

Svetlana Zharnikova

The Distaff and the phallic cult

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«АВТОР»

2026

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The Distaff and the phallic cult / S. V. Zharnikova — «Автор», 2026

In the modern world, the urgency of the problems of the ethnic history of the peoples of various regions of our planet is obvious. The growth of ethnic self-awareness, which has been observed everywhere in recent decades, is accompanied by an increase in interest in the historical past of peoples, in the transformations that each of them experienced during its millennium-long formation. It became a spiritual need for a representative of a modern urbanized society to find the roots of his ethnic existence, to know the diverse processes that led to the formation of that ethnocultural environment through which he perceives the world around him.

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The Distaff and the phallic cult

**Svetlana Vasilevna Zharnikova.
The Distaff and the phallic cult**



Photo. The girl is a pomorka. The village of Umba. The Tersky Coast. The North of Russia.
1910

In the modern world, the urgency of the problems of the ethnic history of the peoples of various regions of our planet is obvious. The growth of ethnic self-awareness, which has been observed everywhere in recent decades, is accompanied by an increase in interest in the historical past of peoples, in the transformations that each of them experienced during its millennium-long formation. It became a spiritual need for a representative of a modern urbanized society to find the roots of his ethnic existence, to know the diverse processes that led to the formation of that ethnocultural environment through which he perceives the world around him.

The book "The Distaff and the Phallic Cult" is devoted to the study of the semantics and symbolism of the most important object of Indo-European life - the spinning wheel. The connection of the spinning wheel with the depths of the phallic cult, Russian and Indo-European mythology is shown. of the most important subject of Indo-European life - spinning wheels. The connection between the spinning wheel and the sewing machine and the depths of Russian and Indo-European mythology is shown.

S. I. Dmitrieva. Mezen spinning wheels (To the question of the origin of the Mezen painting)

Among Russian traditional murals, one of the most striking, interesting and mysterious is considered to be the Mezen wood painting, called so in the place of its greatest distribution - the Mezen River. However, the area of Mezen painting is wider. In addition to the Mezen basin with Vashka, it includes the Pinega and lower reaches of the Northern Dvina to the Onega Peninsula in the west, and the Izhma and Pechora basins in the east.

Among the objects with Mezensky painting are the butcher spinning wheels made in the village of Palashchely, located in the middle reaches of the Mezen. They were in demand among the population of the north-eastern regions of the European North and were produced in large quantities for sale at famous fairs in Kholmogory, Vashgort, and Mezen. A spinning wheel along with a colored shawl was considered a good gift to a woman; in many houses of the villages of Mezen, Northern Dvina, Pinega, Vashka and Pechora, there were several each. Thanks to this tradition, spinning wheels of spinning work are not uncommon now, especially on the Mezen.



Mezen

The origin of the Mezen painting is still a mystery. The dates found on the Mezen spinning wheels suggest that most of them were made in the years 1870-1930.¹ However, the originality of the painting, the graphic art and the primitively conventional interpretation of the images of animals and birds give researchers a reason to look for the origins of the Mezen painting in the art of neighboring peoples and ancient cave paintings. An opinion was expressed about the similarity of the manner in which horses were depicted on Mezensk ware and monuments of Azelin culture of the 3rd-4th centuries.² V. S. Voronov, studying the styles of folk paintings on wood in different regions of Russia,

singled out the Mezen as mysterious and curious, pointing out its connection with the ancient Greek styles.³



Mezen

Some modern researchers, for example N. V. Taranovskaya believe that the Mezen painting is the result of the interaction of the decorative art of the Komi and Russians.⁴ L. N. Zherebtsov, supporting this point of view, emphasized that the applied art komi played a decisive role in the emergence of the geometric style of Mezen painting.⁵ However, painting on Komi products (in particular, on spinning wheels) in composition is quite significantly different from painting on Mezen products. The similarity of some Komi-Zyryan spinning wheels to butcher's, according to, for example, V. N. Belitser, is explained by the influence of the latter.⁶ A characteristic feature of the Mezen painting, in our opinion, is multi-tiered (Fig. 1). Three tiers stand out on almost every Mezen spinning wheel, with horses and deer appearing as the main figures in the lower and middle murals, and birds in the upper one. As a rule, in the middle tier (less often in the lower tier), figures of birds were attached to the images of animals, while in the upper tier only birds were depicted. In all likelihood, the tiers we selected in the images of the spinning wheels correspond to images of three worlds: underground, terrestrial and heavenly, known by the art of many peoples of the world. It is characteristic at the same time that the terrestrial (middle) world, as it were, combines the features of the underground and heavenly. We see a similar combination in the middle tier of the Mezen spinning wheels.

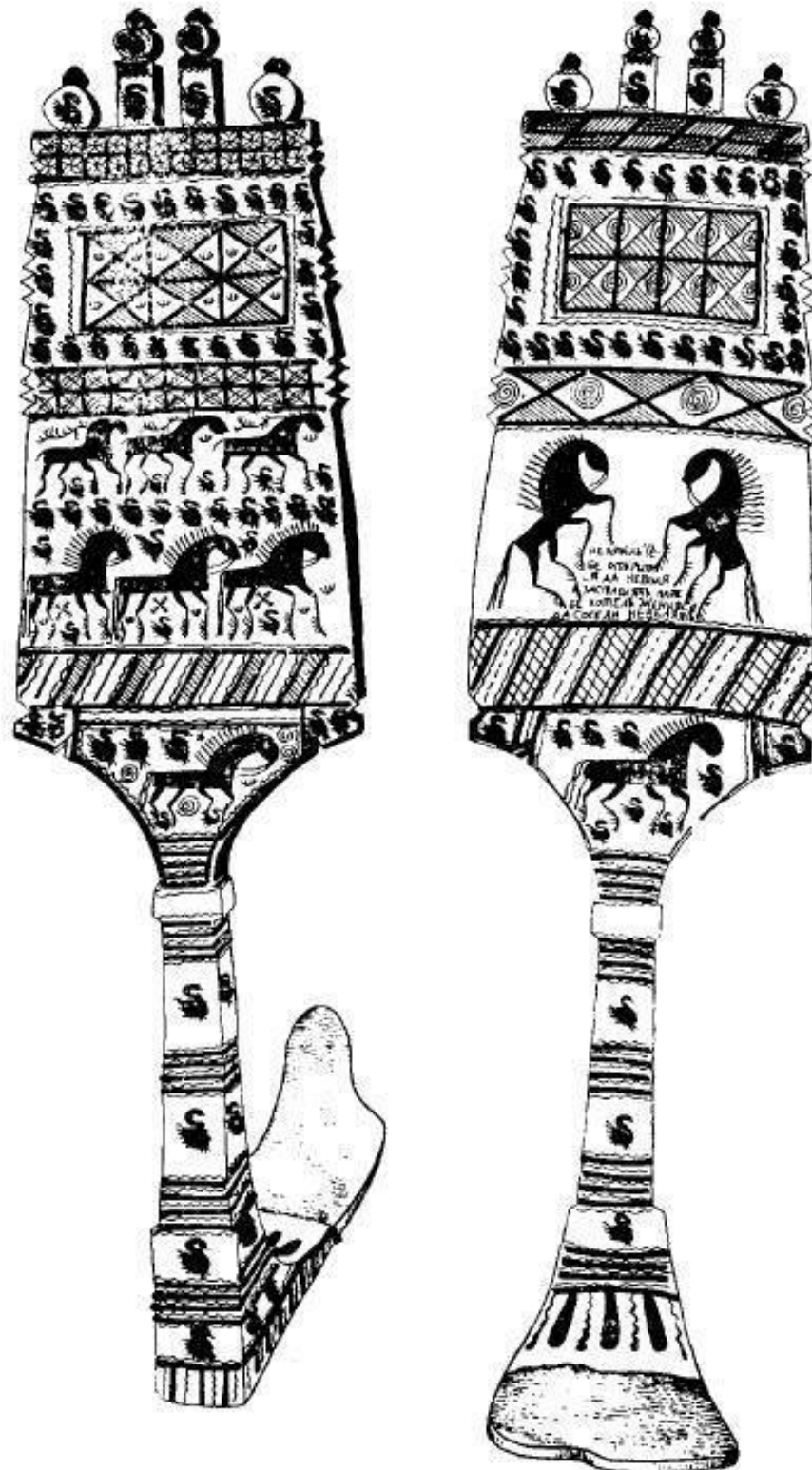


Fig. 1. Spinning wheel with Mezensky painting (front and back view). All spinning wheels shown in the figures were made in the village of Palashchelye at the end of the 19th century.

Another approach to the tiers depicted on the spinning wheels is also possible. If we take into account the geometric series dividing the tiers discussed above, we get a seven-tier division. The number 7, as well as 3, is characteristic of representations of the vertical division of the world, known

from the materials of folklore and folk art among many peoples of the world. It is enough to recall the Babylonian ziggurats, Asian pagodas, murals on the houses of the Secret Unions in Polynesia, etc.

The sevenfold division of the world was especially pronounced in the representations of the Ob Ugrians. The division of the world into three - heavenly, earthly, and underground - is characteristic of Finno-Ugric folklore, in particular, Komi (the heroes of their fairy tales travel to these worlds).⁷ Similar representations are noticeable in products of the Perm animal style.⁸ The image of a shaman traveling across three worlds is often can be seen on the “miraculous” shamanic plaques from the Urals.⁹ It would seem that the vertical division of the spinning wheels is easily explained by the influence of the Komi neighboring with the Russian Mezen. However, this is hindered by the existence of such ideas, although not as pronounced as those of the Finno-Ugric peoples, in folklore and the fine arts of many regions of the Russian North. Heroes of Russian fairy tales also travel to different worlds. The division into tiers, though not as obvious as on the Mezen spinning wheels, can be seen on some Severodvinsk spinning wheels and spinning wheels of the Yaroslavl-Kostroma type, although these spinning wheels are not very similar to the Mezen ones in the subject of images and performance technique. A fairly clear vertical division can be traced in the Pomeranian spinning wheels and in the Mezeni rubels (ironing sticks) close to them.

B. A. Rybakov, having shown the cosmogonic symbolism of the shamanistic representations of the Urals in the art of the northern Russian, Finno-Ugric and Samoyed peoples, considers that the sources of such representations should be sought in the worldview of the primitive hunters of the Mesolithic. The hunting ideology of the Mesolithic and Neolithic was not preserved due to any ethnic peculiarities, but was a sign of the stadia to the extent of this stadia more fully manifested in the materials of the 19th century, the Samoyed-Ugric tribes, preserved among the Finno-Ugric and Russian northeastern Europe.¹⁰ It is also possible that the similarities are considered in the representations reflected in the art of various peoples of Eastern Europe, which is explained not only by the convergence of these representations, but also by the common substrate included in the Russian Mezen, Komi and peoples of the Urals. It is appropriate to recall the point of view of N. Ya. Marr, who found a common substrate not only in the Caucasus and the Mediterranean, and almost throughout Eastern Europe.¹¹ In addition, according to tribute to archeology, paleoanthropology and linguistics, the migration of tribes from Eastern Europe to countries The Mediterranean and in the opposite direction have taken place since ancient times.¹²

Almost all the images on the inside of the spinning wheels, known in the research literature as “everyday scenes”, in our opinion, are variants of the so-called “world plots” that are widespread in the art of different peoples. For example, in a bird-hunting scene that usually sits on top of a tree, a “world tree,” or “tree of life,” is guessed. A tree with birds on branches is one of the favorite subjects in folk art not only of the Slavic, but also of other peoples of Eastern Europe (Fig. 2).

