

THE MYTHOLOGEMES “TREE OF LIFE” AND THE “SUN” IN THE WORLD FOLK PICTURE OF UKRAINIANS (FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE PRESENT)

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Abstract: The article examines the transformations that took place with the mythical images “tree of life” and “sun” in the folk worldview of Ukrainians from the pagan era to the present. The sources were the texts of the oldest Ukrainian folklore works, written monuments of the Kievan Rus period, scientific research of East Slavic ethnologists, folklorists and dialectologists of the 19th and 20th centuries, field records on ethnographic topics. Considered in a comparative typological aspect, the ancient texts of folk poetry and literary works, descriptions of the spiritual practices of past generations of Ukrainians, the traditions preserved by the people in rituals and in arts and crafts, testify to the deep sacred etymology of the mythologemes “tree of life” and the “sun” in the picture of the world of the Ukrainian people’s ancestors, its consonance with other ethnic groups in the context of world culture. In the Ukrainians’ national picture of the world, the mythical images of the “tree of life”, the “sun” underwent transformations under the influence of changes in worldview guidelines. The forms of embodiment of these mythologemes in the Ukrainians worldview of the 21st century, as expected, narrowed down to metaphorical images, but not only are not lost, but tend to be preserved, thanks to the revival of national identity in the public consciousness.

Keywords: Folk poetry text, Mythologeme, Picture of the world, Sun, Tree of life, Traditional rite, Ukrainians, Worldview.

1 Introduction

The restoration of Ukraine's statehood, lost several centuries ago, has awakened a powerful national revival, in the context of which domestic ethnographers, ethno-linguists, folklorists, culturologists, ethnopsychologists actively began to study the authenticity of Ukrainians in all areas of their life from ancient times to the present, which for almost four hundred years in every possible way hindered first by the tsarist empire, and then by the Bolshevik government. In recent decades, the range of scientific interests of Ukrainian researchers includes ethnocultural texts, traditions and rituals, artifacts of material culture, which make it possible to trace the formation of the national picture of the world, to comprehend the manifestations of the mental, cultural, spiritual identity of Ukrainians in order to determine the dominant nation-forming factors [37].

For scientists dealing with the components of the national picture of the world, mythologemes are of interest, which ensure the continuity of ideological traditions from ancient times to the present day, creating a mental environment for aesthetic communication of all generations of an ethnic community in different planes of its culture [24].

2 Literature Review

We are unanimous with researchers who interpret the mythologeme as a “concrete-figurative, symbolic way of displaying reality”, which “becomes... a formula for a communicative symbolic means of establishing a connection with universal values encoded in myth-making acts...” [22, p. 83]. We consider it expedient to distinguish between the concepts of mythologeme as a symbol and archetype as a common idea, a motive for mythological plots, united by a common theme.

The objects of our interest are the mythologemes “tree of life” (“world tree”) and “sun”, since they are deeply rooted in the ancient layers of the national picture of the world and, at the same time, are well traced in modern Ukrainian ethnoculture.

The mythologemes highlighted by us have repeatedly come to the attention of East Slavic, in particular Ukrainian, researchers of various fields of scientific knowledge: linguists, historians, ethnographers.

Analyzing the verbal explication of the concept “tree” in the linguistic model of the world of Ukrainians, V. Vakulenko notes that “the world tree ... an image characteristic of mythopoetic consciousness, which embodies the universal concept of the world” [31, p. 15]. This idea is being developed by the Russian linguist N.A. Krassus, emphasizing that “the roots of the deification of trees lie in myths, the remnants of which continue to live, being embodied in phraseological units, poetic metaphors” [18, p. 50]. The epicentricity of the mythologeme “tree of life” in the mental space of Russians was noted by S. Yesenin: “Everything from the Tree – this is the religion of our people thinking ... The fact that music and the epic were born together through the sign of the tree makes us think of it as not an accidental fact of a mythical assertion, but as a strictly balanced representation of our distant ancestors” [35, p. 35]. N.N. Makovsky and T.V. Toporova, revealing the philosophical meaning of the sacralization of the tree, come to the conclusion that the image of the “tree of life” embodies the finite and the infinite, unites all cosmic zones of being: heaven and earth, time and space [20, p. 122]. The mythologeme “tree of life” in the comparative context of the ancient mythologies of Sumeria, Iran, India, China, Iceland, the peoples of Siberia, the North American Athapaskan tribe and on the ethnographic material of the traditional culture of the Ukrainian Carpathians was analyzed in detail by Tatiana Hoshchitskaya. The material for her research was archaeological finds and artifacts of arts and crafts [8].

