Slavic Mitra. Benevolent and Legal Pole of the Function of Religious Sovereignty in the Slavic Mythology and Epic[*]

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Dumézil's discovery of two opposing and complementary faces of the highest power – on the one side legal and priestly, kind, benevolent, shining, near to world and people ("as Mitra"), and on the other side magic, violent, threatening, dark, invisible and distant ("as Varuna") – gave rise to a lot of research in various Indo-European traditions. Despite the impressive results of such research, the functional place of "Slavic Mitra" is still open. On the following pages we would like to try to indicate whom, where and how to look for this place. Introduced will be several hypotheses with the aim to show that just this functional place probably created an important and irreplaceable part, maybe one of the key pillars of the ancient Slavic model of the world.

Keywords: Slavs, religious sovereignty, legal pole, "Slavic Mitra"

As a basic source of substantial analogies we use the Vedic god Mitra. In the Rig-Veda there is only one hymn dedicated to him as to an independent divine being, far more often he creates an almost inseparable couple with Varuna that was often perceived as something integrated. He is worshipped at sunrise, his connection with the Sun and heaven explains the motives of the heaven ride. Horses, carriage, golden throne, metheglin, soma and cows are amongst his attributes. The name Mitra derives from the Indo-European root *mi-, *mei-, related to the idea of mediation, mutuality, legality, consent, and also to creating peace, friendship and affection (Топоров, 1988, 157–158).

In the Brahmanas commentary on Vedic hymns, according to Toporov the couple Mitra-Varuna has a fixed system of contradictions: beneficial-dangerous, close (internal) – distant (external), East – West, connected with the sun – connected with the moon, day – night, summer – winter, fire – water (the oldest Indian tradition distinguishes between two kinds of oath - on fire and on water), white – black (the corresponding colour of sacrifices brought to Mitra and Varuna), visible – invisible, related to the cosmos – related to chaos, collective – individual, social – natural, legal – magic. Mitra and Varuna work as basic classifiers in the model of the world of ancient Indians.

At the same time, within the framework of the divine couple are more complicated relations: Varuna hugs the cosmos from the outside, all others including the Sun and fire as pictures of the god Mitra are contained inside (it is possible to identify the core of cosmogonic myth with the two main characters Mitra and Varuna, in the imagination according to which Varuna put fire in the waters and the Sun to the heavens with a parallel determination of its path). So for example the symbol of Varuna is the waxing crescent and the symbol of Mitra is the waning crescent. In their relationship are also some conflict elements. Mitra as a husband expels the nymph Urvashi from heaven and curses her because she loves Varuna who lives on the seabed [Varuna's Indo-European kin are the Hittite god of sea Aruna, Lithuanian Velnias and Slavic Veles (Jakobson, 1969; Топоров, 1987, s. 217 – 218)].

As Dumézil mentions, in most cases Vedic poets do not distinguish between these two divinities whose names are mentioned **in the double dual** (in the sense "both" Mitra and Varuna) (Dumézil, 2001, 151) **which is the grammar form expressing the closest possible relationship**.[1] They are perceived as two heavenly consuls, bearers of the highest power, and if only one is mentioned, without any restraint the poets concentrate on him all aspects and means of such power (Dumézil, 1997, 129–130). In the Indian tradition a situation also arises where a poet or ceremonial leader crosses this level and wants to distinguish both gods to better highlight or use their solidarity. But in such cases various arising pictures have the same sense: Mitra and Varuna are the two poles of conceptual couples, counterparts whose juxtaposition defines two levels. It is possible to say that each element of one of them demands on the other side a homological element, and these couples – despite their difference but even at first sight – have something so clearly related that in each newly discovered pair we can define in advance which element is "as Mitra" or "as Varuna" (Dumézil, 1997, 130).

In ancient Iran the functional equivalent of Vedic Varuna became Ahura Mazda himself (Puhvel, 1997, 122), Iranian Mithra is a little lost in his shadow. Zarathustra for example made from Mithra an abstraction *Vohu Manah* (good mind, kindness), and also this "code name" expresses the basic feature of Mithra - graciousness, his element is cattle (also in the contemporary Persian word *mihr*, *mehr* means Sun and friendship). Ancient *dvandva* of the Vedic pair *Mitra-a-Varuna* continuously survived in Iran in the Avesta couple Mithra-Ahura, and also in **Misha-Auramazdah* in ancient Persia, which is substantiated in Plutarch as petrified theonym *Mesoromasdes* and in later Persian double theophoric names as *Mihrhormuz* (Puhvel, 1997, 122–123). While Ahura Mazda (as "Iranian Varuna") created the basic cosmological elements of the world, Iranian Mithra controlled the social organization of people, had a mediation function between upper and lower heaven, between heaven and the world, internal and external, divine and human. Thanks to this, he could gain some features that primarily belonged to his neighbour in the divine couple. In such way, we can explain the unexpected inclination of Avesta Mithra for war, destructive and enemy actions and killing, or his inclination to water that was primarily a feature of the other member of the divine pair. Similarly it is possible to explain the relation of Iranian Mithra to the night sky, as well as deepness and secrets (Топоров, 1988, 154–157).

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[1] According to Puhvel except the commonest form Mitra-and-Varuna, sometimes is mentioned only one of the members, and the dual form indicates the meaning "Mitra and the other" (it means he and from other "dvandva" composites proved Varuna) (Puhvel, 1997, 64).

According to Puhvel (1997, 124), the Iranian exaltation of Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom) and the suppression of Iranian Mithra were accompanying phenomenon of Zarathustra's monotheistic enthusiasm. Ahura as "the director of pantheon" left all the dirty mythical work for Mithra whose functions increased: as well as the protection of human settlements and social contracts similarly as Varuna employed spies and punished oath-breakers, he also punished people who breached agreements, was patron saint of warriors, kept the thunder and was lord of the rain (because the demonized Indra was discarded from pantheon). Iranian Mithra developed step-by-step to a god of warriors with solar tone and certain connotations of cattle and fertility.

The processes of a gradual levelling or even inversion of original functional contrasts of the divine couple in ancient Iranian tradition are already clear and distinctive. Basic antithetical functional contours remain legible, and in the case of Iranian Mithra it is still possible to target what Dumézil termed "own centre" (*centre propre),* which *"enables distinguishing marginal activities (activités marginale) from the substantial core of divine character"* (Budil, 2001, 613).

Language evidence: *"mier"* and *"jatka", * mirъ jatiti*

Vedic Mithra was generally called together with Varuna – its antithesis and complement in one, and always acted as kind god who is "controlling" (*játajati)* the people and gives "reconciliation, safety" – this is guaranteed by "the internal peace agreement" (*mitram)*. He is invoked with the supplicatory formula *"Give us reconciliation, give us peace!"* (Puhvel, 1997, 65).

In the fundamental study *Из наблюдений над этимологией слов мифологического характера,* V. N. Toporov (1969) showed the presence of terminology related to Mithra in Slavic languages. He highlighted two mainly general Slavic words with ancient roots: *"mir"* (peace), etymologically related to the Indo-Iranian word Mitra, and *"jatiti"* (its derivation is for example the Slovak word *jatka* (slaughterhouse) and the Hungarian word from the Slavic *pajta* (fence for cattle).

The old forgotten meaning of *"mir"* was also very comprehensively studied by Czech historian D. Třeštík in *"Mír a dobrý rok. Česká státní ideologie mezi křesťanstvím a pohanstvím"* (1988). The word peace, according to Třeštík, in ancient Slavic had a dominant position in the wide group of terms related to the social organization of people. The range of its meanings and its significant position is best documented in Russian vocabulary. One set of meanings defines *mir* in the negative form as the absence of conflict, hostility and war, and substantially covers the contemporary meaning of this word. The second, positive set already crosses it. It contains meanings such as "order, consent, unanimity, friendship, favour, bonhomie, tranquillity, and contentment". Only in Old Church Slavic or Russian has the word preserved meanings as "our world, land district, universe, world". The last set of meanings for us today is already unknown: "all people, whole world, human race, municipality, village municipality, assembly". Peace (*mir*) here is not the absence of war, but a "reconciliation" balance of different opinions and efforts, it is related to the internal condition of a community and not to its relation to other communities. This closed community as the world for itself is the reason *"mir"* also means world. This is the world of humans, unlike the world of non–humans, and is a world of organized human relations, the cultivated

humanized world unlike the non-cultivated world outside its borders - the world of forest, wild animals and barbarians" (Třeštík, 1988, 31). So peace (*mir*) is also a space concept (related to that it could be interesting to research the etymology of the significantly formally and also semantically similar Roman word *pomerium* that designates the sacred borders of a city – *"the boundary between imperium domi and imperium militiae, the Roman analogy of archaic symbolism of domus and agrios"* (Budil, 2001, 43).

