

**SYMBOLS OF THE FAIRY TALE "THE OLD MAN AND THE WOLF" (from
the "History of the symbols of Slavic mythology")**

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Abstract. *This report is part of a research work in the field of symbolism of Slavic mythology. Developments on this topic were repeatedly presented by the author at various conferences of past years [Zaporozhets 2020 a), b), c), d), e)]. Today we will continue to study the symbols of the figurative mythological structure based on the fairy tale "The Old Man and the Wolf" in the processing of AN Tolstoy [Tolstoy 1992]. This fairy tale is a version of the fairy tale "Hut on the forest edge", which the author considered at a conference in 2020 [Zaporozhets 2020)]. In our report, we will carry out a comparative analysis of two versions of a fairy tale, and reveal new details of the characters' symbolism. The version of the tale interested the author with additional information, which introduced the missing elements into the studied area of mythology.*

Keywords. *Children's folklore, symbolism of fairy tales, mythology.*

In previous reports at conferences, the author has repeatedly considered the figurative structures involved in different genres of Russian folklore from the point of view of their symbolic orientation. In this talk we will consider the symbols of the fairy tale "The Old Man and the Wolf". Let's conduct a comparative analysis of two versions of one fairy tale plot. Let's trace - what interesting things the second option added to us.

Summary of the first option. In a hut on the edge of the forest lived: six Sheep, the seventh Stallion, Grandmother and Grandfather, Boy and Girl. Wolf got into the habit of them. ... Ate Sheep, Stallion The Wolf came for the Boy and the Girl ... Grandfather killed the Wolf and the four of them began to live: Grandmother

and Grandfather, Boy and Girl. (The storyteller presented the tale as a game that teaches children to count (NMI)).

Summary of the tale "The Old Man and the Wolf".

The Old Man and the Old Woman had a Boy and a Girl, a Cockerel and a Hen, five Sheep, and the sixth a Stallion. Boy in boots, Girl in earrings. The hungry Wolf got into the habit of going to the hut ... The old man gave it to him: first the Rooster and the Hen, then the Wolf ate the Sheep, then the Stallion. And then the Old Man felt sorry to give the Boy and the Girl, he killed the Wolf with a poker, from whose belly everyone who had been eaten jumped out.

It is always interesting to consider many variants of one plot, since the variable form is not always a simple fantasy of the narrator, and it often retains such nuances that can explain something previously incomprehensible, which remained "behind the scenes" in other plot versions. There are several points in this variant.

Firstly: this is the number of characters. There are not 12 of them, as in the previous version, but 13. Thirteenth Wolf.

Secondly: location of characters:

1. Cockerel. 2. Chicken. 3-7. five Sheep. 8.the sixth Stallion.
9. Old man. 10. The old lady. 11. The boy in boots.
12. Girl in earrings.

Although, if the characters of the Rooster and the Hen are considered as symbols of the same period of time (as formed in the decoding of other fairy tales) - the month of January, then the scheme will be similar to the first version of the tale:

1. Cock and Hen - January, 2-6. Five Sheep - from February to June,
7. Sixth Stallion - July, 8. Old Man - August,
9. Old woman - September, 10. Boy - October,
11. Girl - November, 12. Wolf - December.

Thirdly: at the end of the tale, the Wolf's belly burst, and everyone he ate jumped out of it (in contrast to the first option). Such an ending, with the restoration and revitalization of characters, is typical for many genres of folklore. For example, the revival of the "Goat" in theatrical action, during the "driving the Goat" before the New Year by the mummers: "And you, Goat, rise, / Rejoice, / Our Lord / Bow! ..." (GES), in other fairy tales (for example, "The Goat and the Wolf")

Is such variability in this tale accidental? Let's take a deeper look.

Firstly, as in the previous version, the Hut in the fairy tale is divided into:

- a) the "yard" in which the animals are and
- b) strictly - a hut.