The modifications of worldview dominants that the mythologeme “sun” underwent in the context of the Christian tradition was studied by T.A. Koberskaya. She highlighted the semantic, axiological, functional signs of the mythical image of the sun in the ideas of ancient Ukrainians [12].

The mythologeme “sun” in the semantics of artistic images of the works of B. Shultz and G. Pagutyak interested the researcher I. Bokshan, who revealed the conceptual meaning of this mythologeme in the artistic pictures of the world of both writers [3].

After analyzing the scientific context in which the mythologemes “tree of life” (“world tree”) and “sun” are presented, we define the purpose of our own research work: after tracing the existence of the chosen mythologemes in the folk picture of the world of Ukrainians from ancient times to the present day, concentrate attention to modern forms and content of their embodiment in the Ukrainian ethnoculture, since this aspect has not yet been the subject of a separate study. The empirical basis for us was the ethnographic materials recorded by other researchers at different times in different regions of Ukraine, as well as our own observations of traditions in the ethnocultural space of modern residents of Central Podillya.

3 Materials and Methods

Having studied the mythical image of the “tree of life” (“world tree”) in the world dimension, the East Slavic ethnologists and folklorists M.I. Kostomarov, A.A. Potebnaya, V.M. Toporov defined its planetary significance as a pre-Christian concept of the creation of the world, which united all ethnocultures. “The Image of the World Tree”, V.M. Toporov summarized his long-term observations V – is attested almost everywhere either in its pure form, or in variants (often with an emphasis on one or another particular function) – “tree of life”, “tree of fertility”, “tree of the center”, “tree of ascent”, “heavenly tree”, “shamanic tree”, “tree of knowledge”, etc. [28, p. 398].

The mythological heritage of the Ukrainian people (several texts of archaic carols are known) preserved the image of the “tree of

life” – in the Ukrainian folk poetry tradition it is an oak or ash – as the fundamental principle of the world, which is located in the middle of a continuous water space and is a place of accumulation of world-creative energy in the form of three doves, which in one version, “... have a council how to create the world,” and in the other – they get down to business [32, p. 46]. Folklorists and ethnologists have recorded two versions of the texts – earlier, not marked by the influence of Christianity, and later, with expressive Christian layers. Here is one of the texts, which, in addition to the characteristic features of the Christian worldview tradition, contains the imprint of the agricultural culture of our ancestors: What did we have from the beginning? Our God! There was nothing, only water. There was the only tree on that water. On that tree, there was a silk nest, and three doves in that nest, Not three doves – three angels. They went into the deep sea – into the deep sea, to the very bottom. They brought us three things: The first thing – we carry rye, We carry rye to people for bread; The second benefit – spring wheat, spring wheat for altar bread, To the service of God to the church; The third benefit is green grass, green grass for a live stock [32, p. 47]. M.I. Kostomarov pointed to the closeness of the plot of this Ukrainian carol with one of the hymns of the Rig Veda, which also speaks of a tree with two birds, from which the creation of heaven and earth began [17, p. 618-619].

In other texts of carols, we meet the mythologeme “tree of life”, which, in accordance with the concept of the authoritative Russian researcher in the field of mythology, culturology and semiotics, V.M. Toporov, is a model of the universe, which in the mythical picture of the world of our ancestors reflected a triune structure: the crown is the sky, the trunk is the earth, the roots are the underworld [29]. Here is a fragment of a Christmas carol recorded by Ivan Franko in the village of Naguevichi: There is a thin, tall sycamore – Hey, God forbid! Thin, tall, deep at the root. And at the root of the black coupons, And in the middle – spring birds, And at the top a falcon sat... [13, p. 168].