Třeštík considers "*mir*" as a supernaturally defined eternal order, an originally sacral term that is etymologically linked with the name of the Indo-Iranian god Mitra, connected (together with Varuna) with the function of religious sovereignty. While Varuna embodied its magical side, Mitra united people into a social structure, and oversees it in a manner that secures peace, i.e. agreements and contracts. According to Třeštík, Slavs took over his function but not character. They even took over the special word determining Mitra's activity, "deployment of people to their own, proper, right place", creating a social structure. It was the word *jatati*, *jatovati* and the derived word *jata*, *jato* with the meaning of rallying point, ritual place or home where society had assembled *mir*. *Jatka* (diminutive form of *jata*) meant in Old Czech "pagan sacrificial ground". *Mir* and *jatiti* were to a certain extent complementary, and with *jatiti* was gained peace (Třeštík, 1988, 32). From these interesting findings it is necessary to specify one point – it is not productive to explain the spread of these words and their derivatives in Slavic languages with their Iranian influence; for their origin it is necessary to in common Indo-European heritage and how it indicates Russian Indo-Europeanist (Toporov).

Toporov (1969, 18–21) draws attention to the fact that the Indo-Iranian root "*jat*" is mostly used to indicate the activities of Mitra (sometimes Varuna and Arjaman), hence the great Indo-Europeanist E. Benveniste called the root "*jat-*" with the very accurate expression *"une verbe mitraïque"*. Its meaning is to deploy people to their own, adequately real and proper place. The Serbo-Croatian *jatiti se* has the meaning to assemble, in Old Czech the word *jatka* (diminutive form of *jata*) means pagan sacrificial ground, temple, ritual place ("*jiné pohanských bohů jatki*"). Old Church Slavic *jato,* Bulgarian *pojata*, Slovenian *pojata,* Slovak *jatka,* Polish *jata,* Upper Lusatia *jětka,* Lower Lusatia *jatka,* Ukrainian *jatka,* and Russian *jatka* are all expressions indicating the ancient Slavic past of the word. According to Toporov, they indicate the ancient meaning of the root **jat-*, which is a binding together in a collective, into a social structure (related to people), and herding, to stall, to flock (related to animals). These examples show a certain synonymy of "*mir*", and "*jato*", "*mir*"and "*jato*" is reached with the help of the activity indicated as "*jatiti*". On the basis of the above–mentioned it is possible to reconstruct ancient Slavic formulas such as **mirъ jatiti* (to assembly people to "*mir*"– community) which is exactly in compliance with Indo-Iranian "*mitró yátayati*" and "*mitró yatati*" (Топоров, 1969, 20). Such gathering also had a spatial–social aspect, the word "*jatka*" could also indicate a segregated municipality place for assembling *mir*.

Pursuant to Machek (1997, 364) the archaic institution *mir* even had at the beginning of the 20th Century in Russia this form: "*... an assembly of all adult inhabitants of a village. It took part whenever necessary to settle disputes (also private) of all adult inhabitants of a village, to divide land again, to schedule taxes, punish trespassers (drunkards, thieves, lazy–bones), to negotiate communal work and salaries with a landowner. Mir had absolute authority, so managed cases without delay with final validity*

and everybody respected its decisions. This archaic Russian situation could be passed into old times. Because all adult men and women took part in mir (they did it without pressure only for common interest) this why mir could be understood as a municipality... Because of this, the original mirъ is an assembly of a municipality"

The equivalent word for *mir* as a place for assembly could also be *jatka* (Old Czech meaning was "pagan sacrificial ground"), pursuant to Třeštík (1997, 305) we can imagine it as *kontina* – a sanctuary documented among Baltic Slavs, in such place assembled leaders for councils and (ritual) feasts. Originally it was probably a fence, maybe similar as that discovered at a Moravian fortified settlement in *Mikulčice,* or similar to the fort mentioned in Slavic Vagria that was destroyed with the assistance of Helmold, because the preserved meaning of *jatka* is "a fence where cattle are butchered".

Important clues highlight ritual feasts, the close connections of which with the first Indo–European function of religious sovereignty we tried to emphasize elsewhere (Golema, 2006). Such assemblies connected with feasts in the territory of Slovakia (and contemporary Hungary) is possible to see with indirect proof such as traces of toponymy, names of several municipalities such as *Jatov* in the south of Slovakia and *Jató* in Hungary (Stanislav, 2, 1948, 238), Slovak linguist J. Stanislav was puzzled by the etymology of these names.

In the Slovak language plenty of derivations from the old Indo-European root *jat-* (similar as in other Slavic languages) is preserved and modified *-jať* and *-jímať* derived from to accept (*prijať*) – perfective form, to accept (*prijímať*), friend (*priateľ*), to capture (*zajať*), to hug (*objať*), to hire (*najať*), etc.

From important derivations from root *-jat*, highlighting traces of the first function of religious sovereignty for us are especially interesting words like assembly (*snem*), friend (*priateľ*) and name (*meno*). S*nem* is maybe the best candidate indication archaic structure of folk assemblies of Western Slavic – it corresponds to the Russian *mir*. It is derived from the verb **jęti* with the suffix **sъn-,* similarly as the Polish *"sejm, soim"*, Boroń mentions them as synonyms of the more frequented name of Slavic tribe assemblies *"wieca"* (1999, 21–22).

A. V. Isačenko (1954) formulated an interesting hypothesis concerning the etymology of the word name (*meno, имя*). He supposed that the ancient Slavic starting point **jъm-men* (name) is derivable as a compound where root **jmo, * jęti* (take, accept) is the first part, and the other root **men* (approximate meaning is sign) are the same as in the compounds **znamę* (sign), **plemę* (tribe). In the word *znamenie* (sign, omen) the first part (*zna-*) is derivable from the verb *znať*(to know) (identification sign), in the word *plemeno* (tribe) the first part (*ple-*) is derived from *pled-ti, plod-ti* – give birth ("tribe sign") . Accordingly, Isačenko concludes: *"The original meaning of our * jъm-men could be accepted sign, accepted indication (prijatý znak, prijaté označenie = accepted sign, accepted indication)'... From the semantic aspect the connection between brať (take), prijať (accept, perfective form), prijímať (accept) and meno (name) is obvious. In tribal society the child received a name at birth, and its given name is in accordance with strict rules related to the cult of ancestors... But the second time receives a person got its name upon initiation – during reception into the community of adult men and women"* (Isačenko, 1954, 129). This hypothesis is not accepted generally, but is not reliably disproven, and in the framework of the above collected documents it seems to be very consistent. Receiving a name in the process of acceptance *jatiti* of the assembly

of *mir* during a folk assembly (*snem*) has deep logic, name giving as an organic part of *jatiti* is the basic competence of divine or human embodiments of religious sovereignty. Probably it was in the competence of those who led assemblies or ritual feasts (in Russian *bylinas* the head of such feasts was always "gracious prince Vladimir" whose name, consisting of two parts, could be read as "the one who is controlling (mastering) assembly (*mir*)".

Similarly "mithranian" institution *"thing"*, Germanic assembly that met on Tuesday, Tiwa's day (*Tuesday, god* Tý, Týr *is* "Germanic Mitra") – wrote in the most archaic form. *"Thing"* *was* voted for by chiefs and judges, where it was allowed to *"to sue and conduct trials"* (Tacitus, 1976, 339). The competence of *"thing"* was to accept and initiate young men among adults (also giving or approving a name) as follows: *"It is not a habit to wear a weapon until a community declares a person able to do so. During this act, one of the leaders or a father or relative ceremonially gives the young man a shield and spear. A male is also given a toga as its first award of young age. Until this moment they were considered members of the family, now they are citizens of the state"* (Tacitus, 1976, 340). Giving names is very probably in the sphere of that what Toporov and Třeštík understands as *jatiti* (Slovak *pri-jatie* = acceptance).[2]