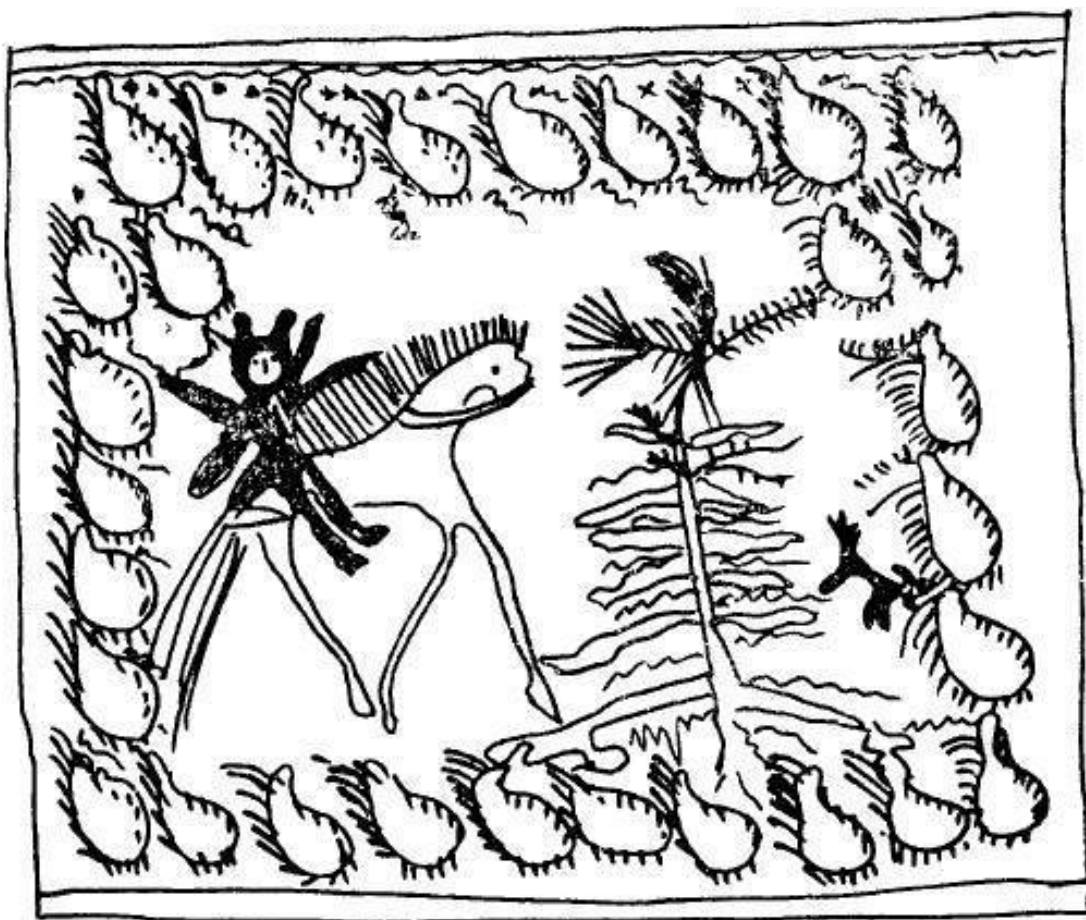


Fig. 2. Fragment of the painting of the butcher spinning wheel (hunter and bird on top of a tree).

In particular, the tree motif with several branches rose upwards and birds sitting on them is widespread in the embroideries of the Karelians of the Kalinin Region and the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic¹³. The "world tree" in the form of an oak tree with birds upstairs or a birch tree with a "sun bird" in the branches is one of vivid images of the Karelian epic¹⁴. In the fine arts of the Russian North, such a tree was reflected in a three-part composition with the Mother Goddess and the figures of people or animals that were to her, surrounded by birds. The figure of the goddess was often combined or replaced by the image of tree¹⁵. On the Mezen, this composition is present in paintings on the gables of some houses, where on the sides of the tree there are figures of opposing lions. On the Mezen spinning wheels, the tree is most often depicted with a large bird on top. Probably, such an image of the "tree of life" is not accidental. It is connected with the custom, widespread in the recent past, among neighboring Komi to put carved wooden birds on poles near houses¹⁶. Although researchers on the question of the origin of such images did not always associate them with the "tree of life," this connection seems undeniable in the light of comparative ethnographic material. For example, the Yakuts have "shaman trees" in which L. Ya. Sternberg sees the "world tree", were depicted in the form of high poles, on the top of which birds - eagles were placed. In turn, the "shaman trees" of the Yakuts¹⁷, like similar images of all the Ural-Altai peoples, have a whole complex of features associated with the ideas about the "world tree" among the peoples of the Mediterranean cultures, as well as among the peoples of Scandinavia and Western Finno-Ugric peoples. The plot of the "world tree" and the eagle as a hypostasis of the supreme god Odin, who lives on top of this tree, is very vividly developed in Scandinavian mythology. The connection between the

“tree of life” and the bird as the embodiment of a deity can be traced in the folklore of the Slavs.¹⁸ The motif of a bird on the top of a tree, bringing good news or gifts, takes place in the calendar and wedding poetry of the Western and Eastern Slavs¹⁹. The bird on top of the tree can be seen in the drawings on the Mezen birch bark tues. Obviously, it is necessary to associate such ideas with the well-known in the Russian North wooden chip birds, which in the recent past were customary to hang in the red corner of the house. The village of Selishche, where the craftsmen who carved birds lived, is located not far from the village. Palaschel is the place where Mezen spinning wheels were made. A relic of the same motif (birds at the top of a tree) can be seen in the very custom of northern peasants to hang wooden birds in the red corner, since a revered tree was often associated with the latter.²⁰

There are images of a lonely standing tree on Mezen spinning wheels, often ate. It is legitimate to associate these images with the veneration of trees, including spruce, reflected in the rites and customs of the Russian Mezen²¹. Numerous testimonies of the veneration of sacred trees by the closest neighbors of the Russians Mezen - Komi have been preserved.²²



Leshukonye

Of particular interest is the composition of three trees (Fig. 3). In all likelihood, this is one of the variants of a three-part composition. Two identical trees are located on the sides of the central tree, differing from the others by either larger size or general configuration. It is no coincidence that a similar plot is found in the paintings on the old peasant furniture on the Mezen. The theme of three trees in various versions is inherent in the art of ancient Urartu and the art of the ancient Armenians and Scythians related to it.²³ There are other analogies to the images of three trees on spinning wheels. The Selkups have an idea of three sacrificial trees - birch, cedar and larch, worshipping which they hung rags: white on birch, red on larch, black on cedar. Three sacrificial trees stood at the shaman's dugout. They were called "heaven and earth, binding the sacrificial trees." Around them, each clan made its own ancestral sacrifice, and the entire Selkup tribe sacrificed near the tree (birch) common

to both clans.²⁴ In the light of this kind of ideas, the special position of the central tree becomes clear both in the Mezen paintings and in the ancient Urartian and Scythian images.

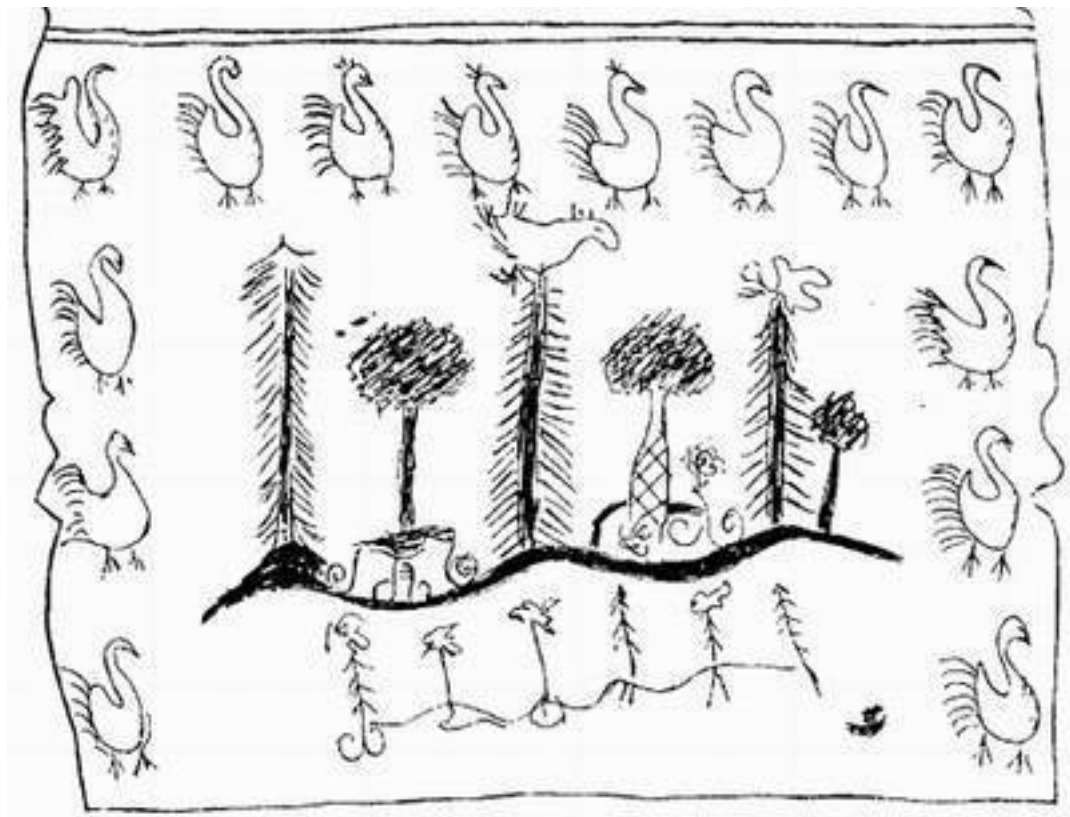


Figure: 3. Fragment of painting on a palaschel spinning wheel (three trees).

Another circle of subjects in the painting on the Mezen spinning wheels is associated with ancient images. These are boats and ships in which it is easy to see the well-known world motif found in the art of many nations (Fig. 4, 5).

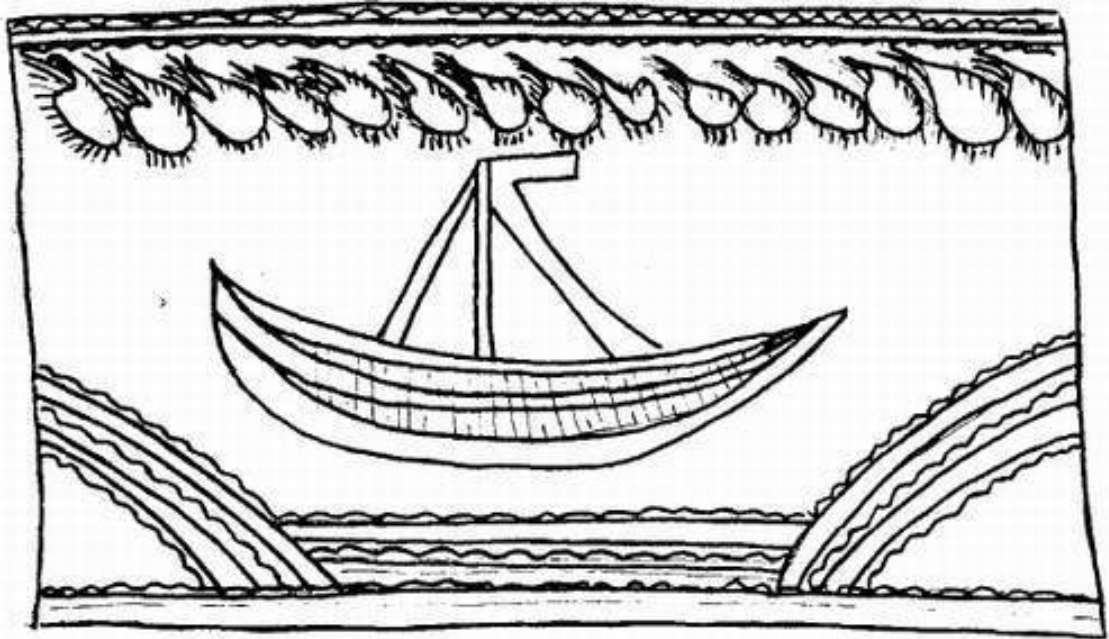


Figure: 4. Fragment of painting on a spinning wheel (boat)



Figure: 5. Fragment of painting on a spinning wheel (steamer)

Its antiquity is evidenced by numerous images of boats on rock paintings in different parts of the world. A. P. Okladnikov, who studied the Amur petroglyphs, in which boats often appear, writes that similar images are found in the petroglyphs of the Baikal region, Yenisei, Karelia and Scandinavia²⁵: “In a word, this is a whole world of such boats from Baikal to the White Sea and

the Baltic. You can ... from Scandinavia stretch the processions of boats and even further, to pre-dynastic Egypt, to the funeral boats of the pharaohs, to the solar boat of the god Ra, on which he makes his eternal journey from sun rise to sunset, into the bowels of the underworld to die and rise again to the delight of people, as the ancient Egyptian myth tells, as the sacred texts of the pyramids say"²⁶. Ethnographic material shows that these boats are the boats of the dead, in which the souls of the dead are transported to the land of the dead. A boat or a ship often appears in fairy tales: on them the heroes go to another kingdom²⁷. The idea of the ship (boat) of the dead prevails among the island peoples of Oceania; in Europe, the classic country of the cult of the boat of the dead is Scandinavia²⁸. In this connection, I would like to note that the motive of the boat (ship) was especially developed on the Mezen spinning wheels; on spinning wheels from other Russian regions, it is almost completely absent. The preservation of this motive on the Mezen was undoubtedly facilitated by the close connection of the population of the Mezen with the river and the sea. An important role in the economy of the Mezen was played by the sea fishing for fish and animals, which in winter gathered the male population from many Mezen villages, including the village of Palaschelya.

However, although the economic activity of the population of Mezen played a role, it alone cannot explain the preservation of the subject in question in the Mezen painting. How else to explain the absence of it in the paintings of other northern regions (in particular, the Northern Dvina), the population of which was also drawn into the marine industries? Obviously, the motive of the boat in the Mezen paintings has deep roots, possibly connected with the local Neolithic population, who left rock paintings on the shores of the White Sea.



