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**DECONSTRUCTING THE WORLDVIEW AND PAGAN BELIEFS OF EARLY RUS'
IN ARCHAEOLOGY:
METHODS, TRADITIONS, CRITICAL APPROACHES**

PREFACE

Historical issues related to ancient beliefs, religion, ideology, and worldviews are as complex as they are fascinating. When we delve into the study of ancient rituals, magical ceremonies, and the worship of pagan gods — a world without clear boundaries or definitions — we are drawn to the romanticism and mystery of this bygone era. Moreover, the uncertainty we face in attempting to reconstruct past realities opens space for imagination, stimulates creativity, and allows for the construction of vivid images. However, a scholar dealing with this subject, one who relies solely on credible sources and scientific methods in their studies, must remain objective and critical when formulating observations, hypotheses, and conclusions. While acknowledging the limitations and uncertainties of the sources and interpretations employed, the primary task is to reconstruct past phenomena as accurately as possible.

The best way to approach historical problems relating to the study of past beliefs and worldviews is through the analysis of written sources. Some communities (ethnic or religious) are fortunate enough to have a substantial source base relating to their early history. Thanks to a well-developed written tradition, we know of ancient Sumerian, Egyptian and Indian epics. Ancient Greek and Roman mythology have long served as a "model" for the pantheons of the European nations. Even the oral traditions of the Germanic and Scandinavian peoples were given literary form.

Eastern Europe was not so lucky in this regard. Writing appeared there only with the advent of Christianity. Old Russian chroniclers who described the pagan reality did so: 1) briefly, 2) after a considerable amount of time had passed, 3) using information from sources unknown to us, 4) aiming more to reveal the non-Christian nature of the beliefs of the pagan era, and 5) presented them through the prism of the Christian worldview. In contemporary sources from outside the Slavic world, references to Old Rus`ian pagan rituals or customs are: 1) rare, 2) often indirect, but 3) recorded based on eyewitness accounts.

What can be done when some of the knowledge needed to understand and describe certain aspects of the past is simply missing from written sources? To fill this information gap, researchers can use other categories of sources: archaeological, anthropological, folkloristic, etymological, including toponymic.

The contribution of archaeology to the study of objects related to cults (monumental architecture, sculpture, wall paintings) in ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, the Middle East, Mesoamerica and other regions is undeniable. These studies inspire archaeologists to search for traces of cults, rituals and reflections of beliefs in the material culture of other communities that lived in the past. This source base seems almost limitless (especially because of the constant increase in discoveries, in contrast to the relatively small and stable number of written records).

In the 20th century, archaeology was directly and intensively involved in illustrating the religious and ideological ideas of the Eastern Slavs and Rus (see, for example, Rybakov 1981; 1987; Rusanova and Timoshchuk 1993; Motsya, Rychka 1996). The material analysed was often interpreted speculatively, and the range in which analogies were sought was almost unlimited. This was not an unusual practice, as rich and sometimes highly expressive archaeological material has been widely used by scholars of religion and ritual throughout the world. However, it is always worth remembering the limited capacity of archaeology to address such complex issues as the history of religious belief, where material evidence must serve to reconstruct an imagined, immaterial world. Moreover, we are not dealing with the sacred of contemporary people, but with those who lived in the past, whose beliefs are much more difficult for us to reconstruct.

In the Romantic period of the 19th century, when the "mythological" school emerged, all folk tales and ethnographic customs that were incomprehensible to contemporaries were considered to be reflections of ancient beliefs. On this basis, and with the help of comparative data on the beliefs of other peoples, scholars reconstructed entire pantheons. From the moment that archaeology established itself as a science, all ornamentation recorded on ancient artefacts, objects and structures of unclear function was also linked to 'cult' or 'ritual'. Moreover, interpretations of a "cultic" nature gradually became more common and "safer", since they did not require laborious analysis, explanation or the search for genuine analogies. Various versions of jokes about the possibility of interpreting seemingly incomprehensible but attractive archaeological objects as "cultic or ritual" are circulating among archaeologists worldwide.

In this situation, the problem of evidence and verifiability of conclusions comes to the fore, without which it is difficult to speak of research of a scientific nature.