4 Results

In addition to ancient mythopoetic texts, the epicenter of the image of the “tree of life” in the archaic worldviews of the ancestors of modern Ukrainians is evidenced by its images on archaeological artifacts, in particular, on processed flints found at the site of excavations of Volyn Neolithic culture, near village of Lakhvychi, Lyubeshivsky district, Volyn region [23], on a gold plate from a Scythian mound near the village of Gunovka of the Velikobelozersky district of the Zaporozhye region, and the most ancient of them are signs which researchers interpret as symbolic images of a “tree of life” on Trypillya ceramics [8, p. 630].

The mythology of the “tree of life” in various forms, mainly figurative and objective, remains alive in the ethnocultural discourse of modern Ukrainians. T. Hoshchitskaya mentions in her work a unique plot, recorded in 2015 by Alexei Nagornyak, about a large pine tree growing on the southern outskirts of the village Vetzitza of Rokitnyansky district of Rivne region, and, in the views of the locals, protecting the village from thunder and lightning, helping sick children, as well as helping recruits who go into the army. According to locals, this tree is endowed with a female essence – a man who cut off branches on it, in a dream a woman with severed hands comes [8].

According to our own observations, among the inhabitants of the villages Turbov, Novaya Pryluka, and Priborovka villages, Lipovets district, Vinnytsia region, there is a custom according to which young couples after the marriage ceremony go to the trees (birch and oak, fused trunks and intertwined crowns) and tie colorful ribbons on the branches, giving their actions a magical meaning – thus strengthening the marital relationship. Undoubtedly, this local tradition is due to the local reality, which is a rare natural phenomenon, but the ritual actions associated with the wedding tree, which has the popular name of the giljce, are common in most of Podolia. In modern villages of the Vinnytsia region, the custom has been preserved, according to which on Saturday evening before the wedding, the girl-lamps in

the house of the groom, and the bridegirls in the house of the bride decorate the cut pine or spruce of small sizes with multicolored paper flowers. The top of the giljce is crowned by a large flower framed by ears of rye or wheat and bunches of arrow-wood. All other branches are decorated by smaller flowers. Starting to make a branch, the participants of the ritual action sing: “Bless, God, (2 times) both father and mother, To your child to wear this giljce!” During the gifting of guests with a loaf, the elder first breaks the top branch with a large flower and gives it to the young couple together with the middle of the ceremonial bread, and then gives all the twigs with smaller flowers to the wedding guests (I). In the villages of Kazatinsky district, the tree that is used to make a branch is a cherry. Here, the senior boyar of the groom fixes the branch as high as possible in the yard of the bride and there it remains forever (II).

Until now, older Ukrainians endow the giljce with magical properties. Here is a story written by M.A. Pilipak 06/23/2007: “The bride grabbed the older flower, and the girls try to grab their flowers for the bride at once, believing that they will get married soon. And it's true! I just pinched the flower – Ganiska followed me – tork... and pinched, the girls say she doesn't have a boyfriend, how will she get married!?? But somewhere Ivan appeared – quite a nice boy – and wooed! Everyone was surprised!!!” (III) [25, p. 292]. According to the stories of residents of the village New Priluka, Lipovetsky district, Vinnytsia region, the largest upper flower of giljce is used in folk magic – for the plunge pool of a girl in order to hasten her marriage (IV).

Also, in some localities of Podolia, in particular, the Kazatinsky district of Vinnytsia region, an important element of decorating a wedding loaf is stylized tree shapes, which are fixed at the four corners of ceremonial bread (II) (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Wedding loaf with stylized tree shapes. Provided by a resident of the village. Zozulinty Kazatinsky district, Vinnytsia region. By Ekaterina Kozak.

A rare custom of using a tree in a funeral rite by residents of the village Tsikilovka, Yampolsky district, Vinnytsia region, were described by I.V. Horofyaniuk – a tree with handkerchiefs or towels tied to its branches, intended for those who have come to say goodbye to the deceased, is carried at the head of the funeral procession [7]. The researcher of dialects of Central Podillia finds an explanation of the etymology of this local ritual action in the rudimentary motif of a tree as a path from the world of the living to the world of the dead, which, according to V.V. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov, is clearly traced in the religious and mythological representations of the Slavs and in the origin of the root morphemes of the words road and tree [9].

