals. However, as the author noted, there were no direct coincidences in the names of deities between the Iranian and the Slavic pantheons, instead there was “almost a complete secularization of the Iranian pantheon among the Proto-Slavs. The Proto-Slavs deprived some Iranian mythological names of a sacred meaning, including them in the commonly used vocabulary. ... In this regard, the Slavic-Iranian language connections should be considered as a means by which there was determined the place of the Slavic beliefs in the array of the Indo-European heritage. They make it possible to determine that no later than in 1000 BC the Proto-Slavs had a developed apparatus of moral ethical and ritual religious concepts sufficiently, they were formulated in categories common to the Indo-European peoples” (Heishtor, 2015, pp. 63–72).

The Russian scholar V. Toporov, unlike A. Heishtor, analyzing Volodymyr’s pantheon of the gods etymology and functions, came to the conclusion that the god Khors emerged in the Kyivan pantheon quite late, in the 10th century AD, under the influence of the Iranian Khorezmian pledge of the Khazar Khaganate in Kyiv (Toporov, 1989, pp. 23–60), which, on the one hand, indicated foreignness to local religious and mythological traditions, and on the other hand, marked rather late religious borrowings of the Iranian tradition in the Slavic one.

Taking everything into consideration, there are two controversial issues regarding duration and nature of the Iranian-speaking religious tradition influence on the Slavic religious tradition.

**The purpose of the research** is to present a comprehensive study results on the parallels of the solar aspect formation of the world mythological modelling among the Indo-Iranian peoples and the ancient Slavs as an inherently ambivalent worldview phenomenon. The pre-Christian beliefs image of the Slavs became an inseparable component of the folk dualism system and is manifested in calendar to this day, funeral, wedding poetry and rituals, in the sacred and socio-cultural terminology of modern Ukraine population. This study aims at elucidating the world solar model formation and place in the pre-Christian beliefs of the Slavs.

**The Results of the Research.** The issue of the universe as a whole, i. e. organization and functioning of nature and society life was the most important in the ancient peoples' worldview. Different peoples often imagined the universe in the form of numerous symbols or models (a world tree, an egg, an animal, a human being, a mountain, a temple, a throne, a vessel, etc.), many of which were in imagination of the same peoples, duplicating each other. The cosmic models of the ancient Indo-Iranians were determined by ideas about a universal law of the type of the ancient Indian *rita* “rita” largely, which originally meant an established path of the world, the sun, the moon and the stars, morning and evening, day and night (Chmykhov & Tupchienko, 1987, p. 87), and later on acquired, along with a cosmological, moral and ethical meaning of order, law; a human collective; areas of application of the law; time; a geocentric model of the world (zodiac) (Chmykhov, 1985, p. 23). An important role in the law of rita was attributed to the sun gods Mitra and Varuna in the Indo-Iranian mythological tradition (the guardians of rita, the sun god-goddess Surya, who in the Vedas are called the face, then the eye of rita or the rita itself, the most important holidays of which

were the sun phases veneration (the Indian calendar tradition distinguished winter, spring, and autumn beginning of the year (Keyper, 1986), as well as the idea of the sun or the sun god as the first ancestor of people (Ind. Yama, Avest. Yima) (Lelekov, 1991, p. 599).

There were similar ideas also typical of the Slavic pre-Christian beliefs. Different sociocultural terms are associated with the circle of “rita”, which, in turn, are associated with the names of the Slavic gods, wardens and guardians of the law, with a more or less pronounced solar nature, for example: vlada (power) (vlast) – volost – Volos – Veles, lad (order) – Lado (Lada), myr (peace) – Myr (Mitra), pora (season) – Poryvit, Porynut, Perun, riad (row) – Radost, rid (family) (rod) – Rid, storona (side) – strana (country) – prostir (space) – Stribog, yar (ravine) – yaryi – Yarylo, Yarovyit, svit (world) – Svitovyit, etc (Sivolap & Chmykhov, 1985). The Ukrainian Kupala ritual poetry preserved very archaic ideas about the sun as the eye of Lada, the guardian or the embodiment of rita:

*Hey, eye of Lada, Lele Ladove, Hey, eye of Lada,  
the night disappears, because Lada's eye comes out of the water,  
Lada brings us a holiday, Hey Lado! And you,  
Perun, let Lada wait Kupala (Yushchuk, 1995, p. 33).*

The greatest holidays were also related to the sun veneration directly in the Slavic calendar holiday tradition, similar to the Indo-Iranian. These are well-known Koliada and Christmas holidays, Masliana and Kupalo. In the Slavic tradition the beginning of the year migrated from spring to autumn equinox, and then to winter solstice. The idea of the sun (a solar deity) as the first ancestor of people could also be found in the Slavic mythological tradition. In “Slovo o Polku Ihorevim” (The Tale of Ihor’s Campaign), the author called the singer Boyan Velesov’s grandson (while Veles was of a transparent solar nature, (Potebnya, 1989, p. 259), and all kniazi were Dazhbog’s grandsons (Dazhbog was the sun) (Toporov, 1989, pp. 23–40). At the same time, the All-Seeing Father/Did-Vsevyd (the sun) is recognized as the ancestor in the Ukrainian ritual poetry, while in the “Bohemian Chronicle” (the 15th century), written by Ioann Maringol it was said that “the essence of the Slavs originates from Helios” (Darkevich, 1960, p. 60). In addition, according to Ya. I. Borovsky, the Slavs ethnonym may be related to the words “slava” (glory) and “sun”, which are derived from the Indo-European *sou* “to shine”, in Sanskrit – *svar* “sky, light, sun” (Borovsky, 1977, p. 20), hence, there is a hidden idea about the solar origin of the Slavs in the very ethnonym.

The most important deities were connected, directly or indirectly, with the cult of the sun or heavenly fire among the Indo-Iranians and the Slavs. There were the following deities among the ancient Indians: Surya, Vishnu, Mitra, Varuna, Savitar, Indra, Yama, Vivasvant; there were among the Iranians: Mitra and Yima; the Scythians had Papai, Hoitosyr, Tabeti, Kolaksai, Tagimasat; and among the Slavs – Svaroh, Svarozhich-Radhost, Dazhbog, Sviatovid, Yarylo, Khors, Perun, the functions of which were the creation of the world, people, family, society, regulation of fertility, calculation of time, connection with the Afterlife, that is, all those the most important elements of the universal law of the functioning of the universe.

Archaeological and ethnographic studies confirm a wide spread of not only rituals among the Indo-Iranian and the Slavic peoples, but also symbols associated with veneration of the sun as the most important cosmic element. First of all, these were the solar signs images (circles, concentric circles, a circle with an inscribed cross, a swastika, a swastika of horse heads, a wheel, a rosette, etc.), on objects of both domestic and sacred purpose: on dishes and ornaments of the Indo-Iranian according to the reliability of archaeological cultures (pit, catacomb, log, the Scythian, the Scythian-Sarmatian); archaeological cultures of the

proto-, and early Slavic circle (Bilohrud, Chernolisk, Scythian forest-steppe, Zarubynets, Chernyakhiv, Kyiv, etc.). The solar signs could be also found on architectural structures: on the paintings of St. Sophia's Cathedral (griffins, eagles, circles with an inscribed eagle, swastikas, etc.) (Vagner, 1974); on ethnographic dwellings there were sockets, crosses, etc. (Toporov, 1971, pp. 11–13), Due to the studies, conducted by O. K. Bayburin (Bayburin, 1983), V. M. Toporov (1971, pp. 11–13), M. O. Chmykhov (Chmykhov, 1993, pp. 33–60) the semantic meaning of a temple, a house, dishes as models of the world were depicted, therefore, the solar signs, which occupy a central position in the ornamental compositions of dishes, houses, temples, defined both the centre of the universe and its container, according to the principle of a part of the whole.

There is evidence of the sun identification with a vessel as a whole, which could be found in the Indo-Iranian mythological texts (Rigveda, VIII. 89. 17), in which the vessel was a receptacle for the sun, where Vishnu or Indra was compared to a cup of soma (Rigveda, VI. 69. 2). There were also similar ideas in Greek mythology (Apollodorus, V, 10), which took them beyond the Indo-Iranian circle. At the same time, in the Indian Atharvaveda (XVIII, 4, 30), the vessel used in the funeral rite is called the goddess Aditi, who personifies the entire universe (Chmykhov, 1993, pp. 132–133), the above-mentioned allowed us to assume that a pot with cremated remains of a buried person could be also identified with the universe in the pre-Christian burial rituals of the Slavs and their ancestors, which was widespread until the adoption of Christianity in 988.