Today, therefore, the most urgent and important need is not to create new hypotheses and conclusions, but to establish a critically verified database of sources and proven (and not hypothetical) links between them, to create a reliable basis for future research.

Perhaps one of the first reconstructors of pre-Christian beliefs in Rus was the anonymous miniaturist of the Radziwiłł Chronicle, published at the end of the 15th century. The

pages of the chronicle contain miniatures intended to illustrate certain historical narratives about beliefs or worldviews (Kukushkina 1994). One of them depicts the construction of the Pantheon of Gods by order of Kniaz` Volodymer in 980. The god Perun is depicted in the likeness of an ancient full-size statue, i.e. as a naked man with a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left, surrounded by winged devils (miniature on fol. 45). The text of the Chronicle, however, tells a different story; it simply lists the gods who were placed in the pantheon: Perun, Khors, Dazhbog, Stribog, Simargl and Mokosh. The artist of the late 15th century could not imagine the realities of the 10th century, so the pagan gods appeared to him as embodiments of demons, as described in the Christian narrative. In the same way, the temptation of the monk Isaac in the Kiev Pechersk Lavra (miniatures on fol. 110, 112, 113, 114) and the personification of demons that brought an epidemic to Polotsk at the end of the 11th century (miniature on fol. 124) were depicted. The representation of the pagan god in the likeness of an ancient statue alludes to the gods of Greco-Roman mythology condemned by Christian doctrine. In the miniature depicting Kniaz' Igor's oath at the signing of a treaty with the Greeks in 944 (fol. 26 verso), we see even more similarities between Perun and ancient statues. Here Perun is also shown with a spear and a shield, and his figure is placed on a pedestal or column, as was sometimes the case with statues of ancient gods. We can only hope that the stories of pre-Christian beliefs contained in *The Tale of Past Years* and *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, written a century and a half or even two centuries later, are somewhat closer to reality.

The interest in Slavic religion continued later. A great fascination with antiquity, especially mythology in its romantic interpretation, can be observed during the Renaissance. However, while the mythology of the ancient Greeks or Romans was well documented and known, that of the Slavs was much more complicated. The methodology of its study was therefore based on the principle of "collect and reconstruct". The more details that could be gathered, the more comprehensive and richer the reconstruction became. For example, at the end of the 15th century, the Polish historian Jan Długosz tried to reconstruct the Polish pantheon based on the ancient Greek one (Długosz 2009). Due to the lack of necessary information about the reconstructed "Olympus", he borrowed the names of some gods from folklore (regardless of the meaning of these borrowings) and even invented some himself. Other writers followed the same path. Maciej Strykowski (1547 – between 1586 and 1593), Alexandro Guagnini (1534-1614), Adam Olearius (1599-1671) and Innocent Gisel (1600-1683) all tried to describe history not only as they saw it, but even as they believed it should have been. The wave of discoveries of new historical and archaeological sources in the 18th and 19th centuries only intensified this interest. It was during this period that the Early Rus` Chronicles [*Laurentian*

and Hypatian Chronicles] were found, along with the incomparable poem *The Story of Igor's Campaign*, and many collections of folklore works were published. Unfortunately, the precious "idols" from Vitebsk and Chernihiv did not survive, but in the mid-19th century a stone statue known as the "Zbruch Idol" was discovered. For a century and a half, it became the model for the depiction of pagan Slavic deities. It was a period of truly remarkable and significant discoveries.

This wave provided the impetus for the publication of numerous works relating to the study of past and contemporary popular beliefs. At that time, much of the painstaking historical and archaeological research that was being carried out was still perceived by the public as peculiar and in keeping with the spirit of the times. Antiquity was fashionable. It became fashionable for the wealthy to own collections of archaeological finds. Artists responded to the social mood, and many archaeological discoveries became inspiration for artistic interpretations of antiquity, whether they accurately reflected the actual period or cultural model.