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[2] Analogical activity was also done by two mysterious pilgrims in Polish Piast dynasty legend. Punishing the inhospitality of Duke Popiel and honouring the exemplary hospitality of poor ploughman Piast, they chose a new duke dynasty (Piast dynasty) to rule Poland. J. Banaskieszkiewicz (1986, 122–156) gives detailed analysis of this legend (in chapter *Fabula podania o Piaśce: analogie, motiv boga – gośćia, postrzyżyny*). In many analogies mentioned by him, missing in many details, was a similar motive of two pilgrims "deploying" before disabled bohatyr – mythical super human strong and warrior Ilja Muromets to adequate place for him in the known topic of bylinas *The Healing of Ilya Muromets* (*Исцеление Ильи Муромца*). Pilgrims forbade him to fight with some bohatyrs – convincing three functional explanations of the episode (Dumézil 2001, 660–664). Far more serious and so far unnoticed, the analogies of Piast dynasty legend contains story of Scandinavian heaven god Heimdallr (the oldest of the gods) whose palace is in high heaven. Heimdallr referred to himself as a Rígr wandering among people to choose a ruler for them. He came to the first poor house where couple Great – Grandfather and Great – Grandmother and is hospitably accepted, he spent three days in their matrimonial bed and fathered a son named "slave" (*praéll*) who is considered a son of the host couple. After he visited another richer household where he is hospitably welcomed by couple Grandfather and Grandmother and in the same way he fathered a son named Karl (free peasant). At the end he visited a luxury house where he is opulently welcomed by Father and Mother, the consequence of his stay is given the name Jarl (noble). This child remained with the host couple but at the end he adopts him. Offspring of Jarl are exclusively warriors, only the last "young Kon" (*Kon ungr*) is different from the whole group and became the first king (*konung*), his characteristic feature is knowing magic based on Runes. The aim of Heimdallr's this-worldly wandering is to choose from warriors (jarls) a king holding Scandinavian name *konung* (Dumézil, 2001, 190–191). Germanic word *konung* is etymologically close to the ancient Slavic word **kъnędzь* (Slovak "*knieža*", Russian "*князь*"), significantly "Mithranian" connotations of this word hereinafter). Heavenly god Heimdallr in fact creates ("*jatiti*") some prototype of complete three functional social structures, completed with category of lawless slaves. Dumézil convincingly discovers the ancient Indo-European origin of this topic, Indian relative Heimdallr is Vedic heavenly god Dyaus sometimes also called Dyaus-Pitar and its epic transformations (more details Dumézil, 2001, 188–197). In Lithuania is the heavenly god Dievas (according to Greimas "Lithuanian Mitra"), who descends from heaven to earth as a beggar to try the kindness of the people" (Beťáková – Blažek, 2012, 152). In Slavic traditions comes during the spring to people to Jarilo to grow grain and father children. Among ancient Iranians an electing ruler was also involved in two divine "Siamese twins", Persian kings in accordance with Plutarch thought that they were enthroned by some *Mesoromasdes*, in whose name Iranologist S. Wikander deciphered names of Mitra and Ahura Mazda ("Iranian Varuna") who in Iran were responsible for sovereign power (Turcan, 2004, 14). Similar functional characters resulting from the logic of three functional systems we allow, including a couple of heavenly pilgrims from Piast dynastic legend.

Pursuant to Třeštík, a Slavic assembly used to be a place of politic decision, courts, cult assemblies and markets: "*There met and intersected all the areas that we divide*" (1997, 302–303), we have to add that very probably before the Indo-European function of religious sovereignty was concentrated and mutually connected into such an internally coherent union – one was such a coherent union, more precisely it was its legal and kind "mithranian" pole (a more detailed analysis of the problem of Slavic assemblies is given by Boroń, 1999).

Třeštík states that Slavics adopted through Iranians Mitra's function a special word for Mitra's activity (*jatiti*) – but they did not adopt its character. The performance of these important functions demanded a domestic mythological guarantee with a high position in the pantheon with a function near to Vedic Mitra. Unlike Třeštík, we thus consider that such very likely personified "mithranian" function was not directly imported from Iranians, it was derived from common Indo-European heritage and the performance of such functions demanded domestic mythological guarantee (guarantees) with a high position in the pantheon, functionally homological with Vedic Mitra.[3]

Greek -*laos*/-*damos* and Slavic *-*pъlkъ*/*-mirъ*

The interesting and ancient Spartan institution of two kings was analysed by Bernard Sergent. He drew attention to the fact that kings of Sparta were hereditary from two linages *Agiades* and *Eurypontides*. The parallel and complementary impact of these two dynasties in doubled royal office depicts Sergen in an interesting way, based on the dualism of the first Indo–European function. Agiades, whose names obviously ended with -*laos* (with approximate meaning "people bearing the arms", for example *Agésilaos*, *Arkhélaos* and others) was chiefly occupied with war and conquering foreign territory, and was Varuna´s pole of sovereignty. Members of Euryptonides´dynasty whose names ended with *damos* (with approximate meaning "people assembly" for example *Arkhidamos*, *Eudamidas*), focused on the internal affairs of the state, and according to Sergent they represented the "mithranian" pole of royal function (1976, 3–52; also Budil 2001, 630).[4]

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[3] For example, the reason for the refusal of the first Czech kingdom was according to J. Kopál the power of this tradition. The story of the first Czech Kingdom was wrecked on Przemysl dynastic tradition as mythical scenario of appointing the prince also emphasizing the moment of contract among ancestors of the mythical Przemysl, the Ploughman and the politic society of Czechs. Under the light of this ideology taken over from the model of a "more despotic" "King", power seemed unacceptable because of the absence of highlighted "mithranian" element of the contract (Kopál, 2010).

[4] We think that very similarly the same Indo-European bipolar mytheme could have caused doubling of the highest power for medieval Slavic in Rügen where according to chronicler Helmold, the heathen of Svantovit had more power than the local "king" (probably in military issues, that from the perspective of an external observer were logically more important, the cult of Svantovit bears a relatively distinct Varuna connotation). We do not want to assess such situation as an inclination to theocracy, it is more probably an interesting case of dual reign and from the mythological point of view quite a logic allocation of competences. Probably a useful instrument seems to be the just allocation of competences among the axis Mitra–Varuna (Sergent discovered more interesting parallels between medieval Rügen and ancient Sparta, these parallels refer to a common Indo-European heritage (Sergent, 1994, 15–58). According to Puhvel (1997, 225) and old Teutons two types of leaders are proved. The first type was a warrior with a company of devotees – this type was characteristic for traveling tribes and was totally depending on Varuna-like Wotan/Odin. His name is *druhtinaz* and means the head of a group of warriors (formally

Contrariety of Greek *laos*/-*damos* has almost the exact meaning as Slavic couples with opposed meaning such as *-pъlkъ* (or a word with similar meaning *-vojь*, both are possible to explain as "people bearing arms")/*-mirъ* (with the meaning "assembly of people") that are extraordinarily frequented (obviously as the second component in the order) in very prestigious compound names of Slavic prince families of the pre-Christian period.

As the first part of such prince names there is very often an occurrence of derivatives from the roots *svęt-* and *jar-,* they are very often in Slavic pagan theonyms (we suppose they both have a privileged relationship with the Indo-European concept of religious sovereignty). According to the findings of Toporov and Ivanov, components of gods´ names like *Svęt-* or *Jar-* can be understood as various names of supernatural powers embodied in gods named in such way. Such components are one of the most productive in the old Slavic (mainly prince) name list, and are sometimes mutually altering (Svjato-polk, Jaro-polk, Svjato-slav, Jaro-slav, Svjato-mír, Jaro-mír (Иванов – Топоров, 1974, 185).

According to Toporov, names with the element *Svęt-,* despite not being the most frequent, are the most prestigious regardless of whether they belong to deities or people (Топоров, 1989, 30). Among the names of gods is a reconstructed known name of deity m *Svęto-* & *vitъ* (Zwantewit, Svantavit, Szuetevit) (Топоров, 1989, 38). Personal names of this sort merged with *-pъlkъ* , *-mirъ*, and also with *-slav, -gor, -bor.* First part *Svęt-* in names of deities and in anthroponyms primarily did not highlight some sacral aspect, but rather the idea of growth flourishing, abundance (for example name *Svętoslavъ* in Russian prince dynasties very often does not indicate sacral fame, but indicates whose fame is growing and spreading[5]). Among pre-Christian Slavic names with the element *Svęt-* are *Svęto-pъlkъ*; for example also Russian prince name *Святополк* (castle *Святополчь*), Polish *Swiętopełk*, *Świętopołk*, Czech *Svatopluk*, Elbe - Slavic *Svǫtopolk*, *Svętopolk* and others. Similarly are proven names like *Svęto-mirъ*; Russian *Святомиръ*, Polish *Świętomir*, Czech *Svatomír* (also the municipality *Svatomírov*), Serbian *Сватомир* and others. (Топоров, 1989, 39).