In other Indo-Iranian texts, the sun in the form of a wheel is called a container of all living beings, the whole world: “A wheel that does not grow old (scil-sun) turns with its rim; they are led by ten (scil – horses of the sun) harnessed to a horizontal bridle. The Eye of the Sun moves, even covered in darkness” (Rigveda, I.164.14), it contains all beings and also “He (Indra) rides out on horses harnessed by Rta, filling the universe with the sun-bearing hub of the wheel” (Rigveda, VI.39.4).

The Iranians either had a similar idea of the sun-wheel, containing all living things. In the Avesta, the sun is one of the four spheres that surround the world, and in another place, Mitra (the god of the sun) is depicted as an avenging god, who catches up with the criminal even at the end of the world, i. e. Mitra fills or includes the universe. In Avestan texts the Earth is depicted in the form of a wheel divided into seven *krashvars* (parts), while the names of these *krashvars* are related to winds (air space) (Makovelskiy, 1960, pp. 32–35). The sun is a wheel depicted in the form of the wheel of *Balsag*, is also known in the Nart epic of the Ossetians (the Scythians-Sarmatians descendants) (Narty, 1957).

Hence, there is an idea of placing the Earth in some sphere or circle (wheel) in the Indo-Iranian mythological tradition. Worshiping the sun in the form of a wheel was widespread among the Slavs. V. Darkevich provided a record from the Ishymskiy povit that the ancestors “lived in the forest, prayed to the wheel” (Darkevich, 1960, p. 59). In his research Pavlo Chubinskiy wrote that in the 19th century the Ukrainians also called the sun a wheel, and burning Kupala wheels were a widespread image of the sun in the solar ritual of the Slavs (Chubinskiy, 1878).

Thus, the solar circle (wheel) was one of the widespread mythological models of the universe among the Indo-Iranians and the ancient Slavic tribes. The same model was also reflected in the Slavic funeral rite with the terminology associated with it. According to the scholars O. Freydenberg (Freydenberg, 1978) and M. Chmykhov (Chmykhov, 1993), the burial structures and burial terminology are well-known cosmic symbols and reflect the most

conservative view of a particular people about the world. Hence, the etymological sequence of the term “to bury” provides the following meaning “to protect, to eat (i. e. to hide food in the middle)” (Fassmer, 1983), which is close to the Proto-Slavic *xorn* “to eat”, the Slavic Khors “sun” (Toporov, 1989, p. 58). The word “to bury” (khoronyty) is also etymologically close to *khoramyt* “to build”, chorus “house, building, protection”, temple “cult building or church” (Fassmer, 1983). The process of construction, and, accordingly, protection of the designed, closed, organized world from the unorganized (Cosmos from Chaos) (Bayburin, 1983, pp. 55–75), which is confirmed in the etymological proximity of the Slavic temple, and the Greek *chora* – “possession, country” (enclosed space), Greek *chorus* (a group of dancers), the Slavic round dance (a group of dancers in a circle), the Proto-Slavic and Prohetian *hord* “kind” (a limited group of people), Ossetian *khor* “sun”, the Slavic *khors* (god of the sun), derived from Iranian *horset* the sun, (Popovich, 1985, pp. 13–24), but which at the same time can be close to the Slavic “*khorovod*”.

A circle is one of the oldest symbols of a protected, organized space. These are protective circles against evil forces, circular detours (bypasses) around a new house, destruction of villages during the plague in the Slavic tradition. At the same time, according to A. Bayburin the Slavic term – crown/wreath “the first trunks tied into a log” (Bayburin, 1983, pp. 55–60), initially denoted the same circle. The Polish *obejskie*, the Ukrainian *obistia* – “places that go around in a circle”, “estate, manor”, again give a closed curved line – a circle, i. e. a solar sign.