The mythological school of archaeology was extremely popular and had many followers. The work of the Soviet academic Boris Rybakov coincided with its heyday. Through his analysis of a vast number of archaeological sources, Rybakov presented an ambitious attempt to synthesise research on the phenomenon of paganism and "dual faith" in the culture of ancient Russia. In his works, which culminated in two books devoted to Slavic beliefs, *Paganism of the Ancient Slavs* (1981) and *Paganism in Early Rus* (1987), he mainly developed the legacy of the ideas of Aleksandr Afanasyev (1865-1869).

It should be noted, however, that the material contained in Rybakov's works is very mixed. When presenting a particular idea or scheme, he used materials from different lands inhabited by different ethnic communities, each of which experienced certain historical stages in its own way. Rybakov himself was aware of this flaw in his argument and tried to justify this approach by arguing that when analysing "dual faith" one should focus not on ethnicity but on religious affiliation (referring to pre-Christian or Christian beliefs in the broadest sense). As a result, Slavic paganism was significantly "enriched" with Ugrian and Scandinavian elements, gaining analogies with the Palaeolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, and even modern times.

The aforementioned works by Rybakov actually present an extensive framework of ideas regarding both Slavic and early Rus paganism. These works were based on speculation, hypotheses, and assumptions. This speculative reconstruction cannot be considered a serious scientific analysis. It relied on the author's imagination and the use of a wide range of similar imagined analogies from different parts of Europe and various periods, from the Paleolithic to

ethnographic data. In this way, albeit an unfortunately unreliable one, the pre-Christian beliefs of Eastern Europe gained many different details and even an entire worldview scheme.

Today, there are many neo-pagan movements whose followers pray to "gods" that exist solely thanks to the imagination of researchers and perform rituals in temples created according to their descriptions. However, a critical observer of such an event today is unlikely to take it seriously.

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At the present stage of research into pre-Christian beliefs in early Russia, there is a need to critically re-evaluate established views on a number of issues. The above selection of articles reviews a number of research problems in the field and attempts to look at the Early Rus' system of beliefs, attitudes, customs, leisure activities, the impact of religion on everyday life, interactions with authorities, cultural relations and other intangible aspects of everyday life.

SELECTION OF TEXTS WITH COMMENTARY

Topic I. Recent trends in research on the religion and worldview of the Kyivan Rus' inhabitants

Publication Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.
2010 *Від язичництва до християнства крізь призму археології: сучасні тенденції історіографії, Археологія і давня історія України 1: Проблеми давньоруської і середньовічної археології*, p. 431–442.

This paper discusses the latest research on the religiosity and worldview of the inhabitants of Kievan Rus. The history of archaeological research on the monuments of the ancient Rus goes back almost two centuries.

The first generalising works appeared in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Even then, two main methodological approaches emerged in the conclusions of archaeologists, which eventually shaped the historiographical schools: the "mythological" and the "religious". The former tended to resolve controversial issues of Russian society's worldview in favour of pagan beliefs (e.g. Aleksandr Uvarov, Lubor Niederle, Nikolay Brandenburg), while the latter tended towards Christianity (e.g. Oleksandr Kotlyarevsky, Aleksandr Spitsyn, Dmitry Samokvasov).

In Soviet historiography of the 1960s and 1970s, the Christianisation of ancient Rus was seen as an exceptionally long process, and archaeological evidence for the fusion of pagan and Christian elements was often interpreted in favour of the former. This direction of research was clearly a result of Soviet prejudices against Christian worship, which led to an emphasis on the

persistence of non-Christian beliefs in studies of the spiritual culture of ancient Rus (cf. reviews: Borovskiy, Motsia 1990; Mys'ko 2003, pp. 4-8; Musin 2002, pp. 9-58; Khamaiko 2007, pp. 87-92; Makarov 2008, pp. 30-32; Karpov 2008, pp. 17-40).

The ideological changes that took place in Soviet society in the 1980s led to shifts in historical research directions. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which was at least officially entirely atheistic, liberated Eastern European scholarship from the "mandatory" fascination with pagan beliefs, though this fascination had roots in the legacy of the mythological school formed in the 19th century. The millennium of the baptism of Rus — celebrated even in the waning days of the Soviet Union — brought about a renaissance in research on the Christianization of the Rurik monarchy. A new phenomenon in these studies is the "discovery" (or rather, the much wider use) of small finds (Ukrainian: *індивідуальні знахідки*; English: *small finds*), an endless array of Christian metal artifacts known from Crimea to Novgorod.