The author has repeatedly seen such buildings with a covered courtyard next to the corridor leading to the hut on expeditions in different regions of Russia. (For example, this form of buildings is well preserved in the Vladimir region ...). But this is not the main thing, but the main thing is that the number of characters living in the hut (unlike the previous version) is twelve. This already indicates a year cycle of twelve months, with an increase (as in the previous version) of the Sheep symbol. True, there are not six Sheep, but five (most likely, this is due to the addition of the Rooster and Hen characters). This annual cycle is more homogeneous in its composition than the previous version: domestic animals and people (without the forest animal - the Wolf). But! As in the first version, the clear dominance of the Sheep symbol indicates the layering of the later New Year celebration in the spring, at the moment the Sun enters the constellation Aries, on the more ancient New Year, which was celebrated at the time of the winter (or summer?) Solstice. The only difference is that:

- a) in this version, the cycle begins with the Rooster and the Hen, as we found out in previous reports [Zaporozhets 2020], the symbols of midnight (or rather, from midnight onward) and the winter solstice (starting from the solstice onward). You can also clarify that if we take into account the symbolism of the Rooster and the Hen as one month - January, then the beginning of the countdown of homogeneous symbols - Sheep from February, points us to the point of the ancient winter solstice, and the celebration of the New Year, when the Sun entered the constellation Aquarius (two with half a thousand years ago). In the diagram, the connection of the ancient points of the Winter and Summer Solstice is marked with a dashed line;

- b) in the previous version, the beginning of the count also goes from the midnight point, but there the symbols are "six Sheep". The characters of the Sheep (in the first version) symbolize six months of the first half of the annual cycle: from the point of the winter solstice to the summer solstice).

What, then, is the Wolf? The wolf as a forest character is a representative of the world of death, night (wolves go out in search of prey at night, starting at dusk) and the culmination of winter, the time before the winter solstice, when they are especially active [Nekrylova 1991]. In deciphering the symbols of fabulous and non-fabulous folklore, we found out that the Wolf stands for the month of December. The

heaviest month of the year, when time moves to the "darkest climax of the year", to the point of the winter solstice, when the longest nights and the shortest days come. Often, the last month before the solstice (like all the "last" in traditional culture) is designated as "extreme" or simply "edge". That is why in lullabies that perform a protective function for the baby during the night (a time isomorphic to winter - sleep and death of nature), it is sung: "... Do not lie down on the edge/A gray top will come/And drag it into the woods/... And bury it in a hole/You will not see the mother "(MNV). The wolf, in the second version, is distinguished not only by its natural habitat - the forest, and comes to eat someone, but also by a numerical opposition: one against twelve. If in the previous version it is highlighted only by the habitat and the negative symbol of the heaviest month of the year - the time before the solstice, after which the end of the old year comes, then here it is generally isolated even by the numerical load. This indicates an echo of such fairy-tale plots as - "the struggle of animals and beasts."

Secondly, in the variant under consideration, the symbolic "logic" is interestingly traced.

a) The beginning of the counting of the annual circle goes from small domestic birds and animals to large ones, that is, to increase: Rooster-Chicken, Sheep, Stallion. This indicates a gradual increase in the seasons, gaining solar power of heat and light.

b) Then, on the contrary, the opposite is described, a decrease, but already of people: from Grandfather, Grandmother to the Boy and the Girl, which is strenuously emphasized by the end of the enumeration of the characters: "Boy in boots, Girl in earrings."

Also:

a) The dominant of domestic birds and animals in the first half of the year - indicates a gradual long "exit" from the space-time of Winter, undead, the death of nature (which will also occur later in fairy tales) into the space-time of warmth, light, life, Summer. And, although domestic animals are described here (located in the space of the house), but still - they are representatives of the "otherworld" time, when there is still no new harvest! This is probably why a very tenacious and harsh prohibition, purely pagan, has survived, but it has to be carried out (especially by women) to this day, despite the constant exhortations of the priests, not to eat the fruits of the new harvest until the Savior, since according to legend, if this prohibition is violated, then on Saved "in the next world", they will not give treats (fruits of the

new harvest) to deceased relatives (especially emphasized by the population - they will not give an apple to dead children in the "next world") [Zaporozhets 2020 d)]. Therefore, such a prohibition is especially jealously observed by women. It turns out that a person before the Savior - (the feast of the Savior is a point tied to the ancient summer solstice, when the Sun entered the constellation Leo) is in the "world of spirits"! And, if at this time he ate the unconsecrated fruits of the new harvest, then he, thus, "connected" to the world of the dead, which in itself is very dangerous and can lead to the death of such a person [Zaporozhets 2019]. (This fact is confirmed in other myths, which we hope to consider in the reports at the next conferences).

b) And the second half of the circle is characterized mainly by people, since even though the sun has turned for winter, summer is for the heat, and the new harvest is already ripe. (We will also trace the analogy of such an arrangement of characters later, in deciphering other fairy-tale plots). This is probably also why the people associate the holiday of the Savior with salvation from starvation.

