

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОХОРОНИ ЗДОРОВ'Я УКРАЇНИ
ХАРКІВСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ МЕДИЧНИЙ
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традиційної символіки**

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**Sacral sense of Ukrainian
traditional symbolic**

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Збірник містить матеріали круглого стола, що відбувся 9 червня 2017 року на кафедрі філософії. Тематика доповідей іноземних студентів 6 факультету присвячена дослідженню сакрального сенсу традиційних українських символів й особливостей традиційної музики і пісень.

Матеріали будуть цікаві для іноземних студентів, які навчаються англійською мовою.

The collection of works contains materials of the round table held in philosophy department June, 9, 2017. Thematic of reports were devoted to the investigation of sacral sense of Ukrainian traditional symbols and peculiarities of traditional music and songs.

For English-speaking students.

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Animal Symbols in Ukrainian Tradition

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Animal symbolic is famous in these lands from the ancient time of paganism. Animals were the totems of clans and families settled the territory of modern Ukraine.

Wild boars, auroches, bears, deer, and other animals symbolized in human consciousness definite qualities and people endowed them by magic power.

Horse was the symbol of energy, power, faithfulness, and reliability. Horse skull was symbolized fertility of the land, and Ukrainians kept it on the fence “for increasing the fertility of the land, and for better beekeeping”. People were sure that “it guarded from evil spirits”.

Horse images one can see on the houses’ roofs (“konyk”). Horse is mentioned in Ukrainian dumas (historical songs). Each Cossack had to have the horse. Horse was the reliable helper for peasants in their hard agricultural work. It was nice sign to find the horseshoe. Up to nowadays, Ukrainians have the custom to fasten “the horseshoe to the threshold for coming good and positive things into the house”. Horseshoe, fasten to the threshold of a stable had to protect horses from the thieves”. Sometimes milk-women put a horseshoe into the milch-pail for protection of cows from witches.

Cat was the symbol of home, cosiness, and house guard. Sometimes, it was considered like a messenger of the evil.

According to folk stories, God created a cat like a kind friend for protection of human being. It absorbs the evil and can “treat a sickness”.

In some rites, during the settling in the new house, cat has to come into it the first. In some regions people believed that cats could guard the house from the bad things and occasions. Along with that Ukrainians considered that cats were witches and magicians' helpers.

People were sure that a black cat is the embodiment of a devil, especially during the crossing of the road.

Goat was a totem animal for Ukrainians. In Christian culture male goat symbolized negative features: pruriency, inconstancy, and even a devil.

The image of male goat is used during the Christmas rites in many regions of Ukraine. This image is the result of pagan cults of stock-breeding tribes, settled Ukrainian territory in the ancient time.

Wolf was a symbol of braveness and treachery. Slavonic mythology tells that this predator was created by devil for harm. Wolves also “did away with devils”.

Hare was a symbol of cowardice, agility and fertility. Such mobility of hare (its quick feet) is the only way of surviving

from permanent danger, and fertility is the only one to preserve the kin (too many hares are perishing).

Folk beliefs connected a hare with bad spirits. People believed that the meeting with it would bring the unhappiness, because of that it was necessary to drop the wisp of hay on the road to avoid it. In some of regions people thought that appearance of a hare nearby of the house was a sign of fire.

Grass snake was the symbol of peace, wisdom and richness. People were sure that it guarded and patronized a farm. If a grass snake settled near the house it was a nice sign and people tried to protect “the new neighbour”. It was forbidden to kill a grass snake. There was a belief that presence of a grass snake affected the cows' milk productivity.

Snake was the symbol of deep wisdom, intuition and hidden treasures. There were different approaches to the estimation of this creature in the life of ancient Ukrainians. From one hand, it was the kind one, from another – the embodiment of the evil. It was forbidden to kill snakes' kids “because the snake-mother will revenge”. There were legends about magicians, who called snakes by whistling and play on the special traditional musical instrument (“sopilka”), tamed them, and even use them to harm other people.

During one of September days (when Ukrainians celebrate a religious holiday – Exaltation of the Cross) it was forbidden to go to the forest and field, because were sure that at this day all

the snakes came together to their winter underground shelters, where they were staying up to Annunciation. Contradictory attitude to this creeper we can explain by specific dual influence of its poison on the people. From one hand it could kill, and from the other – could treat.

Toad could bring both positive and negative things for people.

According to folk mythology it was created by God, because of that it was the heinous crime to kill a toad. Ukrainians were sure that for such crime it could croak calamity to the killer and his relatives.

People did not take toads by hands, because they believed that human hands “would be covered by warts”.

Bee was a symbol of diligence and wellness.

Ukrainians respected bees, they believed that these insects originated from the heaven, Ukrainian people even named bee “God's insect”.

Beekeeper, who looked after bees, was considered “God's person” and had to have even-tempered character and should be lucky. Bee products were used in medicine and in many folk rites. Saints Zosyma and Savvatii patronized beekeepers, because of that there were icons of these Saints in each beegarden.

Cuckoo was a symbol of freedom and majesty, sadness and widowhood (women's loneliness); a harbinger of spring and at the same time death.