Topic II. “Double-belief” in early Rus': the origin of the term, its understanding and relevance

Publication II. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2007 *Древнерусское „двоеверие“: происхождение, содержание и адекватность термина*, *Ruthenica* VI, s. 86–114.

In the text presented here, I have engaged in a reflection on the origin, understanding and relevance of the term “double-belief”. The problem of “double-belief” is one of the most controversial issues in the study of Early Rus' history.

It should be noted that the term “double-belief” (“dvojeverije”), which is commonly used in modern historiography and which, for many researchers, is the original Early Rus' definition of the coexistence of Christianity and pagan beliefs for a long period after the Christianisation of Rus', actually reflects only its "expanded" understanding by the scribes of the post-Mongol period, which is related to the gradual disappearance of the Early Rus' definition (perception) of pagan beliefs as 'idolatry' and its classification as an alternative 'faith'. Although the term is widely used, it cannot be considered to describe the worldview of the Slavic inhabitants of Rus in the 11th-13th centuries.

The Orthodox Slavic word “dvojeverije”, originally meaning “division/doubt/uncertainty of choice” in translated Bulgarian texts, took on the additional meaning of “inconstancy in Orthodoxy” in the anti-Catholic polemics that arose in Rus in the 11th century.

The term “double-belief” (“dvojeverije”) does not accurately reflect the true situation of the mixing of Christian and pagan ideas in the worldview of the Early Rus population living far from administrative centres. The main target of anti-pagan church preaching in early Rus was not the parallel worship of the Christian God, the saints of the Church, and pagan idols, but rather the remnants of ancient animistic beliefs and household magic that had been incorporated into medieval Christianity in both Eastern and Western Europe. The syncretism of medieval Christianity, with its incorporation of many elements of pre-Christian beliefs, became evident at the beginning of the Reformation. The term “syncretism” (whether worldview-based, religious or cultural) captures this situation quite well and needs no further explanation, unlike the term “double-belief”, which only distorts the essence of the phenomenon.

Topic III. Chamber burials evidence of religious change in Old Rus’ian society?

Publication III.1. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2014 *Камерні поховання некрополя Десятинної церкви: проблеми інтерпретації*, *Opus mixtum* 2, p. 137–147.

Publication III.2. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2016 *Давньоруське парне поховання з розкопок Сергія Гамченка на садибі Трубецьких у Києві*, *Opus mixtum* 4, p. 224–229.

Publication III.3 Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2017 *Кочевнические элементы в материальной культуре Руси X века (на примере погребений Шестовицкого могильника)*, [w:] V. Nagirnyu (ed.), *Rus’ and the World of the Nomads (the second half of 9th – 16th century)*, *Colloquia Russica*, series I, vol. 7, Kraków: P.H.U. Multikram, p. 71–86.

Publication III.4. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2018 *«Поховання коня» X століття із садиби Трубецьких у Києві*. *Opus mixtum* 6, p. 105–122.

In the above articles I have addressed the issue of chamber graves, focusing on the question of whether they can be considered as evidence of religious transformations in Old Rus society.

In my opinion, studies on the phenomenon of chamber tombs can provide important sources for analysing issues related to the formation of the Old Rus state and the religious transformations that took place there in the 10th century. Although they are a phenomenon that covers the northern and central-eastern parts of Europe, in the case of Rus the presence of inhumation burials associated with the Christian tradition can be linked to the baptism of

Askold, mentioned in historical sources in the 860s. However, the fact that there is no material in these burials later than the 10th century, that they disappear within that century, and that many elements of this form of burial have a pagan character, leads me to reject the thesis of their association with Christianity. They are a manifestation of the so-called "druzhina culture".