In the tale, the location of paired characters by gender is also clearly observed, the male symbol is female: Rooster - Chicken, Grandfather - Baba, Boy - Girl.

Thirdly, in this version, the revival of "eaten" animals indicates a constant revival of the annual solar cycle. We can also assume that the symbol of Kocherga, with which Grandfather tore the Wolf's belly, is also not accidental. Klyoshechka-kocherezhechka is present not only in the magical actions of stopping a thunderstorm and any bad weather (together with a stove shovel, etc. ...). A poker, as an object that is in direct contact with the Stove, fire, where Bread is baked (holy food [Zaporozhets 2021]), the rite of "Infanting a baby" is held [Zaporozhets 2020 e)], etc., etc., similar in shape on the hook, is mentioned as the main attribute in the theatrical action of the mummers - in the Christmas carols, which were held before the New Year and which began with the words "Already you, Klyoshechka-Kocherezhechka/Where have you been? ..." [Zaporozhets 2020 a)]. Caroling around the courtyards (probably - initially with a decorated staff, as during matchmaking (which has survived in Ukraine to this day) (VBN)) and addressing Klyoshechka-Kocherezhechka took place just before the winter solstice point, in December! In carols, as in fairy tales, there is also a listing of all the symbol months. And, from here, the strictest prohibition on counting becomes understandable: family members, especially children in the family, any group of people, any living beings, etc..... Because according to the calendar tradition - after recounting the months of the year (in fact, the memorial ceremony for the past), the

old year ends, equally - it dies, and the time of the New Year comes! By the same principle, it is also not customary to give watches, calendars, etc.....

Let us emphasize in our report that there is very little absolute binding of symbols to any points in time, which introduces additional difficulties in deciphering the myth. This one is related:

a) with the movement of the New Year celebration to different points of the solstice and solstice, therefore the same symbol could denote the point of the winter solstice, and later - the point of the spring solstice ...;

b) with mixing and layering of different calendar structures on top of each other (calendar of birds, calendar of animals ...).

So, we see that additional information on symbolism is not at all a simple fantasy of the performer or processor of the tale. This is why this version of the tale became interesting for the author.

Based on the decrypted data, we see that:

1. The ancient celebration of the New Year was in winter, at the point of the winter solstice. This indicates that in more ancient times people lived in a warmer climate, and it was important for them to increase the daylight hours, which begins after the sun passed the winter solstice point, and not an increase in heat. The increase in heat after the point of the spring solstice became relevant in connection with some kind of sharp cooling of the climate. Such periodic cold snaps are characteristic of the Holocene time, when the glacier periodically covered large areas of the continent (Comment № 1).

2. Also, this version of the fairy tale plot confirms the previously expressed thought [Zaporozhets d)] that in ancient times the people had many different calendar systems: the calendar of animals, the calendar of animals, birds, plants, fish, etc., echoes, etc. confirmation of which we constantly find in fairy tales.

3. The layout of the fairytale symbols clearly shows the division of the Year into six months vertically and horizontally. But!

a) Vertical division dominates! Winter and summer solstice can be traced more clearly! Another thing is that, as an option, the listing of pets ends (the largest is the Stallion) before Augustus (the constellation of Cancer)! Before the point of the *ancient* summer solstice, when the Sun entered the sign of Leo! And Grandfather - as the most senior symbol - "opens" the account of the second half of the year, when the Solar power begins to gradually decline. Moreover, the description of the fairy tale

symbols begins from the very beginning with the Old Man and the Old Woman! And most importantly: the Wolf's eating of pets ends with a Stallion! The Ox did not eat people! And this is also not accidental, since in this case an even more ancient myth with the main point of the Solstice - Summer, is highlighted! Then we get an annual circle with the point of the summer solstice, with a countdown from the constellation Leo:

1. Old man, 2. Old woman, 3. Boy, 4. Girl,
5. Cockerel, 6. Hen, 7-11. five Sheep, 12. Stallion!

Or, alternatively:

1. Old man - August, 2. Old woman - September,
3. Boyfriend - October, 4. Girl - November,
5. Wolf - December, 6. Cock and Hen - January,
- 7-11. five Sheep - February-June, 12. Stallion - July!