According to superstitions cuckoo lets birds to come to the Earth. People believed that it could forecast the term of the life and death, happy or unhappy marriage; natural phenomena or adversities. Up to nowadays people could ask cuckoo the question: “Cuckoo, how many years will I live?”

Old people were sure that cuckoo could attract the wellness for the whole year, if you have money in the pockets during the meeting with it.

Stork (in Ukrainian language “leleka”) was a symbol of home happiness, love to the native land, and parents. Since the most ancient time Ukrainians have respected and loved the stork like a bird, which “brought children”, and attract happiness. People also believed that stork's nestle nearby the house would bring the inhabitants happiness. It was prohibited to kill storks and ruin their nests. People respected this bird, because it did away with toads.

Crane was a symbol of spring; “God's bird”

Ukrainians had a particular attitude to these birds, because there was a belief that these birds brought a spring on their wings. When the flew away, it symbolized for people yearning and grief for native land.

Swallow was a symbol of maternity, rebirth, goodness and happiness.

In special songs (kolyadky) swallow forecasted masters wellness, for the family – happiness and prosperity. People were full of joy, if a swallow started to build its nestle under the roof and had baby birds. Ukrainians taught their children to respect this bird and it was forbidden to ruin its nests, because “it could cause fire”.

Hen was a symbol of continuation of family, chariness, and tenderness. In Ukrainian tradition hen was accepted like anxious mother, protected children. At the same time, hen was an embodiment of dis-trustfulness, unreasoning, and weakness. People afraid of situations in which hen started to sing like a rooster, it could predict a disaster.

Rooster was a symbol of protection of home from evil, for glory, good, and happiness. In folk imagination it was the harbinder of new day and it fought back the bad spirits. If the rooster sounded not in the appropriate time, Ukrainians were sure that it brought the weather changing or disaster.

Owl symbolized the dark power, unhappiness and secret knowledge.

People had very careful attitude to owls. They believed that its cock-a-doodle-doo predicted death or disaster. Sometimes, it was named “puhach” (from Slavonic word “to threaten”).

Bread in Ukrainian Tradition

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Bread for Ukrainians is not only the product for eating. It is a holy thing and it has a great spiritual importance. Ukrainians name bread “holy”, “gift of grace”, “father”, “bread-winner”, “head”, and “master of ceremonies”. All the important events accompanied by bread. In the rites bread symbolizes life. Words “zhyty” (“to live”), and “zhyto” (“rye”) have the same root.

Ukrainians meet the most respected guests by bread and salt from the most ancient times.

Bread is a symbol of wellness, generosity, joy, happiness, health, and richness of a family. It is one of the most important participants of the folk rituals:

- wedding biscuits (korovayi, lezhni, shyshky);
- ceremonial biscuits of spring holidays (zhaivoronky, Easter cake, Christmas patties (according to the shape they reminded the New Moon or the Moon Sickle).

Usually, women baked bread once a week. This process was a true rite. During the kneading people had to whisper.

Respected attitude to bread was fixed in the folk rites. People had to eat each piece of bread completely, they afraid of losing the energy. Any piece of bread can not appear in the rubbish, even crumbs had been collected into the hand and been

eaten or given to domestic animals or poultry. If the piece of bread was dropped on the floor peasants picked it up and kissed, because they believed that otherwise the bread could “leave the house” and never back.

Ukrainians also believed that bread is alive one, because of that women, who washed a dead person, should not touch the loaf of bread, “it could kill the vital energy of bread”.

As a rule, a peasant family ate one loaf of bread each day of week, but housewives baked 8 loaves (one was for extra loaning).

Person, who had got the jug of milk from the neighbour, had to give back it not empty, but with a salted piece of bread. This bread gave to the cow “to renew the potential of giving milk”.

Bread was a holy thing for Ukrainians. It was “gift of grace” for hard work. Such attitude to bread reflected in folk rites and rituals, and collection of harvest was a real solemn performance.

During “Zazhynky” (August festival of harvest), the whole family had to wear a ceremonial clothes, put the table-clothes on the field. Put on it bread with salt and brought dishes. They sat around it and thanked God for the harvest and left food untouchable for “spirit-guards of the field”.

After sunrise started the collection of crops, family made the first sheaf, sat on it and started “kolyadky” (special songs) for health. Each member of family made his/her own sheaf and

from all of them they made “Baba” and only after that started the holiday eating.

The true collection of harvest started next day.

The baby birth and christening, also had accompanied by a gifting of the loaf of bread.

For the long voyage, people put the piece of bread into the embroidery towel to protect from bad things.

During the engagement it was usual to bring the loaf of bread. If the girl refused to marry, her family had to give back it to guy.

Parents blessed their children for happy marriage during the wedding ceremony.

For the House-warming, people also brought bread like a gift.

In funeral ceremonies, “bread accompanied died person in the last way”.

More than 80 kinds of bread are famous in Ukraine. Let us mention some of them.