The Slavic root *jar-* carries in Slavic languages meanings such as stroppy, hot, fiery, enthusiastic, young, and green.[6] Except for its occurrence in anthroponyms (for example Jaropolk/Jaromír), it occurs in the name of deity Jarovít, this name of deity according to Ivanov and Toporov is significantly linked with the name of main deity

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and partially this word approximates the Slavic word *drugъ* (> Russian *друг* (a friend, mostly in, for example, a martial unit), *дружина* (bodyguards of prince)). This type of Varuna-like military leader – shaman is nearest bohatyr from bylinas *Волх Всеславьевич*, who is mainly and only the head of a martial unit: „*Стал себе Волх он дружину прибирать...*" (Былины, 1986, 90); about his Mithranian anti-pole Golema (2007, 168). The second type of Teuton leader was elective, blessed and officially sacred. He had the title *kuningaz*, (head of the family) or *thiudanaz* (leader of people). These two antagonistic types of leaders, according to Puhvel, were not mutually exclusive (Puhvel, 1997, 225). The similarity of Teuton *kuningaz* with ancient Slavic *kъnędzь* is interesting for us in terms of legitimate thinking about the important "mithranian" dimension of this archaic Slavic institution.

[5] An old Indo-European root *k'ųen-(to-)* (>*svęt-)* named not only growth, development of physical mass, material but also growth of internal fertile power and the spiritual energy linked to it. From the typical external expression, light or colour (colours of divinity are purple, red, orange, yellow) can be seen. (Топоров, 1989, 32).

[6] Very detailed analysis is given in chapter *Ярила и его соответствия у славян* (Иванов – Топоров, 1974, 180–216).

Sventovit. Relationship Svento-vit: Jaro-vit according to these scientists is as the relationship Perún : Jarilo[7].

Old compound (from two parts) Slavic, mainly prince names carry similar traces of polarity Mitra – Varuna as the name of Sparta kings. It is possible to suppose that an old concept distinguishing between the two faces of religious sovereignty was also among Proto-Slavic still alive, appreciated and analytically used in some way.

Phenomenon of mythical peaceful persons-functions (often parallel ploughmen) in Slavic epic

Applicable for Slavic text materials could mainly be considered key Dumézil´s postulates: the oldest epic creates epic heroes according to a perfect picture of the mythical world, and historical facts therein are so hidden and changed there is not even a reliable trace. Dumézil in *Mýtus a epos* (2001) dedicated an important chapter to Russian bylina epic and Slavic and Baltic folklore indicated as establishing the foundations for the future. Encouraged in such prognosis, we have a reason to look for more valuable literal relics from the Proto-Slavic and Indo-European distant past.

We assume that characters of non-militant mediators, arising in fragments of the Slavic Epic (Przemysl, The Ploughman in mythological "Maiden´s War" and his ancestor prince Neklan in mythical "Lucans´ war" from Czech medieval chronicles, gracious prince Vladimir, or bohatyr Dobrynya Nikitich from Russian bylinas) can reveal their functional value in the background of dualism Mitra-Varuna.

Difference (polarity) of magic and law represents the basic pillar of three functional systems, and if we can with reason consider its existence among Slavic, we can allow that the first function preserved the two above-mentioned distinguishable dimensions. This hypothesis will create one of the premises of our following probabilistic opinions. If it is possible to prove in epic (bohatyr *Волх*) and in pantheon (Veles) a Varuna-like pole of sovereignty, the system also supposes the presence of his antipode "x", the occurrence of which in epic or pantheon is more probable and perhaps necessary.

There is a serious reason to suppose that the mithranian aspect of religious sovereignty demanded particular, important and probably personified "entry" in myths or epics, as in the "omnivorous tribal encyclopaedia" (as a specific successor of ancient Slavonic myth-epics is necessary to consider a legend, which mainly in unofficial folkloric variants absorbs and adapts pagan mythological topics[8]). If it was a being who had "mithranian" kindness and peacefulness, such being was suitable for practically total Christianization,[9] so it's necessary to be aware that: *"Charity is not exclusively a Christian virtue"* (Dodds, 1997, 155). It means that also pagans could analytically think about this type of mutual human relationship supported by a different text tradition. Paradigmatically is the destiny of "Lithuanian Mitra" (Greimas, 2007, 153–155), the

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[7] In a prepared and more extensive publication, we would like to suggest and substantiate an interpretation solution built on possible couple relationship Sventovit ("Slavic Varuna", Veles) : Jarilo ("Slavic Mithra").

[8] About taking over important, for example, also "legal" pagan competences by Christian saints in the Slavic environment also wrote Miriam Mencej (2001).

[9] About targets relating to pagan cults as a period mission method writes Rastislav Kožiak (2007).

heavenly god Dievas who gave the Christian God many of his competences and even his own name.

Purely formal analysis resulted in postulating the existence of a mythological–epic character "x" - function, or more precisely, a set of functions of such person could be expressed with the formula *mirъ jatiti*. This affirmation has to be consequently documented in particular text material. We are going to try to focus on several characters of Slavic myth–epic, and we will also focus on something that Dumézil called "genuine centre" (*centre propre*), which *enables to distinguish marginal activities (activités marginale) from the substantial core of deity* (Budil, 2001, 613) and its epic transformations. We will research the ranges of mythical and epic attributes, and find among them typical, invariant features derivable from the Indo-European mithranian prototype. We will work on the presumption that into Slavic, fragmentary preserved (so it can be reconstructed) myth–epic was, similarly as in the other Indo-European ethnically linguistic traditions, very studiously and ingeniously transformed at least the key characters (if not the whole pantheon) or configurations of characters (also interesting are classification triads favoured among all Indo-Europeans).

Continuing the mithranian character-function (originally divine with a high position in the ancient Slavic pantheon) it is possible to find and maybe convincingly identify more Slavic text traditions. We would like to highlight a hate of war (often linked with ritual ploughing[10]), this occurs as an indicator markedly often in the attribute range of this "walking function".

Looking for the functional value of such characters of the Slavic epic, such as mythical Czech princes-peacemakers (sometimes also ploughmen) Przemysl, The Ploughman and his ancestor prince Neklan or exemplary hospitable Polish mythical Piast (Galus Anonymus called him ploughman, (*arator*), peasant (*agricola*)) or "ploughing" bohatyr from bylinas Mikula Seljanin (who is harvesting wheat, brews beer, provides peasants with food and drink, and manages their (peace) issues as a "deputy" named by his counterpart, warlike (like Varuna) conqueror named *Вольга* (*Волх*)[11]) – all these examples it is possible to use for parallel comparison with the Roman "Mithranian" the half mythical king Numa who was elected king after the warlike demigod and creator of Rome "Varuna–like" Romulus.

Numa finishes Romulus´ work and gives the other pole to the Roman king mythology (Dumézil, 2001, p. 150) as king, and the peaceful king-priest also establishes Rome in a way to give him law (Dumézil, 1997, 151). The initial human substance taken over after Romulus is a community whose power still grows, but according to Plutarch this community is *affected by feverish burning because it was at the very start with some kind of courage and crazy fearlessness of the most impudent and most warlike men who came from everywhere; at the same moment their pabulum was often war expeditions and continuous wars...* (Plutarch, 1967, 109). During the reign of King Numa, according to Plutarch for 43 years there was *totally and on all sides eliminated war*, the

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[10] We are more occupied with the problem of ritual ploughing in another study (Golema, 2007).

[11] *Тут проговорил Вольга Святославович:*
   Ай же ты, Никула Селянинович!
   Я жалую от себя тремя городами со крестьянами.
   Оставайся здесь да ведь наместником,
   Получайка ты дань да ведь грошовую (Былины, 1986, 100).

Roman nation was "tamed and soothed" and everybody (also in the surrounding city) longed for *lawfulness and peace, they longed to cultivate land, to bring up children in peace, and worship deities... So due to this, even poetic hyperbole was enough to describe the condition of things at that time: in the iron handgrips was a web of black spiders, or: rust eroded spears and two-edged swords, there were not the sounds of copper bugles anywhere and eyelids were not stolen from a dream.* (Plutarch, 1967, 107). Numa, after being elected king hesitated to accept the royal function, because he was afraid of many "perhaps undesired wars", who dedicated to the city "Varuna like" wild and stormy, he was afraid of the deeply rooted habit of Romans *"to grasp the weapon"* – a habit that was rooted due to *"war happiness"* (a similar violent and marauding action endangered the salt trade – so also Mikula Seljanin had to cope with such behaviour). Numa emphasizes his *enormous and innate love to peace, non-violent occupancy, and to people meeting to serve gods and to have friendly feasts, and to everybody who cultivates lands and shepherds his herds* (Plutarch, 1967, 107). This, chronologically second Roman half-mythological king really embodies the peaceful, kind and priest aspect of sovereignty. When Numa *diverted all people from violence and arms* and taught them farming (and also ploughing), also neighbour tribes started to appreciate him. (Livius, 1979, 69). To become praiseworthy for foreigners–neighbours, he had to *found again with law, justice and good practice the new city that had been founded before with power and arms* (Livius, 1979, 64), if we use old Slavic terminology he had to create *mir*.