It is precisely this "druzhina culture" - containing many syncretic elements, borrowings and aspects from other cultures - that was the first tangible manifestation of the early Rus culture as understood by contemporary archaeology. The culture of the Rus was the culture of the Vikings who settled in Eastern Europe, making Kyiv their center and quickly assimilating the local population, thus creating a new community and a new entity which we ultimately refer to as the Kievan Rus. These early Rus maintained extremely intense and far-reaching contacts with Byzantium and the Orient, which inevitably found expression in archaeological finds. For this reason, in my opinion, the discovery of objects associated with Christianity in the burials of this early period (especially when animal and human sacrificial remains are also found in the burials) does not prove that the buried had adopted the new faith, but merely indicates their familiarity with Christianity and contacts with areas of the world where Christianity was practiced.

Topic IV. Zbruch Idol: disenchanting the phenomenon - critical arguments

Publication IV.1. Komar O., Chamajko N.

2013 *Idol ze Zbrucza: zabytek z epoki romantyzmu?* = Materiały i Sprawozdania Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka Archeologicznego, Supplement do t. XXXIV, Rzeszów: Fundacja Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka Archeologicznego.

Publication IV.2. Komar, Khamaiko = Комар О., Хамайко Н.

2011 *Збручський ідол: пам'ятник епохи романтизму?* Ruthenica X, s. 166–217.

In the above-mentioned texts I have dealt with the issue of the Zbruch Idol, which occupies an absolutely unique position in the research and attempts to reconstruct the pre-Christian beliefs of the Eastern Slavs.

The statue was recovered from the Zbruch River near the village of Liczkowce in 1848. This sculpture, considered to be a kind of "calling card" of Slavic paganism, is considered to be its most representative testimony.

No archaeological artefacts from the 9th and 10th centuries have been found in the area where the idol was discovered, which would indicate the unique method of its creation

(although - it should be emphasised - the examination of the rock material indicates its local origin [i.e. from the Zbruch area]). On the Zamczysko hill, 2.5 km west of the place where the statue was found, today known as Bohit, there are traces of a hillfort with Old Rus material from the second half of the 10th to the beginning of the 11th century, as well as from the later phase of the Old Rus period (second half of the 12th-13th century). The so-called "platform for the idol" discovered there turned out to be only a set of concentrically arranged sunken objects with an economic purpose, later reused for burials in the Christian right. All the archaeological objects of this complex (tombs and pits) contained materials from the second half of the 12th-13th centuries.

The petrographic examination carried out by Rudolf Kozłowski in 1948-1949 did not reveal any traces of intense atmospheric precipitation or evidence of long-term immersion in water on the surface of the idol.

New light is shed on these issues by an analysis of the biography of the Romantic poet Tymon Zaborowski (1799-1828), who was born and lived in the village of Liczkowce. The idol was discovered on his family estate¹. The biography of Tymon Zaborowski provides a plausible justification for the thesis of the 'idol's' inauthenticity: his knowledge (and, above all, his romantic Slavic intellectual sensibility), but also his material possibilities, enabled him to commission the making of a statue at the beginning of the 19th century, which was later (in 1848) found in the waters of the Zbruch River.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the Zbruch Idol, despite its stereotypical image, is not a characteristic and typical manifestation of the pagan beliefs of the Eastern Slavs. On the contrary, as a monument with a very uncertain date of origin, it should no longer be used in scientific research as a source for understanding the religion of the medieval Slavs.

Topic V. Board games as an indicator of social and cultural changes

Publication V.1. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.

2012 *Гральний набір з заплавного кургану Шестовиці*, Археологія і давня історія України 8, р. 121–128.

Publication V.2. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.

2016 *Кам'яні гральні фігурки з Шестовицького городища*, Археологія і давня історія України 1:18, р. 51–57.

Publication V.3. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.

¹ The principal author of these findings is Oleksii Komar.

- 2016 *Гральні набори з розкопок П.І. Смолічева із заплавного могильника Шестовиці*, Археологія 1, р. 69–78.
- Publication V.4. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.
- 2016 *Особливості та характер давньоруської гри у «Тавлії» у писемних та епічних згадках*, Археологія і давня історія України 3:20, р. 137–146.
- Publication V.5. Khamaiko N.
- 2018 *Gaming pieces from recent excavations of the Kyiv Podil*, [in:] A. Stempin (ed.), *The Cultural Role of Chess in Medieval and Modern Times. 50th anniversary jubilee of the Sandomierz chess discovery*, Bibliotheca Fontes Archaeologici Posnaniensis 21, Poznań, р. 149–156.
- Publication V.6. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.
- 2021 *Настільні ігри Давньої Русі* [in:] О. Є. Черненко (ed.), *Історія цивілізації. Україна, Харків, vol. II, Від Русі до Галицького князівства (900–1256)*, р. 421-436.