N. A. Shabunin "Journey to the North". 1906

World plots include the images of driving in a sleigh or carts harnessed by one or a pair of horses, which are not uncommon on Mezen spinning wheels (Fig. 6). The plot is quite widespread and is found in the paintings of household items and on architectural structures in many countries. He took a significant place in Russian art, having received special development in folk art, in particular, in the paintings of spinning wheels, especially in Severodvinsk, less often in Gorodets and Mezen. This plot is not uncommon in the paintings of Hutsul masters²⁹. It is characteristic that of the listed murals, only the Mezen painting retains features that have analogies in archaeological antiquities. So, on the Mezen spinning wheels we see "drags", which are the most ancient form of the simplest construction of two tree trunks or poles, which were dragged by a horse. Such "drags" remained longer in hard-to-reach, swampy, mountainous places. Back at the end of the 19th century, "drags were found in the valleys of the Alps, Transcaucasia, the Carpathians and some remote corners of Russia. They are often mentioned in Kalevala. As D. N. Anuchin, a sled of a primitive design, supplanted everywhere by wheeled carts, was preserved as a part of the funeral rite.

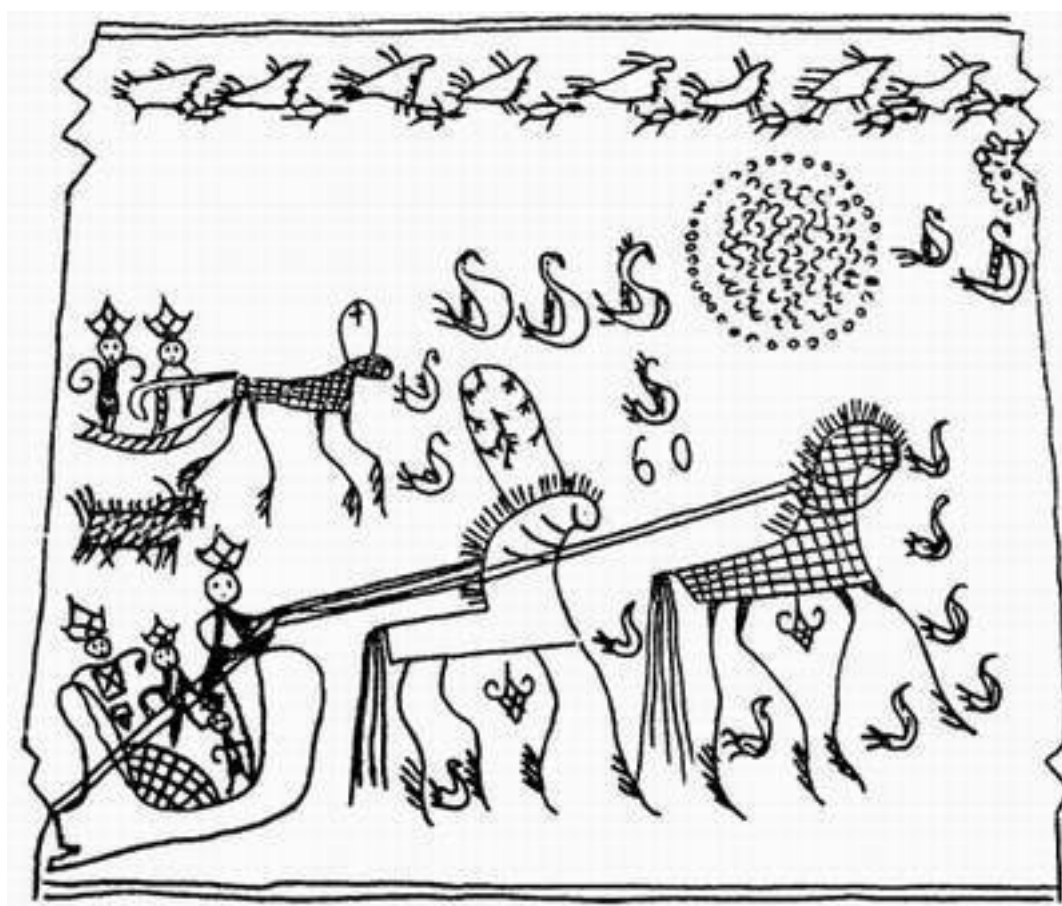


Figure: 6. Fragment of painting on a spinning wheel (ride in a sleigh)

I would like to note, by the way, that the main subjects of the Mezen painting can serve as an illustration to the classic work of this scientist "Sleigh, boat and horses as belonging to the funeral rite." This indirectly confirms that the plots of the Mezen painting we are considering should be interpreted not as everyday, but as religious, pagan in their basis plots.

It is noteworthy that of the two horses, one is often dark and the other light. On the Mezen spinning wheels, often painted one black, the other red, and horses follow each other, personifying, apparently, the afterlife and the real world. The basis for the latter assumption can serve as

mythological ideas about the horse, which exist among many peoples of the world, including the Slavs.³⁰ The fact that the horses depicted on the spinning wheels have a sacred meaning can be judged by the numerous solar signs placed by the artists above the manes, between the legs and under the horses' legs, as well as by the nature of the images of the animal figures themselves. The horses of the Mezen paintings are more distant from the real prototype than the horses in the peasant paintings from other regions. Most of them are red-orange in color, which is not typical for ordinary horses. The body of black horses was often covered with a continuous lattice pattern, emphasizing, in our opinion, the sacred significance of the animal. The horses' legs, unnaturally long and thin, ended in feathers. Often horses were depicted "not following each other, but against each other and, judging by the rearing poses, in a mutual struggle. Sometimes, on reared horses, there are riders fighting each other (Fig. 7). On one of these images we find the names of horsemen - Ilya Muromets and Polkan the hero (Fig. 8).

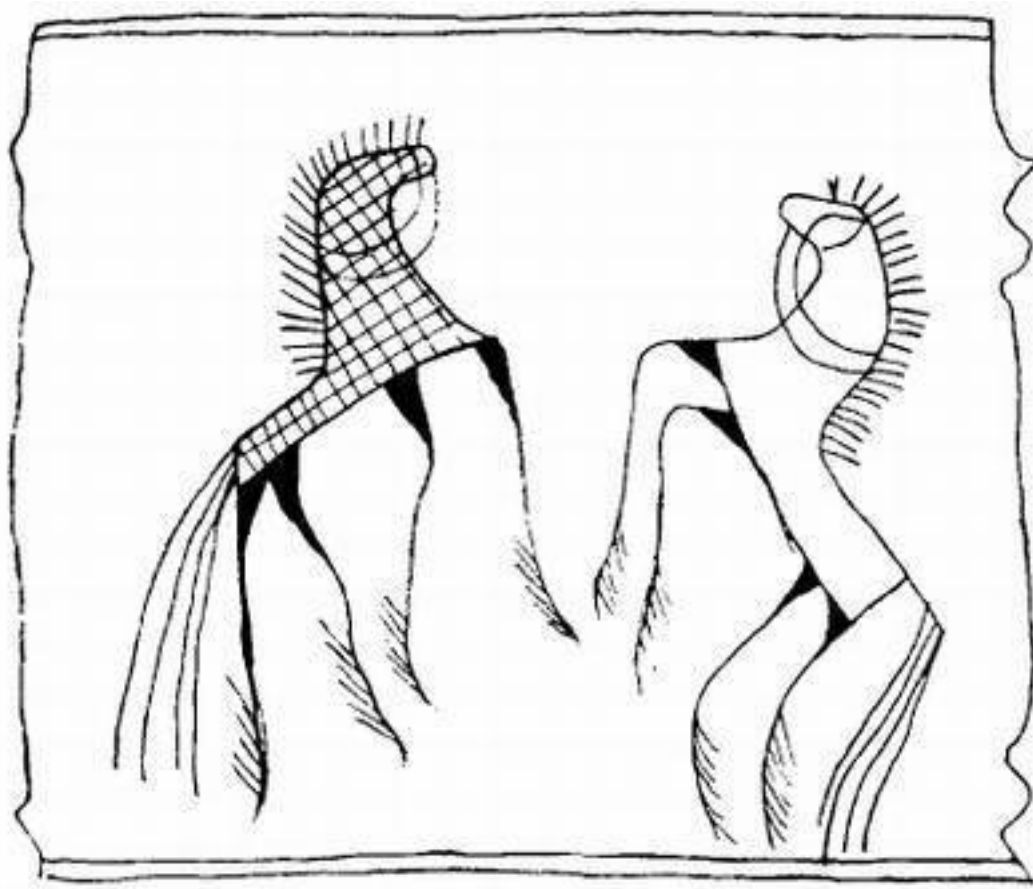


Figure: 7. Wrestling horses

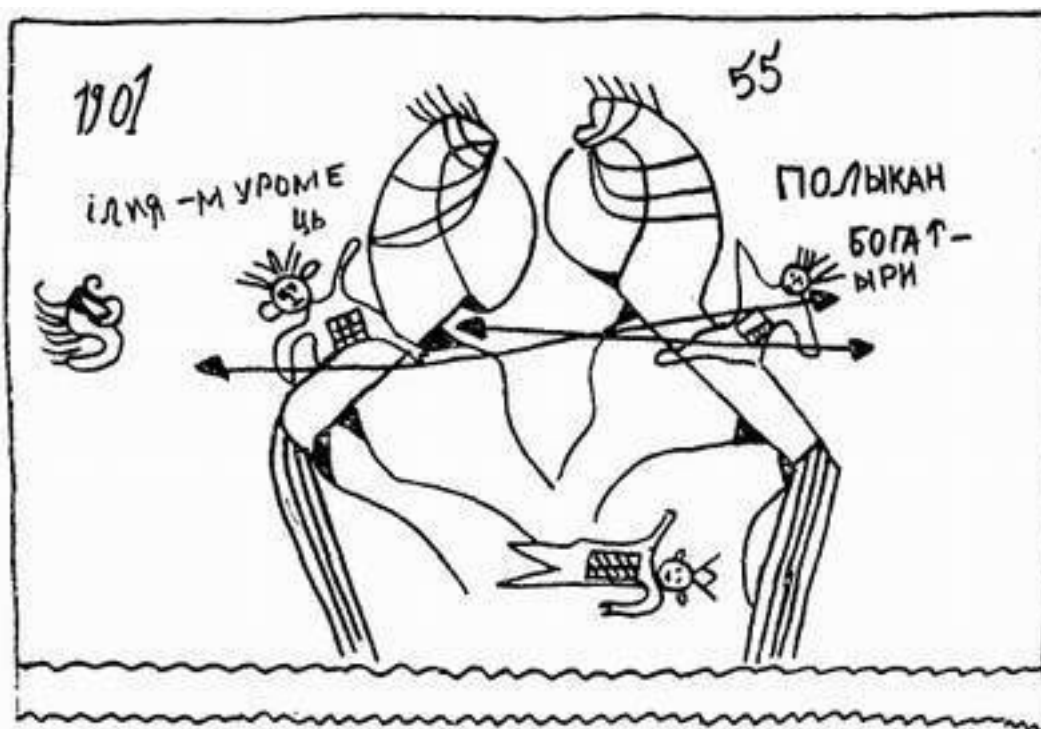


Figure: 8. Ilya Muromets and Polkan the Bogatyr

Of course, the considered Mezen drawings, which, in our opinion, are variants of the most common world plots, have come down to us in a transformed form. They bear the layers of different eras, including everyday life, by the modern Mezen masters of the 19th century, due to which they are perceived by many as everyday subjects. However, practice shows that in folk art only plots are firmly established, constructively and logically corresponding to traditional ornamental motives. V. S. Voronov, who devoted a special study to the genre of everyday life in peasant art, found that some genre scenes depicting cattle herding by a shepherd, milking cows, working in a smithy, round dances, a meal, threshing, dancing and other characteristic scenes from folk life, “did not receive strict formal crystallization in artistic processing and appear to be curious scattered fragments of everyday folk painting”³¹. Plots of this kind did not have deep roots in folk art and therefore turned out to be short-lived.

On the outside of the spinning wheels, the pattern is more canonical than on the inside (Fig. 1). In its middle part, two rows of horses or deer running one after another are almost always depicted. Often, both rows are filled with uniform figures of horses, less often - deer. Usually, in each row, the master placed three or four figures of animals, so those in totals there were six or eight figures in both rows, respectively. The images of animals here, as well as on other parts of the spinning wheels, are rather monotonous. The red-orange silhouettes of horses and deer, as Yuri Arbat first noticed, who had the opportunity to directly observe the manufacture of spinning wheels in the village of Palashchel, are formed from three parts: a rectangular body, a long elongated neck and muzzle. The mane, four long legs and tail are drawn with thin black strokes. Deer differ from horses only in that instead of a mane, branched horns appear behind their backs with the same black strokes. Solar signs and images of birds are placed around the figures of horses and deer. The latter dominate in the upper and lower friezes, symbolizing, as already mentioned, the upper and lower worlds, respectively.

The tiers-worlds both on the front and on the back of the spinning wheel were separated by horizontal frieze stripes filled with a geometric report (repeating) pattern. Despite the fact that the geometric patterns were made up of the same type and even monotonous elements, on a separate

spinning wheel such a pattern looked unusual, giving originality to the entire spinning wheel as a whole. A similar effect was achieved by the fact that each master combined elements of geometric ornament in his own way and on each spinning wheel in different ways.