On Nadsanje, the idea is recorded that the souls of the dead find refuge in lindens – therefore, these trees are planted around the village after the death of relatives [10].

The mythologeme “tree of life” has long been embodied in the Ukrainian arts and crafts. Researchers of folk embroidery have discovered the “tree of life” motif in the decoration of sleeveless jackets, a piece of traditional clothing in the Lemkiv and Hutsul

regions [36], as well as in the decor of shirts in the Snyatinsk region [2]. The image of a tree with birds on the crown is a common motif on a tile, which has been made in the Hutsul region since the 14th century [14].

The tradition of depicting the “tree of life” on Easter eggs, in the painting of ceramics, carpet patterns, embroidery on towels and clothes is preserved by modern Ukrainian craftsmen and needlewomen. Each element of the symbolic drawing has its own meaning and name: the top, as a rule, is decorated with a flower – the fire of life; next to it, there are two spirits – guardians – birds of paradise, sometimes – two deer are placed at the bottom of the trunk, and water is depicted near the tree (Figure 2, 3, 4).



Figure 2 – Wedding towel. Published: <https://static.zrk.ua/handmade-product/big/163136/1.jpg?v=1601730413>



Figure 3 – A fragment of a mural. Published: https://www.google.com.ua/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdi.sted.edu.vn.ua%2Fcourses%2Flearn%2F1731&psig=AOvVaw2m6VlvCq2sb0wmY277Wu6_&ust=1610308528661000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRqFwoTCJDAlozRj-4CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD



Figure 4 – Hutsul pysanka (Easter egg). Published: https://etnoxata.com.ua/image/catalog/blog/27_03_2018/4.jpg

In the mythological plot of the universe, the core of which is the “tree of life”, already in the texts of ancient carols, there is implicitly a semantic component of the highest goal of this action – to prolong the human race. With the change in worldview guidelines in the minds of Ukrainians, namely this component of the mythical image began to dominate and the “tree of life” was transformed into a “family tree” (ancestral tree). The researcher of the material culture of the Lemkiv region, Y. Tarnovich, in his studios, recorded the image of a tree on the paintings in the dwellings of the Lemkos – it was applied with clay to the front door. Each branch corresponded to a separate member of the family, and with the birth of a new child, a branch was drawn on the tree. The Lemkos kept these symbolic images and made sure that none of the branches on such a “tree of the genus” was accidentally overwritten [27].

5 Discussion

In recent decades, interest in their ancestry has become increasingly more popular among Ukrainians [36], and the reconstruction of the “family tree” takes on concrete embodiment in various materials: metal, plastic, embroidery, etc. Does such a “family tree” have a sacred meaning for modern Ukrainians? No – most likely, it is perceived as an objectified metaphor.

The revival of national and cultural traditions returned to Ukrainian families the custom of putting in the house on Christmas Eve (the evening of January 6 before Christmas in the old style), a didukh, which is made from ears of wheat or rye (sometimes decorated with flowers), tied in bunches and fastened together in the shape of a tree (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Didukh. From the stock collection of the Ethnographic Museum of Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University named after Mikhail Kotsyubinsky.

Didukh symbolizes the spirit of the clan and the unity of all its families. After Epiphany, which ends the Christmastide, the didukh, according to legend, should be burned in the garden, smoking the fruit trees so that no diseases can harm them.

The symbol of the tree as a heraldic figure takes place in the modern territorial heraldry of Ukraine (Figure 6, 7).



Figure 6 – Coat of arms of Bakhmut. Published: <https://io.ua/3855326>



Figure 7 – Coat of arms of Slavuta. Published: <https://io.ua/3856279>

Thus, having come from deep pre-Christian ideas about the creation of the world, the mythical image of the “tree of life” has undergone various reflections in the folk picture of the world of Ukrainians and has partially retained until now the rudimentary components of its semantics in objects that are used in ritual tradition, as well as symbolic images in decorative-applied arts.

The mythological image of the sun is rooted in the pre-Christian era, when a person deified the forces of nature, which had a real impact on his life and economic activity. V.N. Toporov, based on a wide textual material of ancient Russian written monuments, proves that the Eastern Slavs worshiped the sun god, whose name is Dazhbog [30].