It should be also noted that in the Slavic tradition, both mounded and moundless burial grounds were called *kolomyshcha* popularly (Kotlyarevskiy, 1968), i. e. a gathering of circles. The following elements of burial structures as barrows – *rivchaks*, *cromlechs*, crepe ids – also bear the solar circle symbolism. The following actions as sprinkling the deceased with grain, where the grain was “a ray of the sun” indicated an ethnographic funeral rite connection among the Slavs with the cult of the sun, a heavenly fire (Danilenko, 1974, pp. 8–15). At the same time, such ritual actions as burning a funeral building, cremating the deceased, placing them in a vessel, using a boat or a sleigh instead of a bed, involve numerous symbols duplication of the same idea of the world solar model, an inverted reflection of which is the Afterlife of the dead. At the same time, there is connection of the sun worship calendar holidays, Christmas and Whitsun, Ivana Kupala, Masliana with the cult of ancestors, and therefore with the Afterlife in Slavic ethnography.

The idea of the world of the dead as a solar world was preserved in the relics of a mythological worldview of both the Slavs and the Iranians. In the Slavic tradition, there were the following figures, who appeared constantly: Alatyry, Zlatyry, and Bil-horyuch kamin’ (stone), on which there was either Bis or Solchak (the Sun); the riddles about the sun, in which the way to the other world was coded as the way to the trydev’iate zolote tsarstvo (the thirty-ninth golden kingdom); the fairy tales heroes of the Fenist type – Yasnyi Sokil (a Bright Falcon), Zorky and the others, who visit the trydev’iate zolote tsarstvo (the thirty-ninth golden kingdom) (Propp, 1986, pp. 281–287); as well as mythological complexes associated with the ladybug – the sun (Toporov, 1981), the poppy, the Kupala rites (in general, connected with the idea of death – the birth of the sun), in which the symbolism of a wreath dropped on the water is associated with happiness and unhappiness, life – death, wedding – divorce, etc. As, such a wreath was a symbolic image of the same sun travelling across the world ocean.

The scholar D. S. Raevskiy interpreted the rite of circumambulation on horseback in a certain territory, which could be found in the Scythian ceremonial tradition, as circumambulation of Kolaksai, the “Sun-king”, the sacred territory of Exampai (Raevskiy, 1977, pp. 126–137).



Therefore, this rite also modelled the universe in the form of a solar circle, in addition, Herodotus' story about the country of the Hyperboreans, in which Apollo (the god of the sun) reigns, also belongs to the Scythian mythological tradition of Scythian ideas about the Afterlife (Bongard-Levin & Grantovskiy, 1983, pp. 66–75), i. e. about the world of the kingdom of the sun. The Ossetian epic about the Narts also directly connects the sunny hero with the other world. Hence, in the legend about the journey of Sozyrko (the Sun) to the underworld, it was said that he drew a circle with the ring he received in the world of the dead and created a steel palace, i. e. the same simulation of the world in the form of a solar circle happened again (Sozyrko = Sun = ring = circle = steel palace). At the same time, the simulation was carried out by an object (ring-sun), which was related to the world of the dead by its origin. And in another place, Sozyrko was a solar hero, who had under his power the wheel of Balsah (the sun) in the land of the dead, (Narty. (1957). And finally, the idea of Mitra (the sun) as one of the dead souls' judges was preserved in the Avesta (Makovelskiy, 1960, pp. 40–45).

The Old Ruthenian New Testament apocrypha “Khodinnia Bohorodytsi po Mykakh” placed the god Khors (along with other pagan gods) in hell (Toporov, 1989, p. 58), which was quite logical in light of the paganism condemnation by Christian ideology. But, probably, there was also a reflection of something else, in particular, pagan ideas about the nature of their gods. The location of Khors in hell as one of the Afterlife components, where the sinners suffer, to some extent explained the etymological proximity of Khors to the word “to bury”. It should be noted that the Khors connection with khor(o)khor – the designation of a rooster (Toporov, 1989, p. 58), a bird of the sun, but also a mandatory sacrificial animal in the rite of commemoration of the dead. In our opinion, the plot from “Slovo o Polky Ihorevim” about Kniaz Vseslav, who crosses Khors road at night as a wolf, also pointed at the Afterlife, nocturnal, image of this sun god.