It is important to note that the geometric rows under consideration, dividing the Mezen spinning wheels into three parts, were drawn by masters at the same level, both on the front and on the back of the spinning wheel. This, in our opinion, testifies to the fact that the spinning wheel was perceived by their creators as something voluminous and round. If this assumption is correct, it leads us to the idea that, on the whole, the design of the spinning wheels was likened to the "tree of life", divided, as already mentioned, into several tiers-worlds. B.A. Rybakov, having examined in detail the spinning wheels with the image of the Universe, noticed that the spinning wheels are developing another idea - a "world tree" rising to the sky³². We have already said that this idea is quite vividly reflected in the art of the Finnish peoples, in particular in the Kalevala. A vivid description of the "world tree" is also found in the Scandinavian epic³³.

The image of a "wonderful tree with three lands" is present in Russian, Ukrainian and South Slavic wedding songs, carols, vyunishny and other ritual songs³⁴. The researchers associate the motif of the three "lands" in the roots, middle and top of the tree with the most ancient Indo-European ideas about the "world tree" as a model of the Universe³⁵. The idea of the "world tree" as an initial concept in the ornament of spinning wheels, according to B.A. Rybakov, is due to the real purpose of spinning wheels in the life of peasants since ancient times. The spinning wheel and the spindle became indispensable tools of labor already in the Neolithic: they caught forest animals and birds with nets made of spun threads. Long strands of yarn have become associated with the "threads of life"³⁶. Many Indo-European peoples have developed an image of heavenly spinners spinning the golden threads of human destinies. These are antique moira (parks), Scandinavian norms spinning threads at the roots of Ash-Igrasil. According to Germanic legends, the goddess Freya, known as a hunter, is engaged in spinning in secluded places; the heroine of other legends - Golda, dressed in a long white dress and a veil, sitting in a grotto or forest thicket, turns a golden spinning wheel to the sound of melodious songs. The golden spindle is one of the attributes of Artemis. The southern Slavs had the image of the goddess of Fate-Sreche, spinning a golden thread. The Eastern Slavs had an idea of a wonderful self-spinning wheel spinning pure gold, of gold and silver threads descending from the sky³⁷. The kikimora of Russian byliches, spinning yarn at night, appearing in a long white robe, in all likelihood, is also related to the goddesses of Fate. The image of a spinner spinning thread for tying (stitching) wounds is found in Russian conspiracies. For example, in conspiracies for blood, it is said that on the sea-okiyan, on the island of Buyan, on an iron or gold chair, a girl (sometimes three) weaves an unusual thread: "three girls spun, torn off a thread and tied blood to a slave (name)"³⁸.

The fact that the spinning wheel was perceived as a tree is evidenced by the design of the spinning wheels itself. The Mezen spinning wheel was called by the local "kokoritsy spinning wheel" or "root-eater". The name emphasized the design feature of the spinning wheel: its bottom was made from the root, while the blade was cut from the tree trunk. The spinning wheels here were not composite, as in many other Russian regions, but monolithic, as if repeating the structure of the tree from which they were made.

In addition, a close connection in the popular representation of spinning wheels and spinning with family life, that is, with procreation and fate, is known. The spinning wheel was an indispensable gift from the groom to the bride. An interesting story testifying to the role of the spinning wheel in family life was recorded by Y. Arbat in one of the North Russian villages. "We had such an incident with a spinning wheel. The girl got married two yards from me. They live well. Brought her husband a daughter. The neighbors laugh: "Your woman has stepped bast shoes." This is a saying. A husband, of course, desires a son. She ordered: a spinning wheel with a value. The master drew a boy in a red shirt, and black boots. Do you dare to what? Strands, they say, but look. When the son is born,

they say here: "The wife stepped in with her boot." And believe it or not - this woman another time brought her son to her husband.³⁹ In the Mezen villages, we heard stories that at gatherings where girls came with spinning wheels, it happened that the guys, as a sign of a special relationship to the girls they liked, broke off ("knocked off") the figures crowning the spinning wheels.

Figures completing the Mezen spinning wheels in their upper part deserve special attention (Fig. 1). Art historians call them chapters, meaning their resemblance to the heads of churches. N. I. Tolstoy pointed out the connection of these figurines with anthropomorphic images on tombstones among some East Slavic and South Slavic peoples⁴⁰. The validity of such a comparison is confirmed, in our opinion, by the similarity of the shape of the figures under consideration with images of deceased ancestors among the eastern neighbors of the Slavic peoples⁴¹. The connection between the spinning wheels and family life and rituals, which we have indicated, indirectly indicates that the figures on the Mezen spinning wheels are related to the images of ancestors.

It is important to note that the main images of the Mezen spinning wheels (birds, horses, deer, boats) do not leave the circle of the most ancient images of Russian folklore, which are most reflected in ritual poetry and fairy tales. All these images connected people with the other world. According to linguistic analysis, the oldest of these images is a bird, later replaced by a deer, a horse⁴². The study of folklore material showed that this replacement took place gradually, as evidenced by transitional (hybrid) images like winged horses and flying boats⁴³. These include the images of horses on the Mezen spinning wheels: their legs, as already mentioned, were painted in the same way as the wings of birds depicted on the same spinning wheels. In addition, boats and ships on Mezen spinning wheels were often depicted surrounded by flying birds.

Hybridity (diversity) of images, a combination of zoomorphic, anthropomorphic and ornithomorphic features in them is a characteristic feature of folk art, and the further into the depths of time, the more vividly it manifests itself. In North Russian art, we especially often see a horse-bird, a horse-deer-bird, etc. As an example, we can cite the decoration of the roof of a house with a "ridge" characteristic of the Mezen and other regions of the North. In the configuration of the latter, the features of a waterfowl, and sometimes a deer, often appear. This feature connects the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images of the Mezen folk art with similar images on ancient monuments of art, known to us from archaeological and ethnographic materials. First of all, this concerns the art of the so-called Scythian-Siberian animal style, which is reflected, as you know, in the culture of many peoples of Eurasia⁴⁴. The presence of motives and images of the Scythian style in the art of the Eastern Slavs is due to the participation in their ethnogenesis of the creators of this style - steppe, including Scythian, tribes. The more ancient contacts of the Slavs with the Iranian and Turkic-speaking tribes of the Black Sea and Caspian regions also played a significant role. So, for example, the influence of the Dacian-Sarmatian and Scythian elements is found in one of the most common motives in North Russian art - a three-part composition with a female figure (tree) in the center⁴⁵. One of the variants of this composition became widespread on the Mezen - lions on the sides of the tree. Some researchers associate its appearance in the North with the lively trade with England, which took place before the era of Peter I through the Northern Dvina and contributed to the spread in the North in the 16-17 century of magnificently ornamented household items, often painted with paintings with lions⁴⁶. However, another, eastern way of the spread of the considered composition in the North is also possible, as evidenced by one of their characteristic features. Lions in the Mezen paintings are depicted with a raised right paw, climbing the side of a hill with a tree at the top. A similar composition with lions, as was first pointed out by I. V. Makovetsky, is found in paintings and woodcarving in the Upper Volga regions of the Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Vladimir and Gorky regions⁴⁷. The following argument can be made in favor of the eastern route of distribution. On the pediments of some houses of Ancient Khorezm, as evidenced by archaeological excavations, there are relief

images of a three-part composition with lions, very similar to the Mezen one. They have the same characteristic: lions are depicted with a raised paw, climbing the side of a hill.⁴⁸

The connection with Khorezm is not accidental. As shown by the fundamental research of S. P. Tolstov, this region from ancient times had trade and cultural relations with the peoples of Siberia and Eastern Europe, including the Russian people. Going back to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, these ties stretch back to the formation of the main ethnic complexes of Asia and Europe. "The Hittite-Hurrian, Thracian, Tocharian, Scythian-Sarmatian problems are equally at the sources of Central Asian and East European ethnogenesis"⁴⁹. The influence of the Khorezm culture on these tribes, according to the researcher, was especially strong in the period between the 4th century BC and 1 AD, having affected, in particular, the history of the development of the surviving complexes of folk clothing in Eastern Europe. These ties stretch over the next centuries, "manifested either in Slavic carols among the Khorezm Christians of the 11th century, then in the existence of the Russian-Khazar-Alan colony in Urgench in the 13th century, or in Russian tales about the Khvalyn kingdom."⁵⁰

In turn, S. P. Tolstov and other researchers noted the undoubted connection between the culture of the Danube, Black Sea, Caspian and Aral tribes with more eastern, in particular the Baikal, tribes. A. P. Okladnikov, who studied the culture of the latter from rock paintings, noted the undoubted similarities with culture of Neolithic and Eneolithic farmers of Central Asia, Iran and neighboring countries⁵¹. Moreover, the researcher sees a common stylistic style in the Neolithic art of the forest tribes of hunters and fishermen of the European Subarctic, as well as the Baltic States and Finland. The similarity of the rock carvings found in such distant spaces from each other is so great that it suggests not only close contacts of the western and eastern tribes, but also the penetration of representatives of western tribes from west to east at the end of the Neolithic, apparently, the ancestors of the later Samoyed tribes Sayan region⁵².

The petroglyphs of the Baikal region of the Bronze and Early Iron Age show no less similarity with the rock carvings of Europe⁵³. Attributed to an even later time (6-10 centuries), the so-called Kurykan scribes left by the Turkic tribes of the Kurykans, have undoubted analogies in the culture of the Sayan-Altai Turks and the Turkic tribes of Eastern Europe, who settled in the 1st millennium AD. e. steppe regions of Siberia and Eastern Europe from the Yenisei and Altai to the Danube and the Black Sea⁵⁴. Of particular interest for our research are the Kurykan scribble-drawings on the Shishkinsky rocks of the Baikal region. The Kurykans, who roamed the northern side of Lake Baikal, were among the Uighur tribes, which, according to written sources of their time, were descendants of the Huns⁵⁵. Their main occupation was horse breeding, hence the predominance of horses and riders in the above drawings). "At the same time, the horses of the Shishkin writings have a special, peculiar appearance, which testifies to the fact that before the eyes of the ancient artist there was a certain model with sharply outlined characteristic features. The artist strove to convey the peculiarities of the horse breed: a tall horse with a narrow long body, a small hunchbacked head set on a sharply arched swan neck; horse with a strong muscular chest and thin dry legs".⁵⁶ According to A. P. Okladnikov, the horses depicted by the kurykans correspond to a specific type of southern Central Asian breeds, which have long been valued in the East and West. A similar horse is reflected in the art of ancient Khorezm. S. P. Tolstov wrote about the sharply expressed difference between these tall and thin-legged, "stream" horses from the undersized Scythian horses⁵⁷. The Kurykan horses described by A. P. Okladnikov are very similar, in our opinion, to the Mezen horses: the same long body, tall thin legs and a small head. It should be noted that, according to the testimony of the same author, in the late Baikal scribes, the figure of a horse acquires geometrized outlines, approaching a rectangle: the legs become straight, elongated and thin, like sticks⁵⁸. Such geometrization, as we have already noted, is also characteristic of the Mezen paintings. The fact that this similarity is not accidental is evidenced

by the following fact: the horses on the Mezen paintings are fundamentally different from the short and stocky horses of the local Mezen breed.

The question arises of how the image of the Kurykan, or Central Asian, horse in question got to the far Russian North. Above, it was said about the Dacian-Sarmatian and Scythian elements in the folk art of the North, explained by the participation of the Scythians and Sarmatians in the ethnogenesis of the Slavic, including the North Russian, population. In the first half of the 1st millennium AD the mentioned tribes came into contact with the Turkic tribes. A. P. Okladnikov, noting the similarity of the Kurykan scribbles with the drawings of the Turkic tribes of the Caucasus, the Don Steppes and Bulgaria of the 9-10 centuries, expressed an opinion about the possibility of the penetration of the Turks of the Baikal region from east to west - to the Don, the Caucasus and Danube Bulgaria.⁵⁹

S. P. Tolstoy wrote about the Türkization of the ancient Saka-Massaget population of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya deltas in the 4th-7th centuries, noting a particularly strong admixture of Hunno-Türkic elements. The descendants of these Turkicized tribes appeared in the 7-9th century under the collective name of the Oguzes⁶⁰. The name "Oguzes", according to the same researcher, has another form - "Ogor", attested by the Byzantine sources of the 7th century, which suggests the presence of the Ugrians in the Oguzes - tribes of the eastern branch of the Finno-Ugric group, whose modern representatives are in the Urals and in Trans-Urals are Khanty and Mansi (Ostyaks and Voguls)⁶¹. The origin of the other northeastern neighbors of the Russian Mezen, the Nenets, is associated with the Altai Turks. The cultural and economic contacts of these peoples with the Komi and the Russians were recorded by a considerable number of historical documents, as well as anthropological and ethnographic research⁶². Obviously, thanks to these ethnic ties, it is in the folklore of the Russians of Mezen that Turkic elements can be traced, which have analogies in the culture of the Altai Turks⁶³.

In this regard, the similarity of some plot paintings on Mezen spinning wheels with drawings on shaman tambourines among Altai peoples will not seem so surprising⁶⁴. Two-horned hats on men in compositions on the Mezen spinning wheels deserve special attention. Let me remind you that two-horned headdresses are characteristic of shamanic clothing. A similar headdress can be seen on many male figures depicted on the Mezen spinning wheels. There is nothing of the kind on any other Russian spinning wheels, which, in our opinion, only confirms the influence of Eastern cultures on the creation of the Mezen painting.

