

Russian Paganism

Outline

- For Newcomers
- Quiz (Course Description)
- The Solar Calendar
- Pagan Festivals
- Film clip: *Andrei Rublev* (Tarkovskii)
- The Christianization of Rus'
- Pagan Deities
- Terminology (if time permits)

For Newcomers

- Course web site is at <http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/tales/>
- Look there for
 - Course description (goals, methods, course structure, policies, etc.)
 - Syllabus (assignments, exam dates, deadline, etc.)
 - Overheads from all classes (on the syllabus page)
 - Other goodies

Solar Calendar

- Solstices and Equinoxes
 - Autumn Equinox (September 22)
 - Winter Solstice (December 21)
 - Vernal (Spring) Equinox (March 20)
 - Summer Solstice (June 21)
- Notes
 - Dates from 2008–09; may vary slightly in other years.
 - Solar dates may vary from ritual ones.

Pagan Festivals

- Yuletide (sviatki, koliada)
 - Winter solstice / Christmas
- Shrovetide (maslenitsa)
 - Mardi Gras (beginning of Lent)
- Rusal'naia Week (Trinity Week)
 - Pentacost (fifty days after Easter)
- Ivan Kupalo (St. John's Eve)
 - Summer solstice

Film: *Andrei Rublev*

- Andrei Tarkovskii, director
- Shot 1965, released 1966
- Cannes Film Festival award, 1969
- Ivan Kupalo Day (St. John's Eve)
 - June 21 (summer solstice)
 - But note the dialogue ...

How to View a Film

- Read the on-line viewing notes (linked in main web page) before the screening
- Know the director or producer and the approximate date
- Pay attention not only to plot and character, but also to filmic technique (as described in lecture or in the on-line viewing notes)
- Films are coordinated with assigned readings, so think about why we screen a particular clip on a particular day

Andrei Rublev

- Old Testament Trinity
- Early fifteenth century



Christianization of Rus'

- Rus'
- Vladimir I (ruled 980–1015)
- 980
- 988
- Byzantium

Pagan Gods

“... he placed idols on a hill, outside the palace yard, a wood *Perun* with a silver head and a golden moustache and *Khors* and *Dazhbog* and *Stribog* and *Simargl* and *Mokosh'*”

- *Perun*
- *Khors*
- *Dazhbog*
- *Stribog*
- *Simargl*
- *Mokosh'*
- (*Svarog*)
- (*Volos/Veles*)

Terminology

- Folklore
- Fairy Tale
- Animism
- Anthropomorphic
- Ritual
- Remythologize
- *Dvoeverie* (double faith, double belief)
- Metamorphosis
- Epithet
- Magic Number
- The Number Three
- Magic Objects and Elements

Don't confuse ...

- *Animism and anthropomorphism*
- *Dvoeverie (double belief) and remythologization*

Animism

- The belief that natural objects, natural phenomena, and the universe itself possess souls or consciousness.
- The belief that souls may exist apart from bodies.

Anthropomorphic

Ascribing human form or attributes to a being or thing not human, esp. to a deity.

Remythologize

The reinterpretation of rituals belonging to one system as belonging to another.

- Winter Solstice (pagan)
- Christmas (Christian)
- New Year (Soviet)

Santa Claus and Father Frost



Dvoeverie

Double Faith, Double Belief

- The simultaneous subscription to two different, and possibly even contradictory, belief systems.
- Characteristic of early Russian Christianity, where people observed Christian rites but nonetheless continued to adhere to certain pagan beliefs and practices.

Folklore

The traditional beliefs, legends, customs, etc. of a people; lore of a people; collected wisdom of a people (oral, ritualistic; associated with nature, agrarian aspects of a given culture; associated with calendar feasts and rites of passage).

Fairy Tale

- A story involving *supernatural* people or events (not necessarily fairies).
- Narrowly defined, fairy tale refers to *popular* fairy tales, which lack a specific author or time of composition.
- Texts similar to popular fairy tales but written by a specific author are called *literary* fairy tales.

Ritual

Any practice or pattern of behavior repeated in a prescribed manner (e.g., religious ritual).

Metamorphosis

A complete change of form, structure, or substance as transformation by magic or witchcraft.

Constant/Fixed Epithet

- A descriptive adjective used *unvaryingly* to qualify a noun, frequent in Homer's epics and in folklore genres, e.g., "oxen-eyed Hera," "wine-red sea," "open field," "bright falcon," "beauteous maiden."
- Note also *fixed formulae*, such as "run as a gray wolf" in Russian tales.

Magic Numbers

1, 2, esp. 3, 7, and their multiples, e.g., 3 x 3.

The Number Three

- Triad: A group of three, esp. of three closely related or associated persons or things.
- Trebling: Repetition in groups of three (e.g., three siblings, three tasks).

Magic Objects and Elements (1)

- Cyclicity (ring, egg, drawing or walking in circles around something, circle dances)
- Fertility (egg, seed, tree)
- Purity (fire, water)

Magic Objects and Elements (2)

- Bounty (livestock, grain, fruits and vegetables, bread, feasting)
- Return of the sun after winter (fire, birds, pussy willows, early bloomers)
- Personifications of holidays (effigies)