That's it. The circle of the year is over.

Here are some interesting patterns preserved in the symbolism of the myth! An indication of the celebration of the New Year at the Summer Solstice at some point in historical time. At what time the Summer Solstice point dominated - the question remains open. But, more than once we will come across this mention in the deciphering of mythological structures.

b) As for dividing the annual circle horizontally, I must say that the Autumn Solstice in the fairy tale is generally not visible at all, and the accent point of Aries speaks of a very late tradition. The sun entered the sign of Aries at the spring solstice in a relatively recent time, and about 2.5 thousand years ago it entered the sign of Taurus.

So, in this study, we identified echoes of *FIVE calendar systems*:

1. The Year Circle with the celebration of the New Year at the time of the *ancient Summer* Solstice - the entry of the Sun into the constellation *Leo*, the point of dividing the year into symbols of animals and people;

2. Year Circle celebrating the New Year at the time of the *modern Summer* Solstice - the entry of the Sun into the constellation of *Cancer*, dividing the Year into 2 semesters: half a year - six Sheep and half a year - other characters;

3. The Year Circle with the celebration of the New Year at the time of the *modern Winter* Solstice - the entry of the Sun into the constellation *Capricorn*,

starting from domestic birds or animals (before the entry of the Sun into the constellation of Cancer);

4. The Year Circle with the celebration of the New Year at the moment of the *modern Spring* Solstice - the entry of the Sun into the constellation *Aries*, the dominant symbol of the Sheep of the first half of the year;

5. Year Circle with the celebration of the New Year at the time of the *ancient Winter* Solstice - the entry of the Sun into the constellation of *Aquarius*, the beginning of the countdown of the homogeneous symbol of the Sheep from February.

Of all the considered points of the solstice, the following are most clearly observed:

a) the *modern winter* solstice, in front of it is the aggressive symbol of the *Wolf*, the Sun enters the constellation *Capricorn* and

b) the *ancient summer* solstice, after it - the symbols of the *Old Man* and the Old Woman, the Sun enters the constellation *Leo*.

Thus, based on the small or large preservation of the symbolism, we see that the celebration of the New Year at the time of the Summer Solstice is more ancient than the celebration of the New Year at the Winter Solstice. Even later, the Spring Festival of the New Year, which we know as Shrovetide, appeared. (Well, and even later, Peter 1 moved the celebration of the New Year back to the Winter Solstice. This is not recorded in the mythological structure).

All of the above facts indicate that the counting of time according to the Winter and Summer solstice is longer in historical time and more ancient. The points of the summer and winter solstices were the beginning of the countdown of the new time, the New Year! We will constantly observe echoes of this in our next published studies. And the celebration of the New Year at the spring solstice is a late layering, which is also confirmed by the dominance of the sign of Aries, and not Taurus.

Comments.

1. Holocene (from the Greek holos - all and kainos - new) (post-glacial epoch) is the modern geological era, constituting the last, unfinished segment of the Quaternary (Anthropogenic) period of geological history, the corresponding sediments. The beginning of the Holocene coincides with the end of the last glacial glaciation of northern Europe (SED).

List of performers.