Kalyta was the special kind of bread, baked for Andrii holiday (December, 13). On this day youth walked around the village and played in “kalyta”. Girls baked the big round shortcake and suspended it to the ceiling. One of the guys had to guard this cake. He marked each person, who tried to touch or take it. Another guy came closely to guard man on the

friend's shoulders and they had specific communicative dialogue full of jokes.

Kutya. The Ukrainians like other people of the world believed that it was necessary to celebrate the New Year around the table full of tasty dishes “to avoid famine”. During the Christmas Eve (January, 6th) at the table there had to be 12 vegetarian dishes and *kutya* should be among them. In the regions of the Right-bank Ukraine it was cooked from the wheat, in the East of Ukraine – from the rye, put there squeezed poppy seeds, nuts, honey and uzvar (boiled dry fruit).

Kutya was also cooked for the Epiphany and in some regions for the New Year. According to the tradition, one of the boys from the family should put the pot with kutya on the special place (*pokuttya*), covered by embroidery towel. It was necessary to put some hay under it. Usually, nearby the pot with kutya there had to be *obzhynkovy* sheaf (it symbolized future harvest and abundance) and jug full of uzvar (boiled dry fruit). Kutya was the first course during the Christmas supper. Kutya remained in a special dish for the whole night, because Ukrainians were sure that died relatives could come and eat some kutya”. The next day after Christmas there was the rite to bring kutya to kumy, godparents, midwife, and relatives.

Paska is ritual bread baked for Easter holiday. Blessed paska was the first dish for Easter breakfast. It was not allowed to throw away the pieces of it. Ukrainians collected and gave to

the domestic animals. Dried top of paska was preserved, because according to Ukrainian tradition it had healing properties both for people and animals.

Zhaivoronky (soroky) were the biscuits were baked for the special holiday devoted to 40 Saints (March, 19). In each house, mistress cooked the whole day 40 small baked bagels, rolls and buns of a definite shape reminded birds. Children had been eating these things the whole day, because in each house people entertained them for all coming guests.

Children had to run about the village, singing, and telling the rhymes. This activity had to help birds back from the far regions and encourage the earlier beginning of spring.

Main Motives of Ukrainian Folk Ornamentation

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Embroidery towels, pillow-cases, table-clothes and textile decorated Ukrainian house inside. Embroidery clothes were an organic component of holidays and rites.

Traditional Ukrainian embroidery ornamentation preserved many elements of the ancient symbolic reflected local flora and fauna.

According to the main motives of Ukrainian embroidery it could be sub-divided into three groups:

- Geometrical (abstract ones);
- Floristic (plant-like);
- Animalistic (animal-like) ones.

Geometrical ornamentation was traditional not just for embroidery, but also for other kinds of folk crafts. Today there are many variants of geometrical ornaments, which are widely used: “sheep’s horns”, “kucheri”, “kudryavtsi”, “hrebinyky”.

In Podillya region “kryvulky” are used in traditional embroidery. It was the symbol of the infinity, had famous since Trypillian culture, earlier than Greek meander. Meander ornamentation we can see in Podillya region. To this kind of ornamentation belong “pine-trees”, “horse-tail”, and “perervy”.

Roses (stars and rosettes) were transitional variant of embroidery from geometrical to plant (floristic) ornamentation. Sometimes this kind of embroidery reminds the Sun.

Floristic motives were very popular in Ukrainian tradition, because of their love to the nature of native land. It was a characteristic feature of Ukrainian people. They tried to reflect through the embroidery the beauty of nature.

Ukrainian embroidery has lots of floristic and plant-like motives, such as “grapes”, “hop”, “oak leaf”, and “periwinkle”. Some of them reflected the old “symbolic images” of Early Ukrainians. Periwinkle motive was a symbol of unfading life, the apple-circle motive, shared into 4 sectors with the embroidery of similar colours in opposite sides was the symbol

of love. In modern embroidery the motive of “life tree” is very popular. Usually, it reflects in stylized form leaves and branches.

Kalyna (guilder-rose) is a tree, which Ukrainian people respect a lot. In the most ancient time, this tree was a symbol of the birth of the Universe, and the fire trinity: the Sun, the Moon, and Stars. “Kalyna” got its name from the old name of the Sun (“Kolo”). Berries of guilder-rose symbolized blood and unfading family, because of that red berries of guilder-rose were used in the embroidery of wedding towels, girls’ blouses and guys’ shirts.

Oak leaf and guilder-rose were the symbols of exceptional power, beauty and unfading source of the family. Oak tree in pre-Christian beliefs was a holy one, symbolized the God Perun (the God of solar male energy, development and life). These motives dominated on male shirts.

Grapes symbolized joy, beauty of family relations, and life field. In this field, a man was a sower, and a woman had a high duty to grow and cherish the family tree. This motive was popular in Kyiv, Poltava, and Chernihiv regions.

Poppy from the most ancient time Ukrainians believed that it had magic power, and preserved from the evil. It brought non-scathing memory of the family.

There was a popular belief that the field of a battle in spring was covering by flourishing poppies. Poppy was a motive of

embroidery on the shirts of relatives of died military men.