Thus, the solar model of the universe idea was able to be designed not only in the Iranians funeral rites, but also of the Slavs on several symbolic levels: sun=vessel; sun=home (grave); sun=horse; sun=circle of cromlech, rivchak, crepid, mound perimeter, etc. It should be noted that the sun-universe idea modelling in both traditions in the funeral rite, in different chronological periods, could be duplicated at different levels in the same funeral rite, burial structure. For example, we can mention the typical Scythian burials: in a mound with a rivchak and a cromlech, in a mound with a rivchak or a cromlech and a burial chamber filled with a wheel, cultic burials of children in amphorae, pots, burials in a crypt with the image of a winged horse and a solar sign in Scythian Naples, burials with a horse or horses. Accordingly, these were mound burials with cremation, cremation in a pot, mounds with rivchaks and crepids, burial in sleighs, boats, sprinkling the deceased with grain, and, finally, in the cremation ceremony itself among the Slavs and their ancestors. It is possible that the idea of the sun – the world of the dead also found its expression in the numerous burials of the steppe Scythians with gold objects, where gold is a renowned symbol of another world (Propp, 1986, pp. 192–202).

**The Conclusion.** Taking everything into account, it can be stated that the sun in the ideas of the ancient Slavs and their ancestors, just like the Indo-Iranians, was accepted as an all-powerful deity that rules both the world of the living and the world of the dead, i. e. the universe as a whole. It is exactly how Surya acts in the Rigveda, who in the image of Vishnu supports all the worlds (where Vishnu is the god of three spheres, who has a world instead of a body) (Rigveda, I.21.154). We could make an assumption that in the Slavic mythological tradition, the equivalent of Surya-Vishnu could be the mysterious Slavic Trojan in the “Slovo o Polku Ihorevim”, the essence of which was revealed in Yaroslavna's cry: “Svitle I try-svitle

sontse (Bright and three-bright sun)!” – in this context the sun shone in the three worlds. At the same time, depending on the functions of this deity, the place of its action, it could bear different names, for example, different parts of the earth in the Avesta. The two solar gods, Khors and Dazh(d)god presence in Volodymyr’s pantheon was a vivid example such a division of functions, where Khors was the Afterlife sun, and Dazh(d)god was the day sun.

It should also be noted that initially the sun identification with the universe could be connected with the sun representation in the Indo-Iranian and the Slavic traditions as a feminine principle that holds the world in itself like a fetus. The Scythian equivalent of the Indian Surya, a female solar deity, was most likely Tabitha, who, according to D. S. Raevskiy, embodied the entire Cosmos and was closely connected with the solar symbolism (Raevskiy, 1977). In turn, the Slavic folklore tradition also preserved the image of the female solar deity Solon’ (the sun is a woman), Lada. There was recorded the distinction between “round”, internal, feminine, associated with female fire goddesses and the home fire, and “four-cornered” fire, associated with the male principle and the sky in the Indo-European mythological tradition (Toporov, 1991, p. 531). But the much greater archaism of round houses, compared to rectangular ones, the long thousand-year tradition of burying the dead in round mounds, often surrounded by mounds with rounded structures, early oval burial pits, the thousand-year-old symbolism of modelling the world in the form of a solar circle (wheel), allowed us to claim that a replacement took place a male symbol in a patriarchal society of an earlier female symbol of the sun, heavenly fire, the universe, and the level of sacredness of this symbol was also lowered.

Thus, it is legitimate to assume that the image of the sun, which was presented in its various manifestations, was in both the Indo-Iranian and the ancient Slavic mythological systems one of the significant, and perhaps the most crucial model of the universe, which was expressed through various symbols (among which dominated circle-wheel), which could be duplicated. On the one hand, such closeness of the Indo-Iranian and the Slavic ideas regarding the modelling of the world in the pre-Christian period was due to a more or less common Indo-European mythological heritage, and on the other hand, to the long-term proximity of the Slavs and their ancestors to various Iranian-speaking peoples during the period between 3000 BC – the 10th century AD, in connection with which a number of solar gods with Indo-Iranian etymology emerged in the Slavic pantheon: Svaroh, Dazhbog, Khors, Veles, Perun.

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