In several of my works I have compiled data on finds that serve as material evidence for the spread of certain games in Rus (*hnefatafl* / *chess* / *backgammon* / *nine-men-morris* / *daldøs* / *dice*). These finds are not only contributions to the representation of the Old Rus *homo ludens* (to refer to the title of J. Huizinga's work), but also serve as a contribution to studies of the cultural and social transformations of the Old Rus.

In the above-mentioned text I dealt with the question of the "idols" found in Chernihiv in the Black Grave and at the settlement in Shestovytsia, which deserve special attention in the corpus of 10th-century Old Rus finds. These include a gilded bronze figurine from the burial inventory of the Black Grave in Chernihiv (Samokvasov 1908, p. 199) and a stone figurine discovered during excavations at the Shestovytsia settlement (Kovalenko, Motsia, Sitiy 2003, fig. 15: 2). Both represent men. In the first case the representation is realistic, in the second it is schematic.

In Eastern European studies, similar figures are traditionally classified as figures of "idols" or "gods" (Samokvasov 1908, p. 199; Rybakov 1949, p. 43; Pushkina 1984; Kovalenko, Motsia, Sytyi 2003, fig. 15: 2; Murasheva 2005; Petrukhin 2007).

A critical analysis of the collected data allows me to question the thesis that these figures represent idols or gods/deities. I am convinced that these artefacts are figurines of kings from the Scandinavian game *hnefatafl*. They were used for entertainment, not for religious purposes.

In this game there is only one king figure, so the discovery of single figures is quite understandable.

Topic VI. „Idols” from Chorna Mohyla in Chernihiv and from Shestovitsa

Publication VI.1. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н. В.

2012b *Тавлейные короли X в.*, [w:] О. А. Щеглова, В. М. Горюнова (ed.), *Славяне Восточной Европы накануне образования Древнерусского государства. Материалы международной конференции, посвященной 110-летию со дня рождения И.И. Ляпушкина (1902–1968)*, Санкт–Петербург, p. 284–288.

In the text indicated above, I address the problem of the ‘idols’ found in Chernihiv at Chorna Mohyla and at the settlement in Shestovitsa, which deserve special attention among the corpus of Old Rus’ian finds from the 10th century. These include a gilded bronze figure from the burial inventory of the Black Mohyla in Chernihiv (Samokvasov 1908, p. 199) and a stone figure uncovered during excavations at the settlement in Shestovitsa (Kovalenko, Mobyа, Sytyj 2003, Fig. 15: 2). Both figures depict a man; in the first case, the depiction is realistic, while in the second, it is schematic.

A critical analysis of the collected data leads me to question the thesis that considers these figures as idols or gods. I am convinced that the monuments are figurines of kings from the Scandinavian game of hnefatafl. They were used for entertainment rather than for religious purposes. Since there is only one king figurine in this game, the discovery of individual figurines is fully understandable.

Topic VII. Early Rus’ian crescent pendants: revising the traditional view of Slavic amulets

Publication VII.1. Khamayko N.

2012 *The Rus’ lunula pendant from 11th – 13th century: pagan amulet or Christian ornament?* [w:] M. Salamon, M. Wołoszyn, A. Musin, P. Špehar (eds.), *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe: Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, Kraków – Leipzig – Rzeszów – Warszawa, vol. II, p. 503–525.

Publication VII.2. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2008 *Древнерусские лунницы XI–XIII вв.: проблема происхождения и семантики*, Наукові записки з української історії 20, p. 319–338.

In the texts mentioned above, I revised the traditional view on Slavic amulets using the example of crescent-shaped pendants, known as crescent pendats. Crescent pendats are one of the most recognized decorative forms and elements of various ornaments across many cultures and periods. They were very popular in the early Rus period and are now a subject of great interest among researchers.