Lily was a female symbol hidden secret of life, girls' charming, purity and virginity. People believed that embroidered lily helped to discover secret of those charms. In this ornament, there were silhouettes of two birds (love and couple) and a bud (insemination), symbolized birth, development and uninterrupted life.

Images with **roses** usually had a definite structure of floristic ornamentation, which meant persistent solar circle with perpetual renovation.

Hop was the youth's symbolic that meant the development, young energy and love. Hop image related to the wedding symbolic.

Berehynya is a Mother-nature symbolized the creation, protection, renovation and harmony of life. Berehynya is a widely spread symbol in Ukraine.

Zoomorphic (animalistic) motives were full of ornaments, which in schematic way presented a horse, a hare, fish, and a toad; from birds: there was a rooster, an owl, a pigeon, and a cuckoo; from insects: there was a fly, a butterfly, a spider, and flying bugs. Each embroiderer had own variant of them.

Oberehy (Amulets)

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Ukrainian tradition is full of things for symbolic protection.

Cross is one of them. For people of the Ancient Egypt, Near and Middle East, and also Ukrainians cross symbolized the Sun. To point on the solar motion the ends of the cross started to turn up and, as a result stylized cross similar to the swastika had appeared. Such cross was peculiar to the Early Christianity.

Christian religion explains a symbolic of this sign like a victory over the death (Jesus Christ was crucified on the Cross and later rose from the death).

Ukrainians were wearing a cross on the neck, and they considered it the most reliable “oberih” (amulet). There is an old tradition in Ukraine to set wooden crosses at the both sides of roads, borders of forests, in the fields, near the ponds and lakes, and near bridges. People believed that it would guarantee God’s grace.

Berehynya was a female deity and nearly all the people had similar creature. It had been considered as Mother of everything alive, divinity-protector of human being, patroness of fertility, nature and goodness. Ukrainians had Berehynya sculptures in each house, they also made amulets with its image and were wearing them on the neck.

Berehynya image we can find in embroidery on the ritual towels.

Symbolic meaning of Berehynya had transformed into the image of Lord’s Mother.

Icons of Jesus Christ, Lord's Mother, Saints and martyrs of Christian religion were Christian "guards". In each house on the honourable place ("pokuttia") there was a special shelf with icons of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas, Archangel Mykhailo, St. Illya, St. Paraskeva and others, decorated by embroidery towels. It was necessary to have an icon-lamp in front of them, which reminded people the presence of God inside the house. This holy place was the most important protection of the family.

Clothes' ornamentation. The main task of clothes' ornamentation was protection. It should not let the disease to come into human body. It was a model of the Universe: the hat was identified with the sky, because of that on the hats there were the embroidered birds and solar signs. Embroidery around the neck, wrists, ankles, and hem shirts had to protect the ability to work. Image of the earth, the sprouted grain, and water were the main motives for female hem's embroidery. Floristic motives were usual for the blouses, because they symbolized the idea of fertility. Braided female belt had the image of lizard's head on both ends, which was the symbol of underground and underwater kingdom.

Decoration of domestic things was a compulsory element of traditional home design. Ukrainians decorated horse harness, military weapons, and the majority of domestic implements.

Ukrainian people believed that beautiful decoration attracted happiness, protected, and helped in life.

Garlic. In Ukraine, for a long time had been existed the tradition (during the first bath), of attaching to the right-hand wrist of newborn baby a small bag with garlic and pieces of clay from home's stove. People here believed that this ritual preserve baby from the childhood diseases.

Numbers. In the world symbolic *number 1* means divinity. An ordinal numeral "the first" sat a particular place in the life of Ukrainians. It was important to pay more attention to the first baby in the family, the first increase of domestic animals, the first sheaf, and the first fruit from the tree. This first one had a magic power. There were many rites, connected to agricultural activities: the first spring plowing, the beginning of sowing, the first pasture of domestic animals, and the start of harvest collection.

Number 3 was considered a holy one. The world tree had three-element structure. In Christianity it was Saint Trinity. Systematic reiteration of this number there was in wedding, puerperal and funeral formalism. This number was usual in healing practices of Ukrainians: for example, sick people had to be bathed in water from three draw-wells, and etc.

Numbers 4, 7, 13, 24, and 40 in Ukrainian tradition were not so spread, but also had magic properties. There were many rites fulfilled "for four parts", "devil's dozen" predicted

unhappiness, number 40, usually existed in wedding, puerperal and funeral formalism.

The Word. Slavonic people believed in magic power of the Word (both for the Kind and Evil). There were many ritual actions realized with the help of words: glorification, blessing, and oath. At the same time people believed in incantations, damnations, and paternosters. They could affect misfortune and calamities for the enemy.

The Cradle Song. The cradle song was considered as an oberih (protection) from all the bad things, because it reminded the praying. Monotonous still tune and tender words had to calm the baby down.