The art of Mezen allows us to trace ethnocultural ties not only with the eastern regions. We paid special attention to eastern ties because they turned out to be the least studied in the culture of the northeastern regions of the European part of Russia, which includes the Mezen basin of interest to us. In the Mezen painting, there are many elements connecting it with the culture of the western regions, primarily with the Severodvinsk regions of the Arkhangelsk region, as well as with the regions of the former Olonets province. Thus, the S-shaped figures of birds, characteristic of the Mezen painting, are often found on the products of masters from Belozerye and Podvina. In the paintings of the Severodvinsk spinning wheels, there is a motive similar to the Mezen motive of riding in a sleigh on two horses, one of the horses being dark and the other light in color. Some of the motives of the Mezen painting, for example, a characteristic ornamental motive defined by N. I. Tolstoy as the image of the "eyes of the dead"⁶⁵, connects the painting we are considering not only with the West Russian, but also with the West Finnish population. It is especially often found in the art of the Vepsians and the Russian regions adjacent to the area of their settlement⁶⁶. This motive is not uncommon in the art of the population of the Dnieper region, as well as among the southern Slavs. Similar parallels are found in other areas of the material and spiritual life of the Russian Mezen. For example, in the Leshukonsky region, where the Mezen painting of interest to us is especially widespread, women

wore original warriors decorated with beads; the ornament on them has undoubted analogies in the applied art of the Vepsians ⁶⁷. In the same villages, a complex of dwellings with winter ground huts is widespread, in many ways similar to peasant buildings in the southwestern regions of the Russian North (in villages along the Vaga, in the adjacent parts of the former Totemsk, Velsk and Shensk districts ⁶⁸). The same connections are found in the distribution of the characteristic decoration - the ridge on the roofs of houses, as well as some types of applied art: wood chips, figured cookies, some ornamental motifs on woven and embroidered items. The researchers associate the appearance of a sundress in the form of a skirt with a bodice on Vaga, Northern Dvina and Pinega, as well as on Vashka and Mezen, with the movement of the population from Western Russian regions. In the clothing of the Baltic Finns, such an unusual element of women's clothing in some villages of Leshukonya, as the "sleeves" that existed on sweaters, has analogies ⁶⁹. The antiquity of the Leshukonya's ties with Vaga, Kokshenga and Belozerie is evidenced by historical documents indicating the colonization routes from Kargopol district to the east, to the banks of the Northern Dvina and its tributaries Vaga, Sia, Emtsa, Vaimuga, and Pinega. Pinega was connected with the middle Mezen by a system of drags. The data of Toponymy testify to the antiquity of these paths. In this regard, the similarity in many elements of the geometric ornament of the Mezen painting with the paintings on the objects of folk art of Kargopol becomes clear. ⁷⁰ In all likelihood, the Polkan-bogatyr mentioned by us, depicted on one of the Mezen spinning wheels, is associated with the eponymous character of clay toys by the famous craftswoman from Kargopol U. I. Babkina. Researchers see in Polkan a once revered local pagan hero - a deity like Yarila ⁷¹.

It is important to emphasize that the similarity we have noted concerns mainly the ancient elements of the culture of the compared regions. This gives reason to associate them not so much with later cultural and trade relations, but with the genetic relationship of the population of these areas. According to anthropological and ethnographic studies, the Russian population of the European North was formed as a result of the advance of Slovenes and Krivichi to the North from the Middle Dnieper region and their introduction into the environment of the Letto-Lithuanians and Baltic Finns, who belonged to the Atlantic-Baltic group of anthropological types. ⁷² In turn, the data of craniological and archaeological studies indicate that the basis for the formation of the Atlanto-Baltic types was the Indo-European tribes that penetrated the European North from more southern regions. ⁷³



Mezen

Thus, the analysis of images on the Mezen spinning wheels allows us to speak about the broad ties with other regions of Asia and Europe reflected in the art of Mezen, which, in all likelihood, determined those features of the Mezen painting, which researchers often identified as unusual and "mysterious". In the light of the considered ethnic ties, the similarity of the Mezen paintings with the oldest paintings in Eurasia becomes clear. We have already talked about the ancient Greek and Azeline cultures. In addition, I will point out the similarities with the art of other ancient cultures - the Cretan-Mycenaean, Etruscan, Thracian, Koban, Urartian, as well as with the Central Asian archaeological culture of Anau. On the decorated household and religious objects of the listed cultures, we see the same ornamental elements repeating in similar combinations: shaded triangles, crossed rhombuses and squares, swastika figures, various kinds of crosses, etc. The similarity is sometimes striking, especially if we bear in mind the considerable distances space and time, separating these cultures from the Mezen culture we are studying.

The geography of archaeological cultures testifies that related tribes took part in their creation, occupying vast territories in the northern steppes from the Black Sea region to southern Siberia and Central Asia. Within these limits, as most scientists believe, was the homeland of the Indo-Europeans. Archaeological sites related to them in this territory can be traced from 3-2 thousand BC until the next time, including the Scythian era. Various Scythian tribes are known to have taken part in the ethnogenesis of not only the Slavic, but also the Finno-Ugric peoples. Therefore, some of the elements of the Mezen painting, which we consider as a result of the interrelationships of the Russian population of Mezen with the neighboring Finno-Ugric population, in their deep origins may refer to Indo-European antiquity. Thus, images of men in two-horned headdresses have analogies in the petroglyphs of Lake Onega and the White Sea, in the sculpture of Tripoli and in the ceramics of the Komarov culture. The horse, so often depicted on the Mezen spinning wheels, was, as is well known, a typical chthonic animal of the Indo-Europeans. Among the characteristic subjects in the art of the latter include the image of a horse harnessed to a cart (chariot).

In the worldview of the Indo-Europeans, the opposition of the dark and light principles (black and red horses on spinning wheels) is explained. The roots of these views, according to researchers, go back to the Proto-Indo-Iranians, in whose mythology good and evil forces were personified, respectively, by white and black horses.⁷⁴ A comparative study of mythology has shown that a number of ritual representations associated with a horse (horse sacrifice, a horse near the "world tree", etc.) coincide among the ancient Indo-Europeans and some Asian peoples who spoke Altai, in particular Turkic, languages, which, according to researchers, reflects ancient contacts between these peoples⁷⁵.

The Indo-European community can explain the similarity of the Mezen painting with the Dipylon style and other varieties of the ancient Greek, the so-called geometric style, which we mentioned. In this regard, the resemblance of lions on the pediments of houses in the Mezen painting with the relief figures of lions on the "lion gates" in Mycenae, discovered in due time by G. Schliemann, will not seem so surprising. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that in many elements the culture of the Indo-Europeans goes back to an older, substratum population in relation to them. It is known, for example, that the cart was borrowed from the ancient Sumerians; compositions with lions, as well as some elements of the Greek geometric style, are found in the art of ancient Crete, and such an element characteristic of Indo-European art as the swastika (not uncommon, by the way, in the Mezen painting), goes back to the pre-Aryan population of India. It is possible that the Mezen painting reflects precisely these more ancient forms of the considered elements of Indo-European art. Hence the originality of the Mezen painting, its similarity with the art of the Finno-Ugric and Siberian peoples, neighbors with the Russians Mezen, as well as the Siberian peoples, who have preserved stages of more ancient elements in everyday life and culture. However, these questions require further research.



Arhangelsk region. Pogorelets village. Church of the Nativity of John the Baptist on Mezen.
Photo by Valery Bliznyuk.

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Художественный идеал демократических Афин. Пг. 1918. p.24). Here, as on the Mezen spinning wheels, we see the figures of deer moving with each other, separated by geometric stripes. The very manner of depicting animals is similar. Especially characteristic is such a trifle (as you know, trifles often say a lot), as often geometric, swastika figures between the legs of animals. The motive of the wickerwork over the neck of the Milesian vase is not accidental either. This motif is found in the products of our Pomors and even more so among the Scandinavians.

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Painted spinning wheels. Severo-Dvinsky district



Donets (part of the spinning wheel) with thread. North.



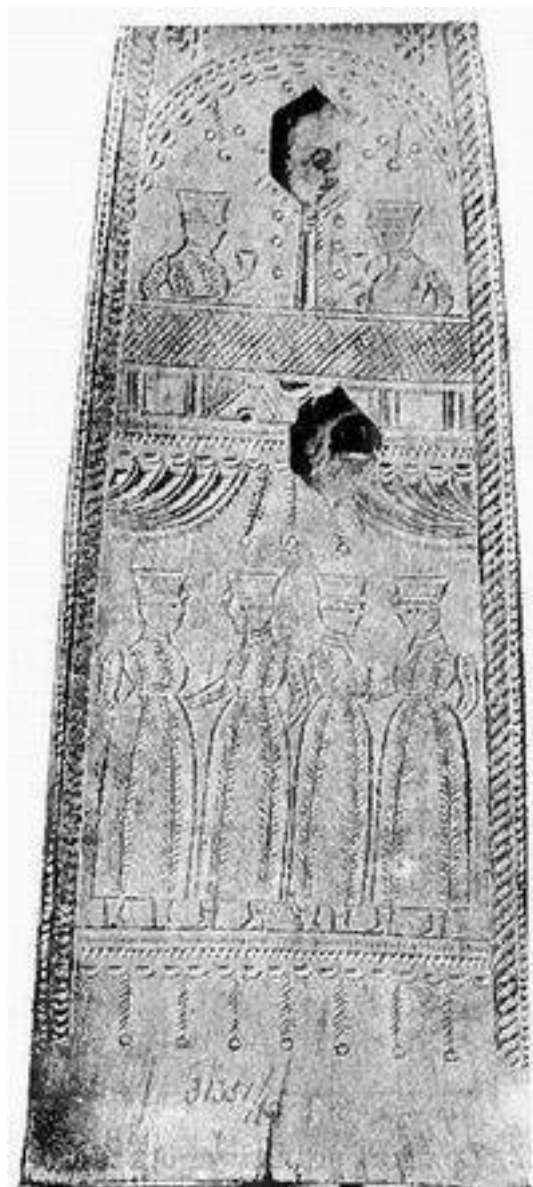




Donets (part of the spinning wheel) with thread. Nizhny Novgorod Region



Ladle. Nizhny Novgorod Region.









Distaff of the Yaroslavl-Kostroma type.



Rubeles with carving. North



Carved valky



Distaff of the Vologda type.

M. V. Surov. Vologda spinning wheels

One of the most interesting phenomena in Russian folk art is wooden hand spinning wheels - the most ancient devices for making yarn. And although the spindle has always played the main role in the spinning process, it was the spinning wheel that was destined to become a symbol of women's needlework, and in a generalized sense - a symbol of women's share.

In the Russian tradition, the spins were patronized by the goddess Mokosh (Mokosh) - the only female deity in the Kiev pantheon of Vladimir. With the adoption of Christianity, the functions of Makosh passed to St. Paraskeva Pyatnitsa, however, her image in the North Russian embroidery continued to dominate until the beginning of the 20th century. According to beliefs, Makosh watched the spinning women and severely punished those of them who dared to spin on the holidays dedicated to her or showed negligence. If the spinner was dozing, and its spindle continued to spin, it was believed that Makosh was spinning for it. An echo of the veneration of the invisible spinner Mokos was also preserved in the rite of "woodlice" - the sacrifice of St. Paraskeve Friday, during which the women threw a tow and yarn into the well.

The whole life of a Russian woman was in one way or another connected with the spinning wheel. Even at the age of five, she was put behind a small, modest children's spinning wheel, on which she spun her first thread. Subsequently, this thread was often used as a talisman. So, for example, before the wedding, the mother would gird her daughter-bride over her naked body to protect her from damage and the evil eye. Over the years of girlhood, she had to knit and strain so much that it was enough for a dowry, a beautiful suit, and gifts for relatives. The most offensive nicknames for adolescent girls were "nasty" and "netkaha". In order to "tie" a newborn girl to needlework, her umbilical cord was usually cut on a spindle (in boys, on an arrow or an ax, respectively).

When a girl became an adult, they bought a new elegant spinning wheel for her or gave her an old one inherited from her grandmothers and great-grandmothers. If the girl's father was a craftsman, he made a spinning wheel for her with his own hands, putting his whole soul into it. Quite often, the husband gave the spinning wheel to his beloved wife, but in very rare cases - a guy to a girl. The bringing by the groom of the spinning wheel has not yet been recorded in any wedding tradition.

The dominant role was played by the spinning wheel at the famous "gatherings" or "supryadki", which in the Vologda district began with "phillips", that is, from November 14 (27) and continued until Maslenitsa itself. The gathering ceremonies are described in detail in ethnographic materials, from which it can be seen that young people usually started playing and dancing only after the "lessons", that is, a tow for yarn brought from home, had run out. Moreover, in some cases, the girls resorted to tricks: "Some glorious women ... stealthily bring ready-made yarn with them, since caring mothers every time they return from their daughters' homes examine how much they have strained for the evening, and on another cheerful evening, meanwhile, it is not possible and prestige to take in hand."