In accordance with the lexicographic description of the etymology of the name of the pagan deity, we learn that Dazhbog is Old Russian Dazhbog, Church Slavonic Dazhbog, Proto-Slavic Dadjbog, formed from the imperative form of the verb dadj (“give”) and the basis of the noun “bog”(“god”) – “happiness, prosperity” [4, p. 187].

The sun god Dazhbog was given a special place in the worldview of the ancient East Slavic tribes, for which there are repeated indications in the ancient Russian monuments The Lay of Igor's Host, Laurentian Chronicle, and Veles Book. In the Laurentian Chronicle we read: “And the prince Volodymer began the single ruling of in Kiev and put idols on a hill outside the courtyard of the terem – Perun made from wood and his head is silvered, and his moustache is gold, and Khrs Dazhb and Strib and Simargl and Mokosh” [30, p. 28]. The unknown author of the heroic poem of the 12th century The Lay of the Host of Igor called the Russians Dazhbogzhi grandchildren: “Prince Oleg made a lot of evil, and quarrels grew, And countless good of the Russian people perished - Dazhbogzhy grandchild”; “The time has come, brother, a difficult time; The desert overcame the Russian force. An insult entered Dazhbogz's family” (A Word about Ihoriv Pochid). Considering all the discussions that are being conducted in scientific circles around the authenticity of at least part of the texts of the Veles Book (Vleskniga), we note that they also mention Dazhbog as the progenitor of some of the Slavic tribes: “This is because Dazhbog created an egg for us, which is a world-star that shines on us. And in that abyss Dazhbog hung our land, so that it would be kept”; “The truth is that we are Dazhbogz's grandchildren” [34, p. 156].

The mythical image of the sun god created by the imagination of our ancestors, having overcome the thickness of the centuries, has come down to us in folk poetry. A long-standing wedding song with an appeal to god Dazhbog was recorded at the beginning of the 20th century in the village Strizhavka of Vinnytsia province from L. Yurkevich, by an outstanding Ukrainian composer Nikolai Leontovich. Here is a fragment of the text: “Oh, oh, oh, oh, Dazhbogzha, early, early... you are the god, year by year...” [19, p. 114]. The same song was recorded in 1970 from a resident of the village Old Aleksinets of the Kremenets district of the Ternopil region A.P. Kavun-Boriskina born in 1900 [33].

The culmination of the winter cycle of religious holidays of Ukrainians was and still remains the Nativity of Christ. In most of Ukraine, on the first day of Christmas (and in Western Podillia on the second), according to the old style (January 7), children and youth (in Galicia, respected owners) go first of all to their relatives, and then to other people to carol and sing congratulatory songs, which glorify the owner of the house and all members of his family. Some groups of carols performers walk with a heptagonal star decorated with ribbons, which symbolizes the star that announced the birth of Jesus Christ. This rite, and after it the time of its implementation among the people, was called kolyada, which became the subject of controversy among ethnographers and folklorists. Some researchers [13, 32] believe that the word kolyada comes from the Latin name of the New Year – Calendae Januariarum, which the Romans celebrated in the second half of December, and probably superimposed on the Ukrainians' celebration of the winter rotation of the sun even at a time when the tribes of the Eastern Slavs were in close contact with the Greco-Roman colonizers of the northern coast of the Black Sea. Nikolay Kostomarov denied the origin of the name kolyada with Calendae and derived it from the root of the word kolo (circle), arguing that “Christmas is a holiday celebrated by our ancestors in winter, at a time when the sun reached its minimum strength and returned back to spring. The roots of the holiday are in the universal human mythological concept of the birth of the sun” [16, p. 248]. A kind of continuation of such an etymologization of the name kolyada is the hypothesis of I. Nechuy-Levitsky: “Apparently, in the distant past, kolyada was the name for the deities of light and warmth, whose holidays coincided with Christmastide” [21, p. 6]. It seems to us that the various texts of carols with the name Dazhbog in the refrain, which Stepan Kilimnik cites in his research “Ukrainian Year in Folk Customs in Historical Illumination”, are direct confirmation of the connection between the caroling rite and the very name of kolyada with the worship of the ancestors of Ukrainians to the sun as a deity. Here is one of them: Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! The field is productive, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! There is abundance on threshing floor! There are many bees in the beegarden, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! The yard is armed, the pantry is full, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! And in the house, there is benevolence for the servants, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! In the yard, happiness for the live stock, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! On a cattle horned and even small... Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! May God be on your way, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! On every ford, on the carriage, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! We congratulate you on happiness, health, Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas! Oh God bless (Oh Dazhbogzhe)! [11, p. 49]. Another piece of evidence that casts doubt on the Eastern Slavs' borrowing of the ritual of caroling and the name of kolyada from the Greco-Roman tradition of New Year's celebrations, we see in written by I.V. Horofyanuk at the beginning of the 19th century in the village Dzhurin, Shargorodsky district, Vinnytsia region, a story about the ancient custom of caroling in honor of the first sheaf, which was kept unmilled until Christmas and used in holy evening rituals (in the western region of Ukraine it was called a carol). We find the researcher's explanations of caroling during the harvest as a symbolic designation of the beginning of a new circle of bread quite well-grounded. In her work, I.V. Horofyanuk notes that stories about this custom of Ukrainians at different times throughout the 20th century were recorded by A. Krymsky, S. Sherotsky, S. Kilimnik, S. Tvorun [7, p. 51].