The Garland. Ukrainian garland was not just the decoration for the girl, but it also fulfilled the protection and healing functions. Ukrainians believed that it “could kill the head-ache and preserve hair”. As a rule, a garland was made of 12 flowers, each of them was the symbol and oberih: immortelle was the symbol of health; elecampane – recalcitrance; periwinkle symbolized life and immortality of human soul; cherry and apple flowers were the symbol of mother’s faithfulness; guilder-rose symbolized girl’s beauty; ox-eye daisy was a symbol of girl’s purity; rose, mallow and peony were the symbols of the faith, hope and love; hop symbolized flexibility and intellect. Poppy usually appeared in the garlands of those girls, who lost the relative on the battle-field.

Each garland was decorated by colourful stripes. In the middle there was light-brown one (a symbol of earth-bread-winner). On the both sides of it on the left and right sides there were yellow ones, which symbolized the Sun; after them there were light- and dark green coloured ones, symbolized alive nature, beauty and youth; after them there were dark- and light blue stripes, symbolized water and sky. After them there was an orange one (intellect) on the one side, and a purple stripe (wisdom) on the other one. Next followed crimson ones (symbolized sincerity) and pink (a symbol of richness). White ones were the last (they symbolized purity). It was compulsory to have the embroidery of the Sun on the left white stripe, and the Moon on the right one. These solar signs were the main amulets of girl's head and protected girl's braid from "the bad eye". In the age of three years girls started to wear a garland, and for each age there was a definite collection of flowers. Usually mother made a garland for her daughter.

There were different kinds of garlands: for a definite age, ritual, magic and customary ones. About 77 kinds in general.

Plant Symbols in Ukrainian Tradition

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Plant symbols sat a particular place in cultural tradition of Ukrainians from the most ancient time. Kalyna (Guelder-rose),

Verba (Willow), Dub (Oak), Topolya (Poplar), Barvinok (Periwinkle), and Chornobryvtsi (Calendula) were the main plant symbols of Ukrainian beauty, spiritual power and love to the native land.

Willow was a symbol of nature awakening and spring. There was a special saying: “There is not Ukraine without willow and guelder-rose”. Ukrainians considered that willow was a holy tree. Usually they planted willows on the both sides of roads. Not far from the new house it was necessary to plant the willow.

Respected attitude to the willow caused by the worldview, peculiarities of labour activity, and spiritual culture of Ukrainian ancestors, who deified each plant, bird and animal.

Willow was the first plant that started to bloom, even if somewhere there was snow.

Willow was respected for water-resistant potential. Ukrainians usually dig out draw-wells nearby the willow tree. It was a wonderful filter, which cleaned the water and thanks to resinous substances the water taste was absolutely wonderful.

Willow wood was an amazing material for authentic Ukrainian musical instruments (bandura and kobza). More than that, from this wooden material, Ukrainian craftsmen made spoons, wash-tubs, baskets, and boats. Willow and oak trees were nice materials for baby cradles, because Ukrainians were

sure that these trees promoted baby's growth, health and strength.

Sanctified willow branches were kept in each house like magic things, which could help to prevent the sickness of inhabitants.

Ukrainians still have the tradition during Palm Sunday jokingly beat oncoming people and especially children by willow branches "for good health and wellness".

Cherry is one of the symbols of Ukraine; native land; mother; and girl-bride.

Early Ukrainians considered that cherry tree was the Tree of life. Early Ukrainians celebrated the spring holiday and the New Year on March, 21st. Cherry tree was the ritual one for this celebration. Usually, a small cherry tree planted in autumn into a vat, hold it in the house, and by March this tree started to blossom. According to the kinds of flowers girls tried to predict the fate for current year.

Oak for Ukrainians is the symbol of power, longevity, and health.

Oak was a holy tree for Early Slavonic tribes. Garland from oak leaves symbolized power and dignity.

The word "dub (oak)" originated from the old one that meant "any tree", "wood, forest", so, oak meant something solid, boundless, and strong. Because of that after the boy's

baby-birth parents planted two oak trees, and mothers embroidered the oak leaves on the shirt.

Oak furniture, according to Ukrainian beliefs, added strength for inhabitants.

Ukrainians knew of medicinal properties of the oak. Leaves' or bark decoction used for rinsing of diseased teeth and gums. People with heart diseases felt better in the oak forest.

Early Slavonic population was sure that oak woods were the houses for Gods, because of that preserved those trees and it was prohibited to cut them without necessity.

Aspen was mostly considered like symbol of treachery and cowardice (because according to legend Judas was hanged on such a tree).

In spite of that, there were many ethnographic evidences of using "the magic potential of aspen" by Ukrainians. They believed that an aspen was nice protection from "witches and evil spirits", because of that they put a branch on the chimney, and put some branches into the hoops for cows and calves "to preserve the milk from magicians". The aspen stick could help in long voyage.

Poplar is one of traditional Ukrainian symbols of sad girl; mother; beauty; and spring. Ukrainians respected this tree.

Usually, people planted it in the field.

In many folk songs it was mentioned like a symbol of beauty and love. Poets compared it with lissome, girl's body

and unhappy girl's life. In folk songs, matchmaking and marriage of girl identified with cutting of poplar tree.

Elder was a symbol of dirtiness, connected with a devil.