Early Rus crescent pendats are pendants with two horns, which are unknown in Eastern Europe from evidently Slavic complexes that can be dated to the tribal period. Slavic crescent pendats from the 6th to 9th centuries have three horns. The formation of ornaments in the shape of crescent pendats with two horns occurred in Mediterranean areas, outside the territories inhabited by Eastern Slavs. They first appeared among Western Slavs at the end of the 7th century and became widespread by the end of the 9th century under Byzantine influence. They arrived in Rus in the 10th century from the Empire as elements of prestigious sets of ornaments (such pendants, of late Roman origin, functioned in Byzantium in the 11th-12th centuries). The wide distribution of crescent pendats with two horns in Rus occurred only after the Christianization, which calls for skepticism regarding attempts to perceive them as ornaments of pagan origin. In assemblages from the 11th-13th centuries, crescent-shaped pendants are sometimes accompanied by symbols of the cross, cross pendants, or images of the Savior and the Virgin Mary. This supports the view of these pendants as Christian ornaments rather than pagan amulets.

Topic VIII. Medical practices in Kyivan Rus': the influence of religion and worldview on healing traditions and remedies

Publication VIII. Khamaiko = Хамайко Н.

2015 *Лікувальна практика Давньої Русі: «медицина» чи «цілителство»?* Opus mixtum 3, p. 101–109.

The above text is devoted to the question of medical practices in Kyivan Rus, in particular the influence of religion on healing traditions, methods and remedies.

To sum up, I would like to say that in the perception of the medical knowledge of the inhabitants of the Early Rus, it is difficult to separate knowledge in the strict sense from the realm of the sacred (ideas of a religious nature). The latter was based not only on the spirituality of the Eastern European tribes, but also on that of the inhabitants of Byzantium. Baptism

brought to Rus not only the high culture/knowledge of Constantinople, but also the popular religiosity of the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire.

CONCLUSIONS:

KEY RESEARCH THESES

- 1) The collapse of the USSR brought about a renaissance in the study of religious beliefs in Eastern Europe. This breakthrough led to an appreciation of the Christian perspective—religious transformations began to be viewed not primarily through the lens of the prolonged persistence of pagan beliefs that defined the spiritual life of the East Slavs despite the influences of Constantinople.
- 2) Since the 1990s, the significance of studies on small finds has increased in research on the Christianization of Eastern Europe, with these finds becoming a legitimate category of sources—material evidence of the first contact between the inhabitants of Eastern Europe and Christianity.
- 3) The term "dual faith" does not reflect the actual situation of the merging of Christian and pagan ideas in the worldview of the inhabitants of Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages and should be abandoned. The term "syncretism" would be more appropriate for describing the early phases of Christianization in Rus.
- 4) Among the most important categories of finds related to studies of religious transformations in Rus in the tenth century are chamber graves. The state of research on this category of artifacts has been presented, highlighting both factors supporting their interpretation as traces of the early phase of Christianization and weaknesses in this concept.
- 5) Despite the entrenched stereotypical image, the idol from Zbruc is an artifact with a very uncertain date of origin. It is more likely to have been created amid the romantic fascination with the Slavs in the early 19th century rather than in the Middle Ages. The Zbruc idol should not be used in scientific research as a source for understanding the religion of medieval Slavs.
- 6) Material evidence of the spread of specific games in Rus (hnefatafl / chess / backgammon / nine men's morris) is an important contribution to the study of cultural transformations in ancient Rus. In this context, the figurines from the Black Mound in Chernihiv and from Shestovitsa should be regarded as gaming pieces rather than representations of pagan deities that were to be worshiped in the tenth century.

- 7) The lunula pendants should also not be considered "indigenously" Slavic pendants of pagan amulets. Their appearance in Rus is more closely associated with transformations in material culture (and the ceremonial dress of women) as a result of the Christianization processes.
- 8) Unlike today, it is difficult in the Russian reflection on health and medicine to separate knowledge in the strict sense from the realm of the sacred (imaginings of a religious nature). Importantly, the sources of these latter aspects were not only the spirituality of East European tribes but also that of the inhabitants of Byzantium.