So we can conclude: the legendary mist veiling the history of establishing Rome in old chronicles and legends is not isolated in the Indo-European population. It is written into the old Indo-European scheme, which demanded that society reach integrity and maturity, and accumulated more actions of more types of kings – for example in Roman chronicles - epics *after the wild magic ruler (Romulus) peacekeeper is coming (Numa). In such way it is projected epic proceeded couple Varuna – Mitra to the diachronic level* (Puhvel, 1997, 107).

Probably such an ideology in pictures with "tribal encyclopaedia" whose key "entries" are divided according to three functions we meet also in Slavic myths (and its continuing in Russian bylina epic or Czech dynastic legends). Let's have a closer look to the character-function of the Russian bylina epic with the significant name Dobrynya. It is an interesting bohatyr, who does not like arms (he fights with a dragon and uses "a cap of Greek soil" – "*шапкой земли греческой*"). It is very significant that he does not like fighting and he hates to kill, he blames his mother for delivering him bashful ("*Зародила ты на свет меня несмелого...*" (Былины, 1986, 239)), but his great and precious merit is politeness (*вежество*) – thank to this he propitiates conflicts (for example in bylina topic *Илья Муромец в соре с князем Владимиром*).

After he defeated the dragon Zmey Gorynych (Varuna-like pole of religious sovereignty), Dobrynya did not kill the dragon but concluded with it an eternal and unbreakable treaty about dividing the world and then released him (according to some variants he is even "cross brother" of the dragon). When the spirit of the above-mentioned treaty is the first time breached by the dragon Zmey Gorynych, Dobrynya renews the legal status based on treaty (he is the only one to do it without fighting, discussion and blood *"Без бою, без драки, кровопития"* (Былины, 1986, 80). In less militant and for us more interesting variants of bylina, Dobrynya was successful,

and in others the dragon refused the "peaceful solution" and consequently is killed. Dobrynya saved and released from the dragon´s lair the kidnapped niece of prince Vladimir and many prisoners. Mention of the eventual killing of Zmey Gorynych as a logical "military" solution for the situation is missing (for sure not accidentally) in more (more archaic?) variants of bylina. It is more a punitive expedition of a lawyer than a soldier. Dobrynya left the dragon alive, and labelling him as typical dragon killer – as is done in part of bylinas *Добрыня и змей* – does not have enough support in the text.

If Dobrynya receives a military task unavoidably connected with killing the innocent, tears of fathers, mothers, widows and orphans, he regrets he was even born:

> *Я не ездил бы, Добрыня, по чисту полю.*
> *Я не убивал, Добрыня, неповинных душ,*
> *Не пролил бы крови я напрасная,*
> *Не слезил Добрыня отцей, матерей,*
> *Не вдовил бы я, Добрынюшка, молодых жон,*
> *Не спущал бы сиротать да малых детушок...* (Былины, 1986, 452).

He is really too sensitive to be a representative of an old Indo-European function of military power (despite the fact that at first sight he seems to be such representative). His aversion to war is also highlighted by Dobrynya´s mother, who emphasizes that God gave strength and boldness to other bohatyrs more intimately connected to military function. Dobrynya was principally given non-military qualities, and the most praised quality is *вежество* (Былины, 1986, 452).

Dobrynya Nikitich after Ilya Muromets (transformed Thunderer – the Lord of Thunder) is the second most important bohatyr of Russian bylina epic. He is part of the popular bohatyr trio – the third of the trio is Alyosha Popovich – Dobrynya´s "cross brother" and also his Varuna–like antipode given with boldness. But Alyosha absolutely does not have Dobrynya´s typical good manners – *У Алеши вежство нерожденое...*, (Былины, 1986, 486). For Alyosha, "pop" (priest) origin is typical manly: boldness, fearlessness, aggressiveness, inventiveness, and slyness. He can deceive even his "cross brother" Dobrynya Nikitich. Alyosha likes to talk big, he is arrogant and mischievous. Alyosha´s miraculous birth links him with Volkh (*Волх*), he has magic abilities (*хитростям-мудростям*) of Volkh and from the bohatyr trio he is the nearest to Veles.

Dobrynya has a forging role in this key Russian bohatyr trio, thanks to his effort and abilities, the trio keeps in touch despite Ilya and Alyosha moving apart. Highlighted is Ilya´s peasant origin, Alyosha´s priest origin, and Dobrynya´s prince origin – so he is the nearest to the gracious Prince Vladimir (he shares with him various aspects of mithranian functions) and his relatives. His responsibility is to collect taxes, he finds a bride for the prince, he talks with *skomorokhs* and as a reliable lawyer verifies the bragging of bohatyrs. Repeatedly and constantly is emphasized his *вежество* – politeness, "good manner". In bylinas he sings, plays the gusle, skilfully plays chess, and defeats a formerly unbeatable chess expert Tatar khan. Alyosha deceitfully wins Dobrynya´s wife over, and Dobrynya wants to punish him for that. Ilya mediates in reconciliation of both "cross brothers" (a similar conflict for woman occurs between Mitra and Varuna).

Toporov interprets the analysed bohatyr trio as a "trisection" originally one person-function related to war, he worked on the assumption that all three bohatyrs are dragon slayers (Топоров, 1998, 97–101) and all three have Veles-like features. We do not agree with such interpretation because Dumézil already referred to the usefulness of distinguishing between cases of "strengthening triplication" (when from the aspect of three functional structures homogeneous triads are only particularly analysed as one of three functions) and more interesting triads with classifying and synthesizing validity (Dumézil, 2001, 646), they are coming as a cross section through the whole three functional system, or at least through its one important part. In the case of the three bylina bohatyrs, as we try to show, there is a classifying triad where the just mithranian lawyer has an essential and irreplaceable position.[12]

Old Czech Chronicle of Dalimil (created at the start of 14th century) in the chapter *Ot Neklana múdrého* (From Neklan, the wise) describes the character of this half mythic predecessor of the Przemyslid prince family as follows:

> *Jeden do sebe nedostatek jmieše,*
> *že ovšem **neudaten** bieše...*
> *Toho jemu za zlé ijeden neměj;*
> *nebo to každý za jísto jměj,*
> *že **bláznóm jest hrdinstvo dáno**,*
> ***múdrým neudatstvie vzdáno.***
> *Neb múdrý rozličně příhodu rozkládá,*
> *až jej i mine ta sváda.* (Staročeská kronika, 1988, 251).[13]

Neklan lacks bravery, but there is something he is gifted with. Such gift we can quite correctly and precisely name with the Russian word *вежество.* Neklan has good manners that help him prevent open, destructive and violent conflicts. In the structure of this old epic about the mythical "Lucans war", rewritten by "so-called Dalimil" who chose it and maybe gave it a new poetic form (respecting the deep structure of the

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[12] In heroic epic or myth it is possible to gain the attributes of a dragon slayer quite easily and undeservedly, such attributes may not indicate "the most essential core" of studied feature-function. Such dragon slayer´s attributes gained (in a very interesting way, according to Eliade) for example Dieddonné de Gozon, the third Grandmaster of Military Hospitaller´s Order of Saint John of Rhodes, who claim credit for killing the dragon from Malpasso. In the legend Prince Gozon has the attributes of St. George who was known as a dragon slayer. It is not necessary to highlight that such information is not mentioned in documents from this period, the legend is dated two hundred years later. It is possible to say, from this simple fact, that prince Gozon was considered a hero as he was classified to this category, archetype, who despite his historic features gave him mythical biography and such biography included the fight with the monster. His biography has been reconstructed according to mythical standards (Eliade, 1993, 32). Something similar probably happened to Russian bylina bohatyrs, their original archaic biography was later reconstructed and completed in accordance with the standards of heroic epic, their originally distinct functions were equalized, even inverted. According to Dumézil *in the heading of these heroic creations* is possible to prove old three-function ideology – bylina creators *decorated it with fresh eruditions – apocryphal, fairy tale topics, fragments of history* (Dumézil, 2001, p. 663) and between such obvious "decorations" we cannot omit dragon slayer motives.