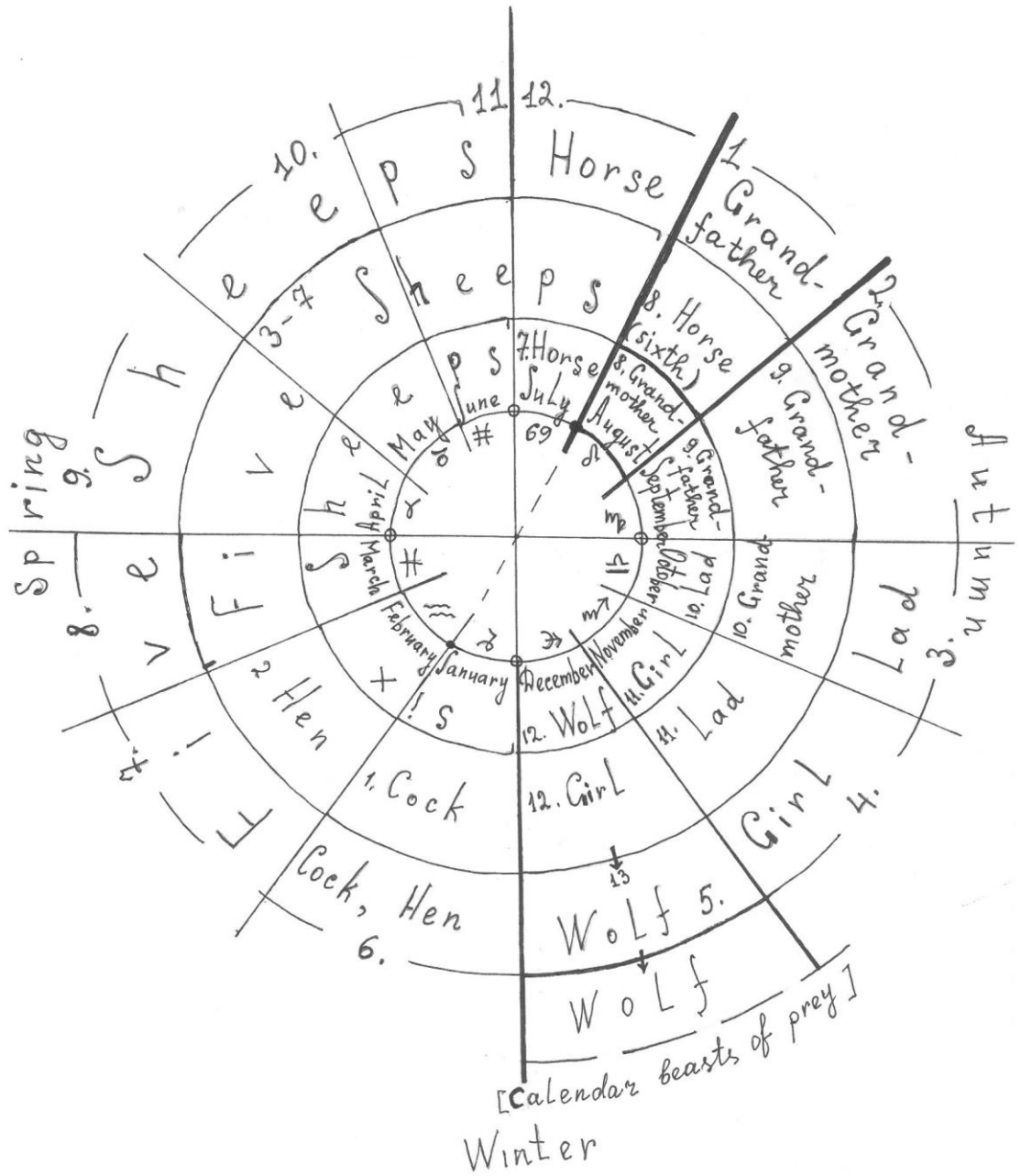
VBN – Vintonyak Bogdan Nikolaevich, born 1957 (Brother of VMN). Construction worker. Originally from the Ivano-Frankivsk region, Bogorodchansky district, the village of Rakovets. Working in Moscow. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 1995.

GES – Gaiduk Evdokia Stepanovna, born in 1924 (nee Basovich), local. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in the village of Dinskaya, Krasnodar Territory in 2004.

MNV – Morozova Natalia Vladimirovna, born in 1926, local. Peasant woman. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in the Vladimir region, Sudogodsky district, the village of Gorki in 1998.

NMI – Nazarova Maria Ivanovna, born in 1930, originally from the Moscow region, in Moscow in transit. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2005 (she knows the tale from her grandmother).

Summer



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