The spinning wheel at the gatherings acted as a kind of "calling card" of the girl, so special importance was attached to its decoration. "A girl's life is always decorated and decorative," writes V. S. Voronov, "a spinning wheel standing next to the spinning wheel adorned it along with clothes, beads and ribbons."

By their design, Russian wooden hand spinning wheels were divided into root (kopyls) and split (composite) ones. Both of them consisted of two main parts - a vertical blade, on which the tow was fixed, and a horizontal bottom, on which the spinner sat. Observing a certain false "code of decency", scientists have still hesitated to name the spinning base with the name that is used by the overwhelming majority of residents of North Russian villages. I believe that in this case, false modesty only hinders the work and distorts the notorious "scientific objectivity", which the luminaries

of science so boast of. The reality is that in all the villages of the Vologda region (and not only), the locals call the spinning bottom "podzhopnitsya", and I personally do not find anything "indecent" in this word. Root spinning wheels were cut from a whole piece of wood: the bottom - from the root (hoop), the blade - from "straightness" (tree trunk). Almost all the spinning wheels that were used in the Vologda province belonged to this ancient type.



N. A. Shabunin "Journey to the North". 1906

The original classification of Russian spinning wheels was given in his famous album by A. A. Bobrinsky. He divided them into eight types: six according to geography and two according to processing technique. V. S. Voronov also took the classification of A. A. Bobrinsky as a basis, but changed some of the names and reduced the number of types of spinning wheels to seven: Yaroslavl, Vologda, Yaroslavl-Kostroma, Arkhangelsk-Vologda, Pomorsky, Mezen and Tver. The authors of the catalog "Russian Spinning Wheels" preferred a longer list: Gorodets, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Novgorod-Petersburg, Tver, Vologda, Olonets, Severodvinsk, Mezen, and Pomor.

None of these classifications can be called sufficiently complete and objective, since it is almost impossible to determine the exact boundaries of the existence of a particular type of spinning wheel, and, therefore, any names of such types are only conditional.

This study does not aim to describe all the varieties of Russian spinning wheels and is limited to those of them that existed in the territory of the former Vologda province. Of course, scientists did not fail to classify the Vologda spinning wheels. Here, for example, to what "sensational" conclusion one of the researchers, OV Kruglova, came: "Now it can be argued that the Vologda spinning wheel as a single type does not exist. There are many varieties of spinning wheels in the Vologda Oblast. Let's call them: these are Tarnogsky, Kuloisk, Nyuksen, Nikolsky, Totemsky, Pechenga, Pogorelov, Biryakov, Chuchkov, Tolshma, Sovegi spinning wheels, Gryazovets spinning wheels, from Sheksna and Novgorod ones".

There is no doubt that after the next expedition of the State Russian Museum (GRM) to the Vologda region, this list will increase by several more names, since in each of the above areas there will certainly be two or three villages, whose spinning wheels are at least somewhat different from their neighbors. In a word, scientists have a lot of work, and God only knows how many more dissertations on this topic will be defended in the coming years...

After a thorough analysis, I divided the Vologda spinning wheels into three main types: Vologda, Gryazovets and Totem. In addition, the spinning wheels of the Mezen and Northern Dvina are indirectly related to the Vologda region: both of these regions at one time were part of the Vologda region, and the products of the masters of Palashelya, Bork, Permogorye and Rakulka were widely used within the Vologda province.

Gryazovets spinning wheels

For the first time, the Gryazovets spinning wheels were reproduced in the album of A. A. Bobrinsky without specifying their geographical origin. The author himself attributed them to the sixth type and called them "slotted". For more than half a century, these spinning wheels remained unnamed, until, finally, the area of their existence was discovered by the expeditions of the Zagorsk Museum in 1968-69. Their first address was received in the summer of 1966: the village of Oberikha, Gryazovetsky District, Vologda Oblast.

Like all Vologda spinning wheels, Gryazovets spinning wheels were rooted, that is, cut from a whole piece of wood (the bottom was from the root, the blade was from the trunk). The area of their existence is quite extensive - from Vologda to the border with the Yaroslavl and Kostroma regions. The wide and massive blade of the Gryazovets spinning wheel, extending from the bottom at a right angle, narrows roundly in the upper part and is crowned with a small ridge, the lower part of which almost exactly repeats the upper roundness of the blade. The ridge itself has a characteristic horizontal cut with small towns.

O. V. Kruglova identified three types of Gryazovets spinning wheels: western, eastern and central parts of the region. They differ among themselves both in the nature of the carved ornament, and in some features of the form. The blade of the spinning wheel of the central part of the district is decorated with fine through carvings in the form of rhombuses, squares, moon-shoes, horseshoes and "tears". The spinning wheels of the western part are distinguished by a more elaborate shape of the leg, in the center of the composition of which there is a two-headed eagle (in earlier - a rosette), supported by stylized horse heads. The base of the blade is decorated with slotted columns-columns with a semi-rosette deployed above them. Earlier western spinning wheels were dominated by triangular-notched carving, in later ones - sawing technique combined with very bright coloring and brush painting. Another distinctive feature of the western spinning wheel is the patterned side sections of its blade (they are even for the "central" and "eastern" ones).

The spinning wheels of the eastern part of the Gryazovets district are distinguished by a different end of the ridge: its upper cut is decorated with two narrow through cuts resembling the eyes of a cat or the cut of the eyes of an oriental person. In the words of O. V. Kruglova, "on the top of the blade ... as if a bow is tied with two symmetrical through loops." In earlier oriental spinning wheels, a sun rosette (solar sign) was carved in the center of the blade; in later ones a relief two-headed eagle was depicted. Another feature of the oriental spinning wheel was a cut-out decorative pattern in the center of the leg, resembling a samovar in silhouette. And in this case, the slitting technique coexisted with floral painting and bright coloring.

In their shape, the Gryazovets spinning wheels are very close to the Buisk and Yaroslavl teremkov ones. The main difference between them is the end of the ridge: for the Gryazovets, it had a horizontal cut with small towns, for the Buiskys, three characteristic "horns", for the Yaroslavl ones, a high pointed "kokoshnik". O. V. Kruglova suggests that it was the shape of the Gryazovets "hoop"

that was the initial one for the Vologda type of spinning wheels in general, but this version seems to me very, very controversial (which we will discuss below).

The painting on the Gryazovets spinning wheels has a later origin: the earliest of these spinning wheels dates back to 1856. However, the artistic traditions of Gryazovets paintings can be dated back to the 18th century, as evidenced by two painted tyables from the former Pavlo-Obnorsky monastery, now in the Moscow Kolomenskoye Museum, the color range and stylistic features of which are very close to the paintings of Gryazovets spinning wheels.

Most often, the Gryazovets spinning wheels were painted green or bluish-green, which was interrupted by flower paintings with a predominance of yellow, red and blue colors of various shades. In some cases, gold paint was used, which gave the spinning wheels a special color. "The image of a blooming, sun-gilded meadow with its many grasses, so characteristic of the nature of the Vologda land," writes T. M. Oleinik, "clearly inspired the master, moved his hand, which, as it were, casually thrown motifs into a general rhythmically organized, but generally free composition".

There is no doubt about the deep archaism of the Gryazovets root spinning wheels, although slotted patterns and paintings appeared much later. The earliest spinning wheels were covered with triangular grooved carvings - one of the most ancient types of wood carving, the motives of which go back to deep pagan times.

Describing the decorative patterns of the Gryazovets spinning wheels, many researchers made vague assumptions about their pagan content, however, only V. M. Vasilenko ventured to compare them directly with Russian mythology and try to decipher the ancient symbolism of these patterns. It was he who first compared the shape of the Gryazovets spinning wheel with the mysterious image of the goddess Makosha: "These spinning wheels are strikingly similar to a schematized female figure and recall the figures of goddesses on northern towels of the first half of the 19th century. ... It can be assumed that we have before us the image (albeit already quite encrypted) of the mysterious Slavic goddess Mokosha, the goddess who guarded women's labor, and after the adoption of Christianity, transferred her rights and responsibilities to Paraskeva Friday. "

The scientist also draws attention to the traditional pattern of the Gryazovets spinning wheels in the form of a crescent (lunar), but, unfortunately, he cannot decipher it correctly: "in the small drawings of the lunar and in their playing pattern, echoes of the 17th century pattern are heard ... that the lunar stars sparkle like the countless faces of the moon - the sight is very impressive in the light. "

The researcher was two steps away from the solution, but it probably did not occur to him to compare mythological plots with archeological data. Images of lunettes on Gryazovets spinning wheels exactly repeat the shape of ancient Russian lunar amulets of the 11-12 centuries, found in many layers in this period. Academician B. A. Rybakov believes that they were "an imitation of the imported oriental models of the 9-10th century decorated with the finest grain" and "depicted... the firmament with its two heavens hanging over the earth", but completely exclude lunar symbolism after all is not solved.

Meanwhile, traces of the lunar cult are found not only in ancient Russian bracelets and pendants-amulets, but also in Russian traditional clothes, in particular, in the famous kokoshnik - a festive headdress of married women. And although in folk ideas the moon and the month were usually associated with the afterlife, in many folklore texts the sun and the moon are often connected by related knots (brother and sister, husband and wife), and in the female hypostasis, the sun usually appears here, and in the male - moon (month). Considering this factor, V. P. Darkevich admits that the Old Russian lunar pendants could well have been a "symbol of marriage."

According to popular belief, on the day of Ivan Kupala (June 24), the Sun "leaves its palace to meet the spouse of the Month", and this day itself was considered the day of the marriage between two divine luminaries. According to many Slavic legends, stars were born from this marriage.

Many ancient Russian rituals and agricultural rituals were directly associated with the phases of the moon: the "young" month favored the beginning of sowing fruits growing above the ground,

and the "old" - those that grow underground, the full moon contributed to agricultural work, for the old month they harvested grain and meat for In the winter, they cut down the forest and mowed the grass, they tried to collect medicinal herbs in the first half of the month, while they preferred to practice healing magic in the second, believing that the decrease in the month would lead to the decrease of the disease.

It was much more convenient to count the time by the phases of the moon than by the sun: the word "month" in its current "calendar" meaning speaks volumes about the fact that the moon was once held in high esteem and was "a golden arrow on the dark dial of the sky."

Lunar symbolism was associated with the cult of the Cosmic Cow (Bull), dating back to the most ancient times. "The horns of the month have already attracted the thought of a horned animal," writes A. N. Afanasyev, "and Russian folk riddles [...] depict him now as a bull, now as a cow." The month is often mentioned in Russian conspiracies: "You are red month! Stars you are clear! Sun, you are free, get off and get rid of the servant of God (from the binge) ", " Month, you are Month, silver horns, your golden legs! Come down, Month, take off my tooth grief, take the pain under the clouds ", " Father is bright month, gold horns for you, and my health ", " You are red month, descend into my cage ", etc.

The ancient Russian lunar amulets were hardly a simple "imitation of the imported oriental samples of the 9-10th century," as B. A. Rybakov asserts. The cult of the heavenly bodies is the oldest cult in the history of mankind.

It should be noted that the moonworms on the Gryazovets spinning wheels were always located on a stand (blades) and never on a ridge, in the center of the composition of which a solar sign was usually placed, and in later spinning wheels - a two-headed eagle. Solar symbolism, as we see, dominated here as well, while the lunars played a secondary role. I take the liberty of assuming that in the original decor of the Gryazovets spinning wheels, the lunar cycle was captured, which consisted of 13 months and, therefore, in the earliest copies of these spinning wheels, the number of depicted moon months was also thirteen (or, in the modern transformed form, twelve) ... Over time, the original meaning of this symbolism was forgotten, and the traditional lunar months turned into a simple decorative element, as is often the case with many ancient symbols.



N. A. Shabunin "Travel to North". 1906

Totem spinning wheels

A distinctive feature of Totem root spinning wheels is a shortened square blade crowning a thin carved leg. The front side of these spinning wheels is decorated with triangular-notched carvings. In the center of the composition there is a solar rosette framed by a dense geometric pattern of triangles and squares. Under the towns there is usually a lattice or round through holes in several rows. The lower part of the blade is decorated with two large earrings facing the riser.

Spinning wheels of this type were used in the Totma area, in Mezhdurechye, on the territory of the Biryakovsky and Chuchkovsky village councils of the Sokolsky district, as well as the Pogorelovsky, Velikodvorsky and Verkhne-Tolshmensky village councils of the Totemsky district. Pogorelovsky spinning wheels are smaller than totem spinning wheels, the earrings on the lower part of their blades, as a rule, do not have a round end, there is no slotted grate under the townships, but in general they repeat the shape of Totem spinning wheels.

Biryakovsky spinning wheels are distinguished by the sparseness of the geometric pattern. They, as a rule, were not painted, but in later versions they were painted like mahogany, decorated with applied copper plates and inlaid with pieces of mirrored glass. Small copper plaques were attached to a loop, and with each movement the spinning wheel made a ringing sound. This was explained by the fact that a family of master accordionists was engaged in decorating local spinning wheels.