According to traditional beliefs, the devil planted this bush and nearly all the time is sitting under it. Because of that, people tried to avoid the building of anything on the places, where it was growing. Energy of such place was too bad, so people were sure that unhappiness, diseases and death will accompany the family.

Blackthorn was the symbol of sadness, life suffering and difficulties on the way ("per aspera ad astra"). Blackthorn is famous for its hardiness, unpretentiousness, and it could grow anywhere. Peasants believed that it had a magic power. Its berries were used for making wine and cooking of varenyky.

Periwinkle was a symbol of joy, vital energy, girlhood, and virginity. Periwinkle along with the other early flowers was a harbinger of spring. This plant symbolized vital energy, and eternity, because of that parents put it to the baby's candle "for long and happy life"; for candles of new married couples "for long strong love" and for their wedding bread (kolach) "to be attractive for all surrounding people".

Periwinkle on the graves symbolized eternal memory about died people. Before the wedding, bride had to take periwinkle from the graves of relatives "for protection of her marriage".

Cornflowers were the symbol of holiness, purity, friendliness and politeness. This nice-smelling medicinal herb with blue flowers, strong stable smell peasants planted nearby their houses. They put cornflowers behind icons, decorated crosses in the churches, consecrated during August celebrations. During the Trinity holiday girls made ritual garlands from cornflowers.

Sometimes mothers washed their sick children in the water with the extract of cornflowers.

Poppy was the symbol of endlessness of the Universe and fertility. It was one of the most ancient symbols. Poppy seeds were used against witches, vampires, and evil spirits. Because of that Ukrainians sprinkled their houses and cattle sheds with such magic seeds.

Mint was a symbol of girl's beauty and virginity. It was compulsory to plait girl's garland with mint. Mint was the attribute of Trinity celebration. Ukrainians decorated their houses and churches by mint. About the medicinal properties of this herb Ukrainians knew from the most ancient times.

Wormwood from one hand it was the symbol of unhappy life, and from the other one, it was the symbol of Ukrainian steppes, memory and yearning for motherland. It was used like a protection against witches and mermaids.

In the folk medicine it was used for healing of wounds, strengthening of memory, treatment of jaundice, etc.

Rue was the symbol of girlhood. Sometimes rue symbolized the separation of a girl with her beloved guy, loneliness, rue of yellow colour meant unhappy love. The image of withered, trampled rue meant the loss of girl's virginity.

Symbolic of Ukrainian Pysanka

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Ukrainian pysanka is an egg, decorated by traditional symbols, came to nowadays from the most ancient times. The sources of pysanka art we can find in the creativity of the people of primitive society. The symbolism of eggs as religious objects dates back to Ukraine's pre-Christian past, and decorated eggs have always been a part of religious celebrations there. Decorating eggs for Easter was banned under Soviet rule as a religious practice, but kept alive by many crafters working in secret.

Decoration of pysanka is the system of old symbols and signs, which had to preserve people from disasters, and help in life and labour.

The oldest Ukrainian ceramic pysanka, which archaeologists have found at this territory, related to the 9th century. Such kind of decorated eggs were spread in Kyivan Rus', and had specific painting with a special technique. On brown, green, and

sometimes, yellow field there was an interlacement of yellow and green bars symbolized pine-trees.

On the territory of Ukraine the art of egg decoration (“pysankarstvo”) had been flourishing in the times of Kyivan Rus’ (10th -13th centuries).

Pysanka masters took empty egg’s shell, decorated it using a big variety of ornamentation. Inside it they put ceramic beads to make a sound, which had to chase “bad spirits”.

Eggs were painted in different way and had particular names. A dyed by one colour egg was named “krashanka”. There were also “malyovanky”: crafters used a special brush for their painting. There were special Easter eggs, which got the name “dryapanky”. An egg covered by colorful spots Ukrainians named “krpanka”.

People gifted pysanky following some rules: for children, they had to be light colours; for girls and boys – with solar symbols of bright colours; for masters – pysanky with 40 figures (chicks or “kryvulky”); for old people – black-coloured with fascias (“heaven bridges”).

Pysanka had to preserve from evil and make a person, who had got it as a present lucky. Ukrainians put pysanky over the icons “for peace in home and health for all domestic animals”.

Pysanka was not just a dyed egg, but it was the image of world’s egg full of symbols of faith, knowledge, and traditions. In many cultures an egg was the source of the Universe’s birth.

One half of the egg symbolized the Earth, and another one – the sky.

Early Ukrainians considered that an egg is a symbol of the Sun, which brings life, joy, warmth, light, and revival of nature (victory over the death), life-saving from the frost and snow. Because of that an egg is an attribute of spring cult folk rites, connected with awakening of the land. Usually, Ukrainians gifted during the Easter.

Adoption of Christianity did not cancel the tradition and an egg became the part of the Easter celebration.

Numbers

Each number for Ukrainians was holy and had a sacral meaning and power.

Subdivision into *two* meant the image about two worlds;

Into *tree* spheres, usually, subdivided in vertical ones;

Four meant parts of the world. Classical subdivision of hemispheres into four parts, and subdivision of each of them into three meant four seasons with three months.