[13] "He had one mistake, /**he was not brave**.../But no-one blamed him for that,/because everybody thinks for **sure,/that fools are gifted with heroics/ and wise ones are not brave**./Because the wise consider situations in many ways/and at the end avoids violent conflict." (translated M. G.)

previous text preserved by verbal tradition), it is not an imperfection but an advantage and important functional attribute:

> *Toho daru Neklan nejměješe,*
> **múdrost jmaję, neudaten bieše.**
> **Zemi dobřě oprávieše,**
> **ale války velmi sě bojieše** (Staročeská kronika, 1988, 251)[14]

When attacked by his relative, more militant, expansive, cruel, mean, almost demonic Przemyslid Vladislav (in the older version of Cosmas of Prague Vlastislav, the name is anagrammatically linkable with the name of theonym Veles) who is blessed with bravery, magic abilities (embodiment of Varuna-like pole of sovereignty – to his army belongs a huge flock of obedient predatory birds, prepared for attack), Neklan calls his best warrior, brave Styr, and he starts to consult him:

> *... kako by mohl Lučan bez bojě zbýti,*
> *řka: "Lépe jest jim něco otpustiti*
> *než sě s nimi zavražditi"* (Staročeská kronika, 1988, 260).[15]

"So-called Dalimil" is a medieval Czech chronicler (mentioning mythical–epic Lucans war) who most significantly acts as an apologist for non-military, only seemingly cowardly acting of this "wise" prince and respects (on the basis of pretexts) the most precise record value of old couple mytheme present in ancient epic.[16] In our opinion he does not create a line of reasoning, he finds it ready in verbal epic–myth.

Such open aversion to war, typical for some characters-function such as Neklan and Dobrynya, becomes unexplainable abnormality if we would like to interpret them as the embodiment of military function (in such cases we have to ignore the quoted paragraphs). A more correct solution is the revision of the obviously simplified three column "table" of relations inside the system of three functional Indo-European ideology (1. religion, 2. war, 3. fertility and production) – such table with its elegant and ordered strength sometimes seduces us into placing these non-warrior persons in the third column of production and fertility – but such placement is only making a virtue out of necessity.

We suggest adding to this "relationship table" a fourth column – it means to divide the first function of religious sovereignty into magic and law, exactly in the spirit of Dumézil´s explanation of polarity Varuna–Mitra. This solution has, we think, more essential advantages. If we place character-functions such as Neklan, Dobrynya, Przemysl The Ploughman, Mikula Seljanin and generous Prince Vladimir to the legal pole of religious function, their pacifism or open aversion to war (to a greater or lesser

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[14] "Neklan does not have such gift,/he is wise but not brave./He governs country well/but he is afraid of war very much." (translated M. G.).

[15] "... how to get rid Lucans without fight,/he said: "Sometimes is better to retreat in something/than to murder each other." (translate M. G.).

[16] Duality Varuna – Mitra is not written here in diachronic order but one beside other -synchronously, this epic solution has to result with conflict inside the dynasty where are typically "presented" opposite styles of ruling.

extent, expressed explicitly or implicitly in texts) similarly as an episodic ploughing (that is seemingly "illogical" if perceived only as an attribute of the third function of fertility, or production results in the acceptance of sovereign prince power) stops being an unexplainable abnormality and starts being an expected result.

For example, instead of "prince–non-prince" Neklan whose competence focuses in the "table" of functional relationships is obviously outside the war function, the army is led by brave Styr. This "professional soldier" dressed in Neklan´s armour (trick of wise Neklan) wins the war, he fulfils his task, his epic existence loses reason and maybe due to this reason he dies in battle. In the final of Lucans war, it again shows the functional substance and sovereign power of Prince Neklan. When his people find the hidden small son of killed and defeated Vladislav, Neklan does not order his killing[17], he appoints a tutor for him, and gives him his father´s title and local power (he is dividing the world with him). In contrast to the mercy and pity of Neklan, the appointed tutor Durynk presents himself as a haughty and dull representative of military function. He is a soldier characterised by *unpleasant cruelty, weak mind, inability to control anger or get rid of a grudge* (Dumézil, 2001, 67), as mentioned Dumézil in another context. The contrast of Neklan and Durynk – they represent two "alive functions" - is symptomatic. Durynk unlike Neklan cannot suppress the violent urge inside him, and contrary to the orders of the prince, he wants only to cut the child´s head off. He brings the head to Neklan to demonstrate his devotion. Neklan is horrified, and instead of the thanks that Durynk had expected in his (functionally conditioned) dullness, Neklan instead orders him to commit suicide as punishment for this act.

The successor of the same Indo-European mythical–epic tradition, mythic king Yudhisthira from the Indian epic Mahabharata, sends to war his brothers, but he (typical of the generous Prince Vladimir from bylina epic) stays in the palace and does not participate in the war expeditions and: *He treats prisoners of war as a sovereign lord. Gives them freedom and releases them*, his king power does not include anything tyrannical, capricious or immoral. At the end he fights: *despite the fact he has a strong inclination withdraw* and battle *scares him* (Dumézil, 2001, 72). He mentions everything possible to say against war: enemies are his close relatives, some are very dear, others for their age, nature or function very venerable, so because of that a duty to fight against them is something criminal: *is fighting a right way to rightfully decide any dispute?* (Dumézil, 2001, 100). Yudhisthira *does not like war for which he does not have adequate professional competence* (Dumézil, 2001, 64). He is a rightful, virtuous, pure and pious king – a real dharmaraja – but without soldierly qualities and even without bravery, exactly as a human representative of the "mithranian half" of sovereignty should be (Dumézil, 1997, 145). Neklan, Dobrynya, Yudhisthira and Numa are characters distinctively specified by their function, *they are from one piece of cloth, and a man could with certainty forecast how all of them would act in every new situation* (Dumézil, 2001, 668).

The end of such consideration could be formulated like this: Czech half mythical Przemyslid Prince Neklan or bohatyr Dobrynya from Russian bylinas are epic successors of old (ancient Slavic) tradition. They are most likely moulded from divine

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[17] *Despite he was a pagan prince, as a good Christian he saw him and showed his mercy and spared him for his youth and pulchritude* (Kosmova Kronika česká, 1975, 52).

prototype. In this case it is not productive tsee a result of foreign "influence", but without this influence, the Slavic myth–epic would not have grown from the amorphous, embryonic, pre-system and pre-epic stages (from the point of view of naïve evolutionism and antiquated comparative "influencelogy"). Such very unambiguous and functionally interpretable successions refer to ancient Slavic, even Indo-European text horizon and wider functional (and absolutely not amorphous, pre-mythical and pre-epic) system of thinking; and Slavic inherited, continuously developed and adapted Indo-European ideology – with still readable value in its framework. They are alternations of very old Indo-European character-function (representing the legal pole of religious sovereignty) as precious residua of literature prehistory as half-mythical Roman king-peacekeeper Numa or King Yudhisthira, who did their best to prevent war among relatives. Such Slavic mythological–epic residua were recorded despite the aversion to pagan themes, and so were recorded too late and too fragmentary, but they remain indirect but serious proof of "Slavic Mitra".

Uspenskij´s Veles (and "the other" in his shadow)

Uspenskij in his essential monograph *Филологические разыскания в области славянских древностей. (Реликты язычества в восточнославянском культе Николая Мирликийского*, 1982) very systematically catalogues and comments on the pagan parts of the folkloric picture of St. Nicholas in Russia. He works on the thesis that this popular saint in Russia probably became a substitute for Slavic Veles, and he also assumed his key attributes and competences. Uspenskij perceives Veles mostly (and only) as a rival of Perun the Lord of the Thunder and Lightning. The relationship between these two deities (Veles and Perun) is full of conflicts and contrasts – Uspenskij considers them an essential ancient Slavic and Indo-European myth. Uspenskij "reads" (slightly a priori) all legend topics linked to St. Nicolas through such, sometimes too much, reducing optic. According to Uspenskij, from the outset the significantly very contrasting features of divine rivals could in time be complicated by various text transformations leading for example to the neutralisation and sometimes inversion of the initial contrasts. In such way, Uspenskij explains some clear abnormalities (non-Veles or non-Varuna) features and functions in the folkloric picture of St. Nicholas, he puts aside the distinct proneness of folkloric St. Nicholas to be bound in the complementary couple with some suitable being from his surroundings (so proneness to work in a complementary and equal couple) or also similar proneness to "split" into a pair of similarly linked beings.

In our opinion this noticeable "proneness" of folkloric St. Nicholas could not be explained consistently and without interpretation of the violence only in the framework of the mentioned binary scheme. It would be necessary and useful to add to the basic binary scheme (fighting of Lord of the Thunder with his enemy) a third member ("Slavic Mitra"). Our solution is mainly based on Baltic analogies, where the head of the pantheon is not only the conflict couple Perkunas-Velnias but also the strange classification trio – in the framework of this trio "Baltic Mitra" heavenly god Dievas also has an important role. (Топоров, 1987, 153–158; Greimas, 2007).