The phantasmagoric notions of ancient Ukrainians turned the sun into a divine being, intelligent and perfect, who bears good, punishes evil, and stands guard over the truth. The anthropomorphism of the mythical image of the sun among the Eastern Slavs correlates with the characters of the solar mythology of other ethnic communities, in particular, Scandinavians, the peoples of Siberia, Georgians, and Bushmen, which are similar in their essence. Among the Evenks, the sun is represented by a woman, whose children light up the light of the day [15]. In the Christian picture of the world of the ancestors of the Ukrainians, the sun was transformed into a moral idea, a symbol of spiritual light, the all-seeing eye of God. I. Nechuy-

Levitsky recorded an old Galician song: “The bright Sun, the bright Sun complained to the dear God: I will not, God, go up early... Because the evil landlords came, On Sunday they cut firewood early...” [21, p. 12-13]. The connection between the sun and the eye is a common mythical motif among the peoples of Central America, as well as Egypt [15].

A diverse range of illusory ideas of Ukrainians about the sun as a mythical creature on the vast ethnological material collected in the early 20th century in different parts of Ukraine, was recorded by V. Petrov: the sun is holy, it is prohibited to talk about it; to see the holy sun belongs not to all, but only to a righteous man; only a righteous person sees the sun “playing” on Easter and on Ivan Kupala (Ion the Baptist); when the sun rises, people make sign of the cross to it; water from the snow collected at sunrise on the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (February 15) was considered holy, children were washed with it to protect against the evil eye and diseases, and livestock and poultry were irrigated to protect them from disease; all dickens hide before sunrise because it fears its righteous light; the sun does not peek out of the clouds on days when great sin has occurred; when a sinful person dies, the sun is not visible all day, and if the righteous, the sun certainly appears at least for the time of the funeral; from the pieces of the sun souls are born in the stars, and after the death of a person the star falls, but if a person is righteous, then the star returns to the sun, so paradise is in the sun. Among the spiritual practices of Ukrainian peasants-healers, there was the achievement of ascetic-cult preparation of secret visions – “solar visions” – the vision of the invisible sun [24].

A number of beliefs recorded by researchers go back to the Indo-European era, as they are in tune with similar ones in genetically unrelated ethnic groups. The role of the sun as a judge and shepherd of people is known to many ancient mythologies, and the ancient motif of the sun-creator of all beings, including man, researchers have found in Hittite hymns to the sun, dating from the 15th century BC. The idea of many suns, of the black sun, is inherent in archaic solar mythologies and can be traced in the poetic images of various national cultures [15].