Mezhdurechensk spinning wheels are distinguished by a slightly narrowed downward blade shape, large rounded towns, the absence of earrings, and also an elegant leg with curly edges. The trihedral-notched carving on these spinning wheels was complemented by brush painting, the floral patterns of which resembled chintz.

On the territory of the Velikodvorsky village council, there were two types of spinning wheels - with a square and an elongated blade.



N. A. Shabunin "Travel to North". 1906

The first should be attributed to the Totem type. Its blade is crowned with 4-5 large rhombic towns, separated from each other by deep round cutouts. The two earrings on the lower part of the blade exactly follow the shape of the towns. The spinning wheel is slightly tapered upward.

Spinning wheels of the Verkhne-Tolshmensky village council have an original blade end with three large towns in the shape of a trefoil or a circle. Large earrings usually follow the shape of the towns. The spinning wheel's leg and blade are covered with fine triangular-notched carvings. In the center of the composition is a solar socket.

Not far from Tolshma on the territory of Sovega, now part of the Soligalichsky district of the Kostroma region, there was another original type of the Totem spinning wheel with a figured blade, the towns and earrings of which were made in the form of large bizarre curls resembling stylized heads of horses. A five-petal flower rose between the towns. In the center of the composition of the blade, decorated with a trihedral-notched carving, a rosette in a square was usually cut out.

And, finally, one of the later varieties of the Totem spinning wheel was the so-called "Solomenka", the area of existence of which was quite extensive and covered the territory of the Verkhne-Tolshmensky, Manylovsky, Nikolsky and Velikodvorsky village councils. The main

distinguishing feature of this type of spinning wheel was zigzag patterns, laid out with multi-colored straw. In the center of the blade is a solar rosette, at the top of it there are four small towns in the form of horns facing each other, at the bottom there are straight hanging round earrings. The widespread use of these spinning wheels was due to the fact that they were made for sale in an artisanal way.

Vologda spinning wheels

Vologda spinning wheels-kopyls easily stand out among others for their impressive size: they are not only higher than all other types of Russian spinning wheels, but also have a much larger, massive blade slightly widened downward. In A.A. Bobrinsky's album, the Vologda spinning wheels are attributed to the second type. They were always carved from a monolithic piece of wood, most often from spruce or pine.

The upper part of the blade of the Vologda spinning wheel is usually decorated with a number of round, rhombic, or arrow-shaped townships, although sometimes towns are replaced with plant motifs or three gentle projections.

The Vologda "shovel-shaped" spinning wheels were most widely used in the Verkhovazhsky, Tarnogsky, Nyuksensky and - partially - Totemsky districts of the region.

A distinctive feature of the Nyuksen "kopyls" were ringing "necklaces" - rows of round through holes into which glass or wooden beads or colored pebbles were inserted, which emitted a characteristic sound with each movement of the spinning wheel. Most often, the three-edged beveled carving on Nyuksen spinning wheels was combined with bright oil painting.

Massive Tarnogo spinning wheels with a small figured leg were usually decorated with two round earrings or semicircular cuts. A huge blade decorated with three-sided carvings was crowned with diamond-shaped towns or three gently sloping ledges.

The Verkhovazhsky spinning wheels were distinguished by a double semi-oval blade end and three round towns framing it. The lower part of the blade was decorated with two semicircular cuts. Many of the Verkhovazhsky spinning wheels were covered with original floral painting.

On the territory of the Totemsky district, there were also spinning wheels of the Vologda type: these should include the aforementioned spinning wheels of Velikyodvorie with an elongated blade, as well as spinning wheels of Songuga, Seredsky, Zaozerye, Nizhnyaya Pecheny, Medvedevsky and Matveyevsky village councils. A characteristic feature of Velikyodvorie spinning wheels with an elongated blade is six through holes with bindings: three in the upper part of the blade under the triangular towns, and three in the lower part, above two semicircular cuts. The local name for such a spinning wheel is "about six windows".

The same slotted windows with bindings are present in the decor of spinning wheels from Zaozerye. However, there are only two of them and they are located almost in the center of the blade, under the through arches and the openwork slotted lattice of the cruciform shape. The lower part of the blade is decorated with two round earrings facing the stem.

Seredsky's spinning wheels are similar in shape and decoration to those of Tarnog, but differ from them in a smaller blade size. The Sundug spinning wheels are distinguished by massive rounded earrings resembling stylized skate heads in shape. The shape of the Matveyev spinning wheels almost repeated the Zaozersk and Sredsky ones, but much more often than the latter were covered with flower painting, in the motives and floral scale of which the influence of the Molvitin masters of the Kostroma province was guessed.

The spinning wheels of Nizhnyaya Bakery are very massive. A huge blade is crowned with three (less often - four) round towns located on the tops of gentle ledges. The lower part of the blade is decorated with earrings of the same shape.

Severodvinsk spinning wheels

The Severodvinsk painted spinning wheel-kopyl is very close in design to the Vologda type, although it is somewhat inferior to it in size. The main distinguishing feature of this type of spinning wheel is the graphic white-background painting or "painting with a contour", in which the master did not make independent strokes, but only filled in the previously contoured parts of the plane.

Researchers have divided Severodvinsk painting into three independent types: Permogorsk, Rakul and Boretskaya. On the basis of the latter, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, two more varieties of local painting developed - Puchuzhskaya and Nizhneoyemskaya.

The most significant among them is the Permogorsk painting, which includes products by masters from the villages of the Wet EDOM nest. It is based on small floral ornament, among which various scenes of peasant life are placed. The front side of the blade of the Permogorsk spinning wheel was divided into either two or three "staves". In the two-step scheme, the bird of paradise Sirin, framed by a toothed rosette, usually stirred at the top, and sienna of tea drinking or skating below. The reverse side of the blade was always decorated in the same way: at the bottom - a floral pattern, at the top - an empty ornamental frame, which was closed by a tow.

On the three-fold blade at the top, a lion and a unicorn were most often depicted, in the center - the supra-row, below - horseback riding. On the reverse side is a feast. The color range of Permogorsk painting is dominated by red and yellow colors on a white (sometimes yellowish) background. Art critics believe that the main elements of the pattern and the color scheme of painting in Permogorye have much in common with the ornamentation of ancient Russian manuscripts of the Pomor (18th century) and especially Belevsk (19th century) schools.

"The folk masters of the Northern Dvina used the wonderful traditions of the Old Russian book," writes O. V. Kruglova, "where illustrations were like a second text for the illiterate, and the principles of church wall painting, where a consistent story in the images of fine art made it possible to "read" this plot to each".

Among the masters of Permogorye, the most famous were Yakov Ivanovich and Yegor Maksimovich Yarygin, Alexander Lukyanovich Misharin and the Khripunov brothers - Dmitry, Peter and Vasily.

As already indicated, the image of Sirin dominated in the Permogorsk painting. Images of a bird of paradise could be found not only on the blades of spinning wheels, but also on many other items of peasant life. It is noteworthy that the fabulous image of the Sirin bird was especially popular in the Russian North: it is practically not found in the famous Gorodets carving and painting. This suggests that the image of the mysterious and fatal bird-maiden, allegedly coming from Greece or from the East, did not just appeal to the inhabitants of the North, but turned out to be familiar to them and - quite possibly - even relatives. Most likely, here we should talk about the general Indo-European sources of this ancient image.

In the Russian tradition, the magic birds Sirin, Alkonost and Gamayun were combined in the image of the sacred patroness of Russia - Mother Sva. V. N. Demin quite rightly compares the word "Sirin" with the pagan name of Paradise - "Iriy": Sirin, as you know, is a bird of paradise. Echoes of the veneration of Sirin are also heard in the names of the country of Syria and the star of Sirius, in the names of the nymph Syringa and the Egyptian god Osiris.

Most researchers of Russian folk art are inclined to the version of the Greek origin of Sirin (from the legendary sirens from the Odyssey), some see the origins of the image of the bird of paradise in distant India, but none of the venerable scientists even tried to explain the extraordinary popularity of this character among the North Russian peasantry and even more so to find the origins of the image of the mysterious bird-maiden in the Russian mythological tradition. And completely in vain...

Looking into the dictionary of V. I. Dal, we can easily make sure that "sirin" is a native Russian word meaning an owl, eagle owl, scarecrow or a special kind of "long-tailed owl, similar to a hawk", leading a daytime and nocturnal lifestyle (SURNIA).

The owl, as you know, in almost all traditions is a symbol of wisdom. But, in addition, many peoples perceived the cry of an owl as a "song of death" (probably, this performance was associated with her nocturnal lifestyle). The sweet-voiced singing of the Greek sirens turned into death for their listeners and, therefore, was also a kind of "song of death". Undoubtedly, one thing: the Greek sirens had their own prototype, and we should not ignore the version about its northern, Hyperborean, "owl" origin.

Images of lions and unicorns are also often found in folk art. In the Russian North, we find them in the painting of chests, suppliers, spinning wheels, arches and bast boxes, in the Volga region - in the decor of peasant huts, etc. In the Heraldic, the lion and the unicorn symbolize rival solar-lunar and female-male forces. Two lions on the sides of the World Tree act as its reliable guards: it was believed that the lion sleeps with open eyes, hence its veneration as a symbol of vigilant vigilance. "The lion is asleep, but he sees with one eye," says the Russian belief, recorded by V. I. Dal. Guardian lions are also found in Russian folk tales: "There is a kingdom not far away - you don't go through the gate, lions are guarding the gate" (A. Afanasyev).

In the apocryphal legend of Noah's ark, recorded by P. S. Efimenko in the Arkhangelsk province, the lion acts as the savior of the ark: taking a piece of wool from all the animals, he swallowed it and vomited out the cat, which attacked the gnats and exterminated them. The lion's claw was used in cattle-breeding magic to keep the herd safe. He is also mentioned in the shepherd's conspiracy: "I go around, servant of God, with the claw of a lion-beast, my sweet herd, a peasant's belly. As my cows were afraid of the bear until now, so now the bear is afraid of my cows, and to this my word heaven and earth are the key and the lock, amen."

It is characteristic that the image of a lion was entrenched not only in peasant art, but also in works of art of a cult nature (the temple architecture of the Kiev Lavra, Suzdal and Vladimir, the decor of the 13th century iconostases, the ornament of Pskov bells, miniatures of handwritten books of the 11-12th centuries, copper plastic, etc. etc.), as well as in secular architecture (the gates of the Moscow palace of I. Grozny, ship carving, decor of city houses, the embankments of St. Petersburg).

Researchers again agree that Russian culture borrowed the lion's symbol from the Greek tradition no earlier than the 11th century. However, the stability of the Russian tradition, which has been repeatedly recorded and proven, is not in favor of this common opinion.

Many things on earth still remain unexplained: why, for example, were traces of the growth of cypresses, poplars, magnolia and viburnum found in the Arctic Circle, tropical plants in Siberia, and grapes in Greenland? How to explain the annual migrations of migratory birds from South to North? The great native of the Russian North M. V. Lomonosov asserts: "in the northern regions in ancient times there were great heatwaves, where elephants were born and reproduce and other animals, as well as plants, near the equator, ordinary, it was possible to keep, and therefore their remains, here those who are, cannot seem disgusting to the flow of nature. "

The legends of various peoples bring to us the echoes of the global cosmic catastrophe that once befell the Earth. It could be a cosmic explosion within the solar system, as a result of which a huge asteroid fragment crashed into the Earth. Vague memories of the monstrous cataclysm are preserved in the Avesta, Bundahishna and Kalevala, in Greek myths and legends of Siberia and China, in sacred Buddhist texts and many other sources. All of them report a sharp change in climate and the rotation of the earth's axis, as a result of which the sun changed its course, and the planet "turned over". If earlier the sun came from the North and went to the South, then after the impact it began to come from the East and go to the West.

Only this can explain the numerous mysteries of paleobotany and paleontology that continue to trouble the minds of modern researchers. And if elephants once lived in the north, then why can't the same be said about lions?

The second most important type of Severodvinsk painting was the Boretsky, Nizhnetoyemsky and Puchuzhsky murals, named after the regions of their manufacture: the village of Pervaya

Zherlyginskaya at the mouth of the Nizhnyaya Toyma, the village of Puchuga and the village of Skobeli, Nagorye, Gorodok, Falyuki (Borok pier). As already noted, the Puchuga and Nizhnetoemsk paintings developed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries on the basis of the Boretskaya.

If in the Permogorsk painting the plant pattern was placed on the blade arbitrarily, asymmetrically, then in boretsk spinning wheels it was arranged according to a strictly designated scheme. In the three-way blade, windows were usually depicted at the top ("becoming with windows"), in the center - a semicircular arch, and below - a riding scene ("becoming with a horse"). On the reverse side at the bottom were various genre scenes, at the top - an empty, magnificently ornamented frame of flexible stems.

The floral pattern on the wrestler's spinning wheels, as in Permogorye, dominated, but here it was drawn more finely, more subtly and almost always made red. In addition, gold was widely used in the decoration of spinning wheels of this type. The design of the Boretsk and Puchuga spinning wheels is almost identical; you can distinguish them from each other only by the pattern on the leg: the stem is straight on the Boretsk and Puchuga spinning wheels, and the wriggling one on the Puchuga spinning wheels. In turn, a distinctive feature of the Nizhny Omsk spinning wheel was a brightly painted turning leg, and on the back of the blade there was a spinning mirror.