Folkloric St. Nicholas in more aspects is more or less significantly a dual being, he has, for example, an interesting "couple" relationship with the Christian God, the

pagan prototype of this important relationship could not be consistently and without contradiction explained as a relationship between the Lord of Thunder and his rival. Into folk tradition passed an interesting imagination, that Mikuláš (*Микола*) is part of the Trinity (such "adjusted" Trinity consisted of the Saviour, Our Lady and Nicolas (Успенский, 1982, 7) we feel the classification triad of pagan myth beside this triad[18]. In Russian folkloric texts Nicolas is sometimes named as a god (official church formula *Микола святитель Богом силен* is in folk tradition changed into *Святитель Микола, силен Бог наш*. Similarly St. Nicolas is sometimes called "god of sea" (*морский бог*), "burlak god" (*бурлацкий бог*), "god of beer" (*пивный бог*), and "general god" (*общий бог*) (Успенский, 1982, 10).

Uspenskij also mentions very interesting documents, with St. Nicholas not being identified with God but rather creating a couple with him, or for example standing beside God in the position of **independent and equal divine being** (Успенский, 1982, 13), the necessary coordination of activities in the framework of a divine pair could be explained with reference to the previous treaty about dividing the world. In the popular and well known kind of icon (so called *Деисус*– typical three member composition with Christ in the centre with Our Lady and St. John the Baptist) St. Nicholas can fully replace St. John the Baptist – it is the expression of the function of the mankind, mediator between man and (Varuna-like faraway) God (Успенский, 1982, 14).

It is interesting that the original form of this saint's name was among Slavic phonetically changed – the original Greek *Νικόλαος* (*Nikólaos*) was changed into the Russian *Микола, Микула.* Uspenskij, with reasons, considers this form with the letter "M" at the start, to the west Slavic element in Russian. He draws attention to the Polish *Mikolaj,* Czech and Slovak *Mikuláš,* Lusatian *Miklaws*, similar forms also asserted in the environment of Pannonian Slavic as for example Slovene *Miklavž* and Hungarian *Miklós* unambiguously borrowed from the Slavic (Успенский, 1982, 20). According to Uspenskij, this formal change of the first letter "N" to "M" cannot be explained phonetically, for now the most accepted explanations seems to be a contamination of the name Nicolas (Mikuláš) with the name Michal (through the German Michel)[19]. It is supposed that this form reflects the contamination of the names St. Nicolas and archangel Michael – it happened in the west of the Slavic settlement in the period before Cyril and Methodius, in the oldest period of Slavic Christianization (Успенский, 1982, 20). We can perform experimental replenishing to this interesting hypothesis – we can add to the two contaminated names a third - explaining the direction of this contamination (N > M). During the adaptation of the name of the being with "mithranian features" and functions in the Slavic environment, various domestic words could also be involved derived from the Indo-European root *mi-*, *mei-* related to the idea of mediation, mutual exchange (and measure), lawfulness, consent, building the peace, friendship, and affection (for example *mir*).

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[18] This triad probably guaranteed similar functions as any other classification triad, it more referred to the Indo-European distant pass: *During the reign of Artaxerxes II in the old Persian text occur for the first time three deities, they are the most important protectors of empire and dynasty: Ahura Mazda, Anahita and Mithra* (Oběti ohňům, 1985, 318).

[19] This form of name such as *Michola*, *Micholt*, *Michno* (*Mychno, Michna*), *Michon*, *Mychnyk*, *Misz* (*Mysz*), *Miszka*, *Miszec*, *Miszek*, *Miszak*, *Miska* occur for example in old Polish language as Nicolas (Успенский, 1982, 20).

The proven Russian habit of placing into the hands of a deceased person a letter to St. Nicolas – who was considered the guard of heaven's gate - refers to some eschatological functions of Slavic deity (or divine couple), whose substitution became St. Nicolas (Успенский, 1982, 25). The cult of St. Nicolas is typical mainly for northern parts of the east Slavic settlement, in the south, (including the Ukraine) the cult of St. Nicolas corresponds to the cult of St. George (for us it indicates that both substitute in folk imagination the same deity or a closely connected complementary divine couple). Uspenskij explains this equality as a product of the above-mentioned equalizations and inversions of originally irreconcilable contrasts between the Lord of the Thunder (St. George) and Veles (St. Nicolas). In the area of south Russia where St. George is placed above St. Nicholas the latter has a "Moscow nature" (*породы московской*), and it is interesting for us that he has a more complementary rather than conflicting relationship with Russian George (*русьскому Юрку*). In the Ukraine, the cult of St. Nicolas is generally less developed. In Ukrainian superstition, when we come to "the world beyond" then St. Nicolas and St. George divide (without conflict, it seems in compliance with the "contract") the incoming deceased in accordance with the code as follows: *... як прийдемо на той світ, то за москалів буде Микола, а за нас Юрій. То як іде москаль, Микола... каже: "міи" тай баре собі, а як наш, то Юрій собі бере...*[20] (Успенский, 1982, 32). Uspenskij believes St. George is a hypostasis of Perun. We do not agree with that, as in the folk cult behind these two saints with homological competences we can probably see more of a dual being – Veles as "Slavic Varuna" (and the other in his shadow – "Slavic Mitra"). To Veles belongs (probably) the foreign deceased – "Moscals" (inhabitants of Moscow, Russians) and "our dead" belong to "Slavic Mitra" (George). This motive implies an agreement about dividing the world into two deities.

Uspenskij as a variant of a basic myth about the fight of the Lord of the Thunder with his enemy, interprets folk legend about the prophet Elijah and St. Nicolas, where Nicolas deceives Elijah and saves the crop of a poor peasant (more details Téra, 2009, 280–284). Uspenskij explains this legend in a way that in the folk texts, good (from below) protecting Nicolas is confronted with terrible (from above) punishing Elijah. For scientists researching Russian folk cults, St. Nicholas in folk imagination is usually better and more merciful than the prophet Elijah who is vengeful and atrocious. Nicolas is usually a good protector of people (Успенский, 1982, 34). The relationship of the prophet Elijah and St. Nicolas in this legend is exactly the same as the conflict relationship between Perun and Veles. In our suggested table, it's more probably a relationship of one guarantee of military function (Perun, the Lord of the Thunder or his "Varuna-like" rival, demonic Veles) on the one side, and the sly "mithranian" lawyer on the other side who is unlike the two above-mentioned and nearer to the third function of production and fertility. This is why he is protecting it (using typical sly legal tricks).[21] A rare case of inversion occurs in the variant of the legend, where God

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[20] ... when we come to the world beyond, for "Moscals" there will be Nicolas, for us George. When comes a Moscal, Nicolas will say "mine" and he will take him, when he comes out, George will take him...

[21] Dumézil draws attention to the fact that also law when clever used becomes a tool how to become stronger, how to win and often destroy a rival in the same way as a fight. For example "Germanic Mitra", due to one legal trick offered his right hand as a guarantee for a useful but false statement. He stayed one-handed and could no longer be a mediator of reconciliation among people (Dumézil, 1997, 134).

Himself misleads Nicolas and in this way saves the crops of a peasant (Успенский, 1982, 41). This legend implies the "duality" of St. Nicolas, and only Nicolas acts as a terrible, punishing (so Varuna-like) being (Veles), and God Himself plays the contrary role of sly, "mithranian" lawyer, good protector of people.[22]

The distinctively interesting couple relationship of God and Nicolas in similar texts is interesting to us. Nicolas acts as an independent and equal being, in the relationship withGod. According to the belief from the Moscow region, for example when God dies, St. Nicolas takes his position (Успенский, 1982, 38), as the power to oppose God is often ascribed to Nicolas (Успенский, 1982, 42).

The Russian forest ghost (*леший*), considered an obvious hypostasis of Veles, could in folk imaginations be both a bad and good being, he can be a demon and good spirit (*дух благодетельный*), sometimes called a fair-minded forest ghost, (*лесовиком праведным, лесом праведным*), by Uspenskij it refers to the often and typical "splitting" of the picture of Veles. We explain differently these more time-documented transformations of Veles, during this "splitting in two" from the shadow of Veles, the second member of the divine couple (maybe, in some texts "Siamese twin" of Veles, or his merciful and kind variant, alomorph; in Indo-European mythological traditions for sure it is not the first case when the mithranian lawyer is lost in the shadow of big Varuna like magus) arises or even becomes an independent being, closely related to him.

The ritual ploughing of St. Nicolas Uspenskij is explained as the help of deity in the cultivation of land. In such first ploughing of the world, we see not an agricultural but a cosmogonic act, ending cosmogony and approving the agreement about dividing the world between two divine beings. The analogical structure of other versions of Slavic cosmogonic myth is catalogued by Tomicki (1976). The God and Devil divide their world vertically. God is coming to heaven and Devil to waters (during ploughing the world is divided horizontally). Two sovereign divine rulers cooperate during this (horizontal or vertical) division of the world[23].