According to other imaginations, the world was subdivided into *six* sides. Such kind of space orientation we can see on pysankas with 6-rays stars.

Subdivision into *forty* is also very interesting. Ukrainians named it *sorokoklyntsi*. Each of them meant one of the kinds of human activities or natural phenomenon, and in Christian interpretation - forty days of the fast before the Easter.

Signs

The Sun. Ukrainians lived in specific climatic conditions: it was difficult to live during the frosty and snowy winter, and after it to do the best for the new harvest. The beginning of long-awaited spring was accepted as a birth of a new Sun, triumph of life, warmth, and light over the darkness. Among the pagan Gods Dazhbog was solar God, because God is the light.

Cross was one of the solar signs, symbolized the Universe, four parts of the world, four winds, and four seasons. It originated from the schematic image of a bird, because since the most ancient time Ukrainians had conceived the Sun as a flying bird.

Spiral was a symbol of fertility, sign of a lord, and flow of the time.

“Tryrih” (three-horn) was one of the most ancient symbols of the Sun.

Swastika or swarga in Ukrainian tradition was the sign of a holy fire, the Sun, and perpetual motion. The first its pictures we can find on the tools for hunting, because people believed that it could protect from “the bad power and evil”. Different kinds of swastika were used in embroidery, ceramics, and wood-carving.

“Ruzha”, “rozette” or “star” symbolized the Sun, and sunrise. It contains slanting and straight crosses, and left- and

right-side swastika. In Ukrainian tradition it was the symbol of love.

“Kryvulka” it was the sign of the water. It could be positive and negative element: from one hand it brought life and from the other one, it could ruin everything during floods.

The snake. It was the image of the snake, or spiral. According to the ancient beliefs, the snake was the master of the ground water, the God of the ocean (chaos). From the chaos originated the whole world. Ukrainians were sure that the snake had such properties, like immortality, wisdom, and healing power.

“Hrebintsi” belonged to the symbols connected to the water and presented clouds and rain. Pysanky with this symbol were made during droughts, with the belief that it could help to attract the rain.

Deer symbolized prosperity and richness. In the most ancient time deer was the object of hunting. People ate its meat, used the skin for building of tents and for primitive clothes, from the bones and antlers Ukrainians made weapons and adornments. Deer was also a mythological image, which brought the Sun on its antlers.

Horse was connected with worshipping to the Sun. According to the ancient legends, the Sun is moving in the sky by the chariot with harnessing fire horses. In Christianity horse symbolized the fearless pythoness ready to self-sacrifice.

Lyrical Songs Are the Symbol of Ukraine

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Ukrainian lyrical songs sat a very particular place in Ukrainian musical and spiritual cultures. First of all, we have to underline that they always were truthful and realistic ones, reflected family and social life of people, their inner world in different historical epochs. Ukrainian people put into the words of lyrical songs its striving to justice in social relations, friendly, sincere relations between people, and life of working people full of dignity. Lyrical songs usually were devoted to two main themes: family and social life.

Songs of social thematic included a big variety of sub-groups. Among them we have to mention: *Cossack songs* (such as “Ikhav kozak na viionku” (A Cossack Was Going Away to War)); *serf songs* (“Oi, u poli krynychenka” (A Well in the Field)); *recruits’ and soldiers’ songs* (“Oi, khmarytsya”)); *wanderers’ and migrant labourers’ songs* (“Plyve kachur po Dunayu”); *chumak songs* (“Huliav chumak na rynochku” (A Chumak Caroused in the Market)); *women’s songs* (“Oi, zatsvila chervona kalyna” (The Red Guilder-rose had frourished)); and *humorous songs* (“A ya vse dyvlusya de moya Marusya”).

Lyrical songs presented mostly positive hero, who was hard-working, fair, sincere, and followed definite principles, full of humanity, incompatible to the evil, and ready to fight against it.

The most characteristic feature of the folk lyrics is the use of constant epithets, comparisons, embodiments, repetitions (in particular, tautologies), psychological parallelism, and antithesis. Many lyrical songs had started from the description of landscape miniature (in one or some lines) (“Nich yaka misyachna, zoryana, yasnaya”).

Lyrical songs are usually built in the form of a monologue or dialogue (a conversation between parents and a son or daughter or between two lovers, for example “Oi, divchyno, shumyt’ hai” (O Girl, the Orchard is Rustling). Rhythmically, lyrical songs evolved from a free recitative to a syllabic verse and then to regular syllabotonic symmetry. Ukraine is situated at the crossroads of Asia and Europe and this is reflected within the music in a perplexing mix of exotic melismatic singing with chordal harmony which does not always easily fit the rules of traditional Western European harmony. The most striking general characteristic of authentic ethnic Ukrainian folk music is the wide use of minor modes or keys which incorporate augmented 2nd intervals. This is an indication that the major-minor system developed in Western European music did not become as entrenched or as sophisticated in Ukraine.