The most famous masters of borets painting were the Amosov brothers - Stepan, Nikifor, Mikhail, Vasily, Kuzma and their sister Palageya Matveevna Amosova. In the village of Puchuga, the works of the father and son of the Kuznetsovs were famous, and at the mouth of the Nizhnyaya Toima - the brothers Andrei and Vasily Tretyakov and the wife of the latter Pelageya.

And, finally, the third center of the Severodvinsk painting was the village of Ulyanovskaya, Cherevkovsky district, located on the Rakulka river (hence the name of the painting - "Rakulskaya"). The Rakul spinning wheels were significantly higher in height than the wrestler and Permogorsk ones. In appearance, they cannot be confused with any others: a low leg, expanding almost from the very base with oval ledges, turns into a long and narrow blade with four towns. In the lower part of the blade, a bird was always depicted inscribed in an ornamented square, in the upper part there was an S-shaped branch with large leaves and bunches of black antennae.

The Rakul spinning wheels, in contrast to the Boretsk and Permogorsk ones, had a characteristic yellow-ocher color. By the beginning of the 20th century, the color of Rakul spinning wheels lost its former harmony: the background, due to the use of aniline, became poisonous yellow, in the painting of a large branch for the same reason, too contrasting colors appeared - purple, bright blue and bright green. The most famous masters of rakul painting were Dmitry Fedorovich Vityazev and his son Yakov Dmitrievich.



Mezen spinning wheels

Root Mezen spinning wheels are also similar in design to those of the Vologda type. Their main difference is calligraphic painting with a black outline on a golden-yellow background ("cursive"), the theme of which is surprisingly close to the rock paintings (petroglyphs) of the Russian North.

The blade of the Mezen spinning wheel is broken into horizontal friezes, in the center of the composition there are two stripes with rhythmically running deer and horses. The reverse side of the blade is occupied by steamers, scenes of hunting, fishing, riding, etc. "Everything in these spinning wheels is full of significance: deer and horses are depicted as if in a solemn ritual run," write N.V. Taranovskaya and N.V. Maltsev.

The center of the trade was the village of Palashelie on the Mezen River, almost all the male population, which was engaged in the manufacture of spinning wheels. The most famous are the masters Novikovs, Fedotovs, Kuzmins and Aksenovs. The popularity of the Mezen spinning wheels was enormous: they were exported to the Northern Dvina, Pinega, Pechora and even Onega. In addition, in a number of places centers of imitative painting were formed: the village of Pokshenga on the Pinega River, the village of Keba on the Vashka River, the village of Seltso on the lower Dvina, etc.

The main elements of the Mezen painting were deer and horses. The mythological functions of the horse were discussed by me above in the chapter on Russian wooden utensils. The image of a deer is often found in northern embroidery, in the plots of Russian folk tales, in songs, legends and beliefs. In the North Russian brotherhoods mentioned above, there was a custom to sacrifice a bull. But in local legends, the image of a sacrificial deer is clearly recorded.

"On the border of the Velsky and Totemsky districts, near the upper reaches of the Vaga River, in the parish of the Kochevarsky volost, there is a legend that every year a deer ran out of the forest on this holiday; the people, accepting the deer as a gift from God, slaughtered it and, tearing it apart,

prepared dinner for themselves. This went on [...] for several years, but when the appearance of the deer stopped, the villagers began to cook dinner instead of the deer, killing a bull for this purpose».

According to another legend, on a festive day two deer ran to the chapel, one of which was sacrificed, and the other was set free. Similar legends are recorded in many in the Vologda, Novgorod, Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces. Be that as it may, they were all associated with the pagan rite of sacrifice, the original object of which was a deer.

In heraldry, the deer symbolizes the Sun, creation, fire, renewal and is often associated with the Tree of Life. In Russian folklore, the deer also serves as a poetic symbol of the sun: "From distant winter countries, the sun directed its return run in the form of a golden-horned deer, bringing light to the world." In Russian folk tales, deer usually have silver hooves and golden horns.

V. N. Demin explains the origin of the word "deer" (in Old Russian - "deer") from the word "spruce". In this interpretation, the deer appears to us as an animal living among the fir trees. The researcher claims that the same lexical nest includes the word "elin", which in the Old Russian language meant "hellin". It remains only to remember the name of the first Delphic priest - Olen - and seriously think about the origin of the ancient Greek people.

It just so happened that for a century and a half (interest in Russian folk art first manifested itself in the middle of the 19th century), researchers were mainly engaged in the classification of wooden hand spinning wheels, their distribution areas and, at best, in the analysis of their stylistic features, practically not paying attention to this attention to chronological issues and not even trying, at least in general terms, to restore their "pedigree". Figuratively speaking, scientists painstakingly worked on the fruits, completely ignoring the tree and its roots.

V. S. Voronov, quite rightly noted: "The Vologda type of Russian wooden hand spinning wheel should be considered the oldest in time of occurrence, far beyond the limits of chronological digital data represented by spinning wheels." Indeed, the form of the Vologda root spinning wheels, cut from a whole piece of wood, in its antiquity far exceeds all other types of Russian spinning wheels. It is curious that in Novgorod, from where, according to most art historians, "culture" came to the north, archaeologists did not find a single root-type spinning wheel!

In the lower part of the blade of the Vologda spinning wheels, there is usually a schematic representation of the earth in the form of crossed squares, rhombuses and triangles, above it is a solar sign or a symbol of "white light" (the Universe) with rays turned inward. Earrings on the lower part of the blade depicted the rising and setting sun, respectively, and the "towns" crowning the blade depicted its daytime path.

All other types of spinning wheels - collapsible (from 2-3 parts), painted, with chiseled and slotted legs, decorated with through, contour, embossed and bracketed carvings, of course, are of later origin and are much inferior to the Vologda-type spinning wheels in terms of the degree of archaism.

The art critic O. V. Kruglova suggests that the most ancient type of northern spinning wheels are related to the Gryazovets, Buisk and Yaroslavl terem spinning wheels: It is this simplest, stable and most natural form of the root and the broad, at first, probably little processed massive board from the tree trunk, which extends from it, which was the initial one for root spinning wheels of the Vologda type, which is widely known to us.

In no way trying to offend Olga Vladimirovna, I argue that in this case what is desired is simply passed off as real. To be convinced of this, it is enough to put the Yaroslavl tower, Bui, Gryazovets and Vologda spinning wheels next to it: the greatest archaism of the latter will not cause doubts even for a person who has never studied Russian folk art. The primitive form of the Vologda spinning wheel, reminiscent of a "simple working shovel", its stern and rough appearance, its bulkiness and heaviness speak so eloquently of its ancient origin that it seems to me to compare with it the artsy,

light, fragile and elegant spinning wheel of the Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Gryazovets types simply frivolous: the difference in "age" between them is at least 1.5 thousand years!

It is noteworthy that archaeologists discovered the oldest root spinning wheel in Russia in the Vologda region on the Modlon River connecting Lake Vozhe and Veshozero, in a peat layer of the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, along with cultivated flax seeds. The argument of O. V. Kruglova regarding the "wide board" is broken at one glance at the Modlon spinning wheel, as well as at the ancient (albeit later in comparison with it) root spinning wheels of the Ryazan region: there is no "wide board" in these spinning wheels at all.

The desire of O. V. Kruglova to proclaim the Yaroslavl teremkovsky and related Buis and Gryazovets spinning wheels as the oldest spinning wheels, in my opinion, is quite understandable: Olga Vladimirovna herself comes from the village of Novoselovo, Prechistensky district, and Yaroslavl region - an area where Yaroslavl teremkov spinning wheels were widely used. Your own shirt, of course, is closer to the body.

Of all the types of spinning wheels that existed on the territory of the Vologda province, the most ancient, without a doubt, are the "Vologda", that is, those that were common in the Nyuksensky, Velikoustyugsky, Tarnogsky, Nikolsky and Verkhovazhsky districts. This is followed by spinning wheels that existed in the Totemsky, Sokolsky and Mezhdurechensky regions: I call them "totemsky". By their "age" they are much older than the Gryazovets, although they are inferior to the Vologda ones. This is supported by their shortened square blade, slotted gratings, figured completion of side sections, etc.

Gryazovets spinning wheels are clearly inferior to both Vologda and Totem ones in terms of antiquity. They are more slender, light and graceful, decorated with small through carvings, often covered with paintings, have a fanciful shape of a leg, as well as a small comb "cut off" from above and oval tapering downwards. Fragments of the decor of the Gryazovets spinning wheels also testify to their late origin: here we find architectural slotted "pillars", stylized images of a samovar, a double-headed eagle, etc. There is nothing like this among the Vologda and Totemsky spinning wheels.

References to the "evolution of type" and the later origin of certain patterns are also, in general, untenable: in Russian folk art there have never been sharp leaps and "stylistic revolutions", the form and decor of rural household items seemed to mature, crystallize over many centuries. V. S. Voronov expressed this idea very succinctly and figuratively: "The development of peasant collective art cannot be likened to a fast-flying horse of stormy and unrestrained individual creativity. This is the movement of a slow raft on a wide river; as if motionless and dead, this dormant raft on the water, but this is not true: it moves and overcomes thousands of miles of space.

The most ancient painting not only of the north, but of the whole of Russia, without any doubt, should be considered the Mezen: in its magical "running" ornament lies the secret of millennia. Researchers compared the Mezen painting with northern embroidery (Rabotnova, Vishnevskaya, Kozhevnikova), with geometric woodcarving (Vasilenko), the Azelin culture of 3-5 centuries (Arbat), with the petroglyphs of Zaonezhie (Zhegalova, Vasilenko) and even with cave paintings in France and northern Spain (Kruglova).

Severodvinsk painting was born much later. Some researchers look for its roots in northern icons, some start an old song about the "Novgorod" or "Moscow" influence, but not one of the venerable scientists has yet taken the trouble to directly compare the motifs of the Severodvinsk painting with the artistic traditions of the Old Believers, although the connection between them is undeniable and requires the most in-depth study.

Having scrupulously studied the smallest details of the Boretzkaya, Puchuzhskaya and Nizhnetoemskaya paintings, the researchers ignored the semicircular arch traditional for the decoration of these spinning wheels, which was most often placed in the center of the blade, in the so-

called "middle stave". Of course, the motif of the arch could not be just random and clearly carried a certain semantic load.

Which one? In heraldry, the arch symbolizes the firmament, transformation, heroic victory. The image of the arch on the Boretsky, Puchuzhsky and Toyemsky spinning wheels exactly repeats the shape of the famous Vshizh bronze arches of the 12th century, which symbolized the universe and was placed on the church altar. And although the path of the sun across the sky on vshchizh arches was depicted in specific symbols (birds, circles, lizards, etc.), and in spinning arches only with the help of thick lines, their identity is still obvious.

Serious attempts to decipher the symbolism of the northern spinning wheels have so far been made only by B. A. Rybakov, V. M. Vasilenko and G. L. Malitsky. The rest of the researchers preferred to study folk art "in the context", using exclusively sterile laboratory methods and trying to look into the folk soul with a scalpel. Examining pieces of living flesh under a microscope and trying to reconstruct from them the image of a bird soaring in the sky is an absolutely fruitless task. It is not surprising that such methods never justified themselves and brought science more harm than good.

Some scientists even denied the originality of the North Russian folk art, diligently trying to find its "roots" in the cultures of other peoples or in the traditions of other regions. Of course, there were always analogues, and our unfortunate scientists immediately declared themselves to be the discoverers of new "influences", completely not thinking about the fact that all Indo-European peoples once had one common culture and, as they became isolated, they broke away further and further from ancient roots, preserving in their ancestral memory the remnants of the former common Indo-European beliefs and ideas

The most ancient knowledge was consolidated in the word, ritual and symbol, the meaning of which was forgotten over time and with each generation became more and more mysterious and mysterious. The archaic patterns on North Russian spinning wheels are undoubtedly filled with the most invaluable information, which we will be able to decipher only if we manage to get closer to the ancient cosmological thinking.

Along with the spinning wheel, almost every peasant hut had a seamstress, the purpose of which is eloquently indicated by its very name: a female seamstress sat on the bottom and pinned the fabric to a low patterned column, which allowed her to conveniently stretch the cloth while sewing. It is noteworthy that in the only serious scientific work on the subjects of rural life - "Economy and Life of Russian Peasants" - not a single word is said about seamstresses. It is not mentioned in the recently published illustrated encyclopedia "Russian hut". Until now, none of the Russian museums has taken the trouble to prepare a separate exposition "Russian seamstresses". Moreover, in the entire history of Russian science, not a single article has been published devoted to this truly unique subject of peasant life.

By its design, the North Russian sewing machine resembles a small spinning wheel and differs from it only in the riser, which often has the shape of a swan's neck, a carved turret in several tiers, a milestone, horse heads and even a phallus. In my collection, there are more than 450 seamstresses who lived within the Vologda province. Some of them resemble real sculptural works. I am convinced that in terms of the degree of elegance of forms and subtlety of decoration, they fully deserve to become the subject of the most serious and comprehensive study.

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