In the context of folk ritual and magical traditions, our attention was drawn to magic spell. In these cultural texts, one can read the deep humanistic foundations of the life philosophy of Ukrainians: the spiritual beauty and greatness of the individual, social harmony, love and compassion for others. The sun was asked to give kindness, beauty, mercy and love to people and their same attitude to themselves: Good afternoon to you, the shining sun. You are holy, you are clear and beautiful, you are pure, majestic and respectful... – educate me, servant of God (name) before the masters, before the priests, before the kings, before the whole Christian world: kindness, beauty, loves and graces, so that there was neither more beloved nor dearer than the servant of God born, baptized, prayed (name). How clear, majestic, beautiful you are, so that I may be so clear, majestic, beautiful before all the Christian world forever and ever. Amen [5, p. 93].

The cult of the sun and its anthropomorphic image are reflected in Ukrainian heraldry. The first mention of the image of the sun with a human face on the banners of Podillia is found in the medieval chronicle written by the Krakow canon Jan Dlugosz. In the story about the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, the author writes: “Among the other detachments that arrived here, three were from the land of Podolsk. All their banners are with a sunny face on a red background.” The images of the sun with a face framed by sixteen straight and wavy rays, but already on a white background, on the banner of Podolia, were placed in the book Description of European Sarmatia by A. Gvagnini in 1581 [26, p. 32].

This historical heraldic symbol was inherited by the modern Ukrainian city of Kamyianets-Podilsky (photo 7). As one of the elements of the heraldic composition, the face of the sun is depicted on the coats of arms of the Vinnitsa, Zhytomyr, and Khmelnytsky regions of Ukraine.

Solar symbolism is present in modern Ukrainian egg painting, in embroidery, ornaments, in particular, in traditional Hutsul zgardas, on pottery and woven products. Stylized symbols of the sun in folk arts and crafts are svarga, an octagonal star, a circle of strokes depicting rays (Figures 9, 10, 11); however, in the minds of modern Ukrainians, these signs have partially or completely lost their protective meaning and are considered as a memory of traditions ancestors.



Figure 9 – Fragment of embroidery. Published: <https://www.google.com.ua/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fosvit.in.ua%2Fimages%2Fukraine%2Fderevlyany%2Fsvarga-vyshivka>. Date: 03.02 2021.



Figure 10 – Easter Egg. Published: https://etnoxata.com.ua/image/catalog/blog/27_03_2018/8.jpg Date: 05.02 2021.



Figure 11 – Hutsul contempt. Published: <https://www.google.com.ua/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fzgarda.com>. Date: 22.01 2021.

A vestige of the solar cult in the worldview of our ancestors, obviously, is the custom of burying the deceased facing east, which is still unshakable and is kept in the traditions of the funeral rite throughout Ukraine. Also, Orthodox Ukrainians traditionally cross to the east if there is no church or icon in sight.

6 Conclusion

Thus, considered in a comparative typological aspect, ancient folk poetry texts, descriptions of spiritual practices of past generations of Ukrainians and traditions preserved by the people in customs and rituals, in arts and crafts, testify to the deep sacred etymology of the mythologemes “tree of life” and “sun” in the picture of the world ancestors of the Ukrainian people and confirm their consonance with the mythopoetic images of other ethnic groups in the context of world culture. The forms of embodiment of these mythologemes in the worldview space of

Ukrainians of the 21st century, as expected, narrowed down to metaphorical images. The analysis shows that they not only did not get lost, but also acquired a tendency to be preserved due to the revival of national identity, knowing their ethnocultural origins, the possibility of which became real in the conditions of a sovereign state.

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I. Notes by A. Vatag from Gimbel Anna Grigorievna, born in 1945, a resident of the village. New Obodovka of Trostyanetsky district, Vinnytsia region, Ukraine.

II. Notes by A. Vatag from Ekaterina Vladimirovna Kozak, born in 1964, a resident of the village. Zozulinty of Kazatinsky district, Vinnytsia region, Ukraine.

III. Notes of M. Pilipak from Gorbatiuk Maria Artyomovna, born in 1931, a resident of the village. Mitinty, Khmelnytsky district, Vinnytsia region., Ukraine.

IV. Records of O. Pavlushenko from Zhuk Galina Stepanovna, born in 1951, a resident of the village. New Priluka, Lipovetsky District, Vinnytsia Region, Ukraine.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AI, AL, AM