The oldest examples of lyrical songs date from the 16th century, but these examples of genre were not published until the late 18th century. They were assigned a particularly important place in 19th- and 20th-century song collections. The most famous collections published in and outside Ukraine. It is necessary to name such ones as *Lira* (The Lyre, 1945), *Velykyi spivannyk* (by B. Zarevych)¹, *Pisni Yavdokhy Zuikhy*², *Zhartivlyvi pisni* (Humorous songs)³, *Tantsiuvalni pisni* (Dance Songs)⁴, *Rekruts'ki ta soldats'ki pisni* (Recruits' and Soldiers' Songs)⁵, *Naimyts'ki ta zarobitchans'ki pisni* (Wanderers' and Migrant Labourers' Songs)⁶, *Chumatski pisni* (Chumak

¹ Заревич Б. Великий співаник: 222 українські народні пісні / Упор. Б. Заревич. – Відень, (б.р.)

² Пісні Явдохи Зуїхи. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1965. – 810 с.

³ Жартівливі пісні (родинно-побутові). – Київ: Наукова думка, 1967. – 798 с.

⁴ Танцювальні пісні. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1970. – 801 с.

⁵ Рекрутські та солдатські пісні. – Київ: Музична Україна, 1974. – 620 с.

⁶ Наймитські та заробітчанські пісні. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1975. – 575 с.

Songs)⁷, *Vesil'ni pisni* (Wedding songs)⁸, and *Dytyachyi fol'klor* (Children's Folklore)⁹.

Remarkable Features of Ukrainian Folk Music Through the Ages

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Musical talents of Ukrainian people are famous all over the world. There were many performers and folk singers in cultural history of these lands.

During the Middle Ages developed different kinds of music. Specialists sub-divided them into three main groups: palace music, church one, and folk songs.

Let us analyse the peculiarities of each one. *Palace music* mostly was spread in princes' and boyars' (noble) houses and courts. It was presented by groups of musicians, local and foreign, resided at the princely courts and performed during festivals and banquettes, praising the prince's talents and entertaining the guests.

⁷ Чумацькі пісні / Упор. О.І. Дей, А.Ю. Ясенчук. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1976. – 542 с.

⁸ Весільні пісні. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1982. – 679 с.

⁹ Дитячий фольклор. Колискові пісні та забавлянки. – Київ: Наукова думка, 1984. – 471 с.

The art of wandering musicians and minstrel-cum-clowns (skomorokhs) entertained their listeners with a special kind of performances full of songs and acrobatic tricks. The variety of musical instruments was really amazing: stringed harps, metal and wooden trumpets and horns, wooden pipes (sopilkas), drums, and kettle-drums (litauros).

As for *church music* it is necessary to underline that its performers originated from Byzantium and Bulgaria (exactly from those territories Christianity was brought to Ukraine). Foreign musicians organized local choirs and were the first teachers and conductors. But soon after the increasing of number of local musicians the influence of regional peculiarities started to be felt.

In middle-to-late 11th century the Kyiv-Pechers'k (Kyiv-Cave) Monastery became the center for the development of church music in Ukrainian lands. A cappella singing and monophony were the main characteristic features of church-religious music at that period of time. The melodies were recorded in a non-linear notation, called *znamenna*, written in above the words of the liturgical services. There was also

another kind of non-linear notation (kondakarna) to note down lithurgical singing (kontakia)¹⁰.

Folk songs formed the third major type of music of the medieval Ukraine. Folk singing was an important part of all significant events of human life and was the best evidence of rich spiritual life of Ukrainians.

Traditional Ukrainian festive cycle was accompanied by the appropriate folk songs: the New Year carols (kolyadky and shchedrivky); the spring period songs (rusalka (mermaids') ones, hahilky and mayivky); songs of the middle of summer Ivan Kupala festival (7th of July) and so on. *Love songs* and *historical* ones (*dumas*) formed a particular groups of folk songs and were in the repertoire of many singers of that period.

Second half of 14th – the first half of 17th centuries was very complicated and contradictory period in the development of Ukrainian culture. Ukraine appeared under the domination of two states Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth and Russia. They did not give the chance to free development of Ukrainian culture, so, very soon in the Right-Bank Ukraine started to form national-cultural organizations – brotherhoods. They patronized the foundation of Ukrainian schools. Lviv, Peremyshl' Ostrih, Luts'k and Kyiv brotherhoods were particularly active in their

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<http://encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\F\O\Folksongs.htm>

religious-educational work. Musical theory, church music and singing were important subjects at the schedule of brotherhood schools.

A significant innovation of that period was the introduction of polyphony singing, leading to the five-line notation called *kyivs'ke znamia*, which replaced the non-linear notation. The *pasternyi concert* and a *cappella* composition for choir were favourite musical forms of that time. Most of the works had been written for 8 voices.

In the 18th century Ukrainian music started to reach a higher level of maturity and sophistication. The bases for developing a well-educated core of Ukrainian musical talent were expanding at that time. The Kyiv Mohyla Academy had an orchestra (up to 100 musicians) and choir of 300 singers. In 1738 the Hlukhiv Singing School was founded. It provided thorough education for future musicians. Cossack foremen (starshyna) families supported musical ensembles. Last Hetman of Ukraine Kyrylo Rosumovsky had the most notable orchestra.

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