Besides mythological ploughing with a hitched up dragon (involving the **couple** of saints Cosmas and Damian (Петров, 1930), in some variants also the more complicated **double being** "Kuzmodemjan"[24]) are more interesting versions for our explanation. For example: *Егорий (змееборец) запрягает Николу (заместителя змея) в соху и пашет на нем*[25] (Успенский, 1982, p. 100–101). Our explanation is different: George (mithranian pole of sovereignty) hitched up Nicolas (in this version the obvious Varuna pole). Also in other variants of Slavic cosmogonic is the obvious "mith-

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[22] A similar motive is related to Lithuanian Dievas. Dievas acts as rich farmer and neighbour of Velnias. They agree a treaty with Velnias to work together in one field and everybody will take one part, Dievas the down part and Velnias upper part (vertical dividing of the world). Dievas is planting potatoes (very sophisticated from the legal point of view) and Velnias takes only haulm (Beťáková – Blažek, 2012, 57–63). Lithuanian Dievas is not only deceiving or bad, he is only a sly lawyer, and such slyness in the name of a good thing is perceived as a positive manifestation of a mithranian type of intelligence.

[23] In Lithuanian myths, Deivas competes with Velinas – they both create the world and later they are rich farmers there.

[24] Maybe only formally, similar to old *dvandva* compounds is also the riddle name of ploughman with plough and yokes: *Вышел тюрь-юрь на Егорьев день, вынул тюрь две головы, двенадцать ног, оловяный нос, конопляный хвост* (Иванов –Топоров, 1974, 205).

[25] "Similarly, George (dragon slayer) hitches up Nicolas (dragon′s representative) and ploughs with him."

ranian" celestial God, who first creates the world with Varuna-like Satan (Tomicky, 1976), after that they agree on the world´s division (about the Iranian parallels for the motive of treaty - Eliade, 1997, p. 98) and in the conflict caused by Satan He (God) cannot fight with him (typical Mithranian deficit). So he has to delegate this military issue to a "military expert", usually archangel Michael (transformed Lord of the Thunder more closely bound with the function of military power). Belief in such "God of the Gods" (*deus deorum*) without a specification of the detailed limited powers and sphere of influence is ascribed to Elbe Slavic by chronicler Helmold (Helmolda kněze buzovského Slovanská kronika, 1947, s. 127). The same type of celestial god (moreover with same title of God of Gods and Lord of Lords) creating the world in a couple with Satanael occurs on the opposite side of the Slavic world in the apocryphal legend about Lake Tiberias (Eliade, 1997, p. 85)[26].

In our opinion it's an interpretation mistake to reduce too mixed relationships centred on folk St. Nicolas to the relationship with the Lord of Thunder. The relationships are too various to be correctly read as only variations of basic Indo-European myth. Overusing the interpretation scheme of "basic Indo–European myth" is probably the only mistake of Uspenskij´s excellent monograph – it is probably the case when ugly facts kill beautiful theories. It seems more productive to "add" a third "player" entity, and from the couple of basic Indo-European myths to create a trio. The myth about the fight of the Lord of Thunder with his rival in this particular case seems to be too reducing a model – it is not possible, without interpretation violence, to fit functional diversity and above all interesting complementary coupling (often contractually cooperating, sometimes standing in conflict as rivals) of the characters in researched texts.

The important trace, implying that within the folk cult of St. Nicolas is only the first Indo-European function of religious sovereignty, whose basic and emphasized attribute is always wisdom, are some Russian colloquial active verbs derived from the names of mentioned saints, in folklore bound to couples. There are for example words such as *микулить* – to comprehend, to understand, *обмикулить* – to deceive, parallel with it also *объегорить* – to mislead, to trick, *абигорить* – to arrange, to put into order, according to Uspenskij it conforms with its meaning to "Veles-like" word *волосить* – to manage, to own (in Slovak "*vlastniť*") (Успенский, 1982, 139). Same meanings are bearing words *обкузьмить, подкузьмить* – to deceive. Uspenskij draws our attention to the fact that words such as *обмикулить, объегорить, обмишулить, подкузьмить* derived from the names of saints (Nicolas, George, Cosmas) are semantically equal to the word *обволхвить* – to lie, and also to the Ukrainian word *волшити* – to out-trick. Words such as *обволхвить* and *волшити* point directly and unambiguously to word *волхв*, which is etymologically related to the name Volos/Veles. This connection allows the assumption that the Old Russian *волхв* (or Old Czech *vlchvec*) was heathen or shaman – servant of Veles (Успенский, 1982, 140) – according to Uspenskij, Veles and typical activities are also related to the above-mentioned verbs. We want to falsify this hypothesis: Varuna´s wisdom previously based on magic activities also has its pair – mithranian equivalent. So we don't want to connect the

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[26] Also in Baltic mythology, the god Dievas residing in the sky is first among deities, he is the main god, markedly passive out of mythological topics. For example in relation to Perkunas, he behaves as main to unimportant, inactual to current, as a lord towards executor (Топоров, 1987, 153–158).

lawyer´s slyness of the above quoted group of verbs as a whole only with Veles and his magic abilities. His supposed lawyer antipode could also very slyly "shuffle cards" thanks to another "mithranian" type of wisdom. For example "prince – non-prince" Neklan disguised in his armour the bravest soldier, who consequently won the war. At the critical moment intentionally lies even the prototype of veracity dharmaraja Yudhisthira (Dumézil, 2001, 64– 65).

In Slavic texts referring to ancient Slavic and Indo-European text horizon systematically and deliberately occur an interesting, more or less firmly stuck double category, which should not be analysed as a whole, but rather has to be analysed along with the axis Mitra–Varuna. Such detailed analysis can uncover and more deeply explain the potential or actual duality (being in couple) present in a range of Slavic mythic and epic texts mentioning religious sovereignty and consequent sovereign ruling. Such interesting duality we can meet not only in original pagan dynastic legends, in folklore-like adapted legends or in fragments of Slavic cosmogonic myth, but also in Slavic prince names and the oldest Slavic epic poem. In all Slavic languages it is possible to prove much circumstantial language evidence referring to Varuna–like or Mithranian style of ruling. If we summarize these findings, we can formulate our main intention as follows: apart from Veles, linked with magic (as a "Slavic Varuna") in the ancient Slavic myth (very near to Veles, sometimes small in Veles´ shadow, or even as a "Siamese twin") also his couple counterpart and addendum in one with kind heavenly Jurist "Slavic Mitra" was involved, who was in a close relationship with Veles. For example, Helmold (similarly as the Russian apocryphal legend about Lake Tiberias) labelled him the ancient Slavic "God of Gods".

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Slovanský Mitra. Láskavý a právny pól funkcie náboženskej zvrchovanosti v slovanskom mýte a epose

Martin Golema

V slovanských textoch odkazujúcich k praslovanskému a indoeurópskemu textovému horizontu sa určite nie náhodou, ale dosť systematicky a pomerne často objavuje zvláštna, viac alebo menej pevne zlepená dvojkategória, ktorá nemá byť analyzovaná ako celok, ale podrobená ešte ďalšej analýze pozdĺž mitrovsko-varunovskej osi. Takáto detailnejšia analýza môže rozkryť a hlbšie vyložiť potenciálnu alebo aktuálnu dvojnosť (párovosť), prítomnú v celom rade slovanských mýtických alebo epických textov zmieňujúcich sa nejakým spôsobom o náboženskej suverenite a z nej plynúcej suverénnej vláde. S takouto zvláštnou dvojnosťou sa môžeme stretnúť nielen v pôvodne pohanských dynastických povestiach, vo folklórne adaptovaných legendách či vo fragmentoch slovanského kozmogonického mýtu, ale tiež napr. V slovanských kniežacích menách či v najstaršom slovanskom epose. Vo všetkých slovanských jazykoch sú doložiteľné početné jazykové indície odkazujúce tak k varunovskému, ako aj k mitrovskému štýlu vládnutia. Ak zhrnieme tieto zistenia, môžeme sformulovať náš hlavný záver asi takto: popri s mágiou spojenom Velesovi (ako "slovanskom Varunovi") sa v praslovanskom mýte (veľmi blízko Velesa, niekedy tak trochu aj vo Velesovom tieni alebo dokonca aj v podobe akéhosi k Velesovi prirasteného "siamskeho dvojčaťa") angažoval jeho párový protiklad a doplnok zároveň, s Velesom úzko spojený láskavý nebeský Právnik, "slovanský Mitra", ktorého napr. Helmold (a rovnako aj juhoruská apokryfná legenda o Tiberiadskom jazere) označuje ako slovanského "boha bohov" (*deus deorum*).