

MYTHOLOGEMES OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND THEIR LINGUISTIC REFLECTIONS

Abstract: *This research reflects main appearances of mythologemes, occurred on the British Isles. These appearances make it possible to denote general characteristics of British mythological thesaurus in the discourse of its semantic and linguistic reflection. Thus, determination of corresponding appearances is actual due to the ascertainment of general connections of British mythological complex with basic mythological manifestations of other cultures.*

Key words: *mythologemes, British mythology, world mythology, cultural references, superstitions*

In the meantime concept of the mythologeme is a specific element of lingual, literary and historical knowledge, which definition is still poorly understood. The term “Mythologeme” is denoted by cross-systematical notions, and, in this connection, it has different definitions. Factually, most represented definition of the mythologeme was formed and formulated by C.G. Jung and K. Kerényi, who determined it as the “primary mythological reality of the human culture at all: it’s a set of ideas, reflecting general spatial and temporal stories, characterized by universality, globality and wide spreading in world cultures” [1]. At the same time such concepts as protoplasts (as common progenitor of mankind) and images of hell and paradise and others can’t fill complete essence of mythologeme: it also contains common motives of personalized creatures and personalities, universalized for all cultures and performing historical and multi-

functional roles (e.g. household deity, mermaids, supreme deity and others). In view of these allegations, mythologeme must be considered as multi-faceted meaning, reflecting all universalized spiritual views and superstitions of the world and thoughts about the world structure and events. Each mythologeme has its linguistic reflections, and this obvious fact has significant importance because of the understanding of how the mythological sub-reality, expressed by mythologems, can determine image of meaningful elements of the language (in this case – of the English language).

Undoubtedly, British mythology compiles widest mythologems because of complicated history of Britain, which was influenced by different cultures and nations. Furthermore, mythological system of definite national culture can't be full and completed without most typical thoughts about the world. Historical context of mythological culture of Early Britain is a result of centuries-old and continual interactions, which changed final mythology of pre-Christian Britain.

Mythological establishments of Old Britain are regarded to 7th century BC. It's connected with Celtic invasion in the year 600 BC. Religious system of Celts was based on the polytheism, and most of Celtic inscriptions, proving that, were found in the Roman period of Britain. Celtic paganism was named as the "druidism" – this pagan superstition was encouraged by highest priests and bishops, called "druids", who performed different mystical and spiritual rituals, directed to implicitly of ambrosial images of Gods. Transferring their religion to pre-historic Britain, insular Celts improved and saved mythological and religious structure of pre-Celtic Britain, especially on the territories of modern Scotland and Wales [2]. Celtic myths were a product of oral communication and transmission, and this fact was possibly dictated by isolated character of Celtic culture. Several

inscriptions showed that Celtic mythological culture strictly supported notions about mysteries and individuality. Thus, Julius Caesar concluded that “this mentality is a circumstance of two reasons: druids don’t support the idea of accessibility of their culture and they want their followers to rely only on memory” (second statement is based on the historical feature of Celtic spiritual rituals and sessions: they had cumbersome religious poetry, which was intended to be read only by heart [3]) [4]. Celtic religious spreading is considered as the most influential process, which added structural and systematized mythology to the British Isles.

Further cultural connections of the British Isles contained not such significant cultural inclusions to final mythology of Britain, as the last was subjected to the Christianization and massive unconditional acceptance of monotheism. This fact is followed by the historical line of Saxons, one more meaningful group of invaders to the British Isles, who became Anglo-Saxons – first accepters of the Christianity executed their conversion in the period from year 590 to 660 AD [5]. It was denoted by gradual elimination of continual paganism in Anglo-Saxon religion, and pagan values were exterminated from spiritual sphere of Anglo-Saxon culture: furthermore, Anglo-Saxon ethnos became British central ethnical union, which speeded the process of spreading of Christianity. Factually, year 660 can’t be considered as doubtless date of the conversion to Christianity, but 7th AD can be considered as the period, which gave close trade and cultural connections between Britain and Christian Europe. Accordingly, further mythological inscriptions of cultural situation of Britain described only remakes and reconstructions of old Celtic myths and epistolary tales about mythological persons, events and facts. Thus, most denotative Celtic mythologems are to be revealed in the context of this paper, and

excepting of mythological peculiarities, borrowed by Christianity, is a primary principle of this research, which aim is directed to analysis of original mythologems, occurring connection with other cultures and world systematic mythological views of the world. Moreover, all these positions show that Celtic mythology is a first basis of British mythology and spiritual knowledge, which must be researched with deep attention: it determines mythological system of all creatures and essentials and this fact, according to the upper references, emphasizes circumstances of British mythology's appearance.

There is no a concrete typology of mythologems. All of them, as it was mentioned, are regarded to personal, spatial or temporal activities, creatures and abstractions, surrounded by common cultural leitmotif. Hereby, analysis of mythologems of the Celtic culture must be derived with attention to these essential characteristics (Anglo-Saxon mythology is excepted because of strong influence of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon culture). One more objective advantage of this method is underlined by comparison of mythological particles with other details of mythological view of the world and mythological knowledge at all.

Spatial and temporal mythologeme of Celts is directly connected with spiritual and mythologized consciousness of time. Celtic druids counted that time is semi-scholastic consequence of space: any movement or activity causes the time to move. This conception is based on the ancient calendars of Celtic druids, who subdivided short period of time (e.g. day) by solar and lunar cycles. These cycles were exchanged under the natural changes of the concrete period of the day [6]. This mythological allege and spiritual picture of the time and space is typical for different cultures: thus, evidences of such understanding of these essential notions can be

found in calendar inscriptions of Gallic, Frankian and Saxon ethnical unions. These similarities are bounded by strong interdependence of all these nations. In addition, many of these ethnicities had high-developed trade and cultural connections, which determined united way of measuring a day: adequate support of these connections could be impossible without united understanding of the time, occurred in routine human activity. Hijri Qamari (Islamic), Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Vietnamese calendars also were lunisolar, and same denotations of the time, directly influenced by movement and activity, characterized one more dense common basis of this mythologeme. Thus, this special and temporal mythologeme is densely predicted by calendars, estimating and establishing general periods of time in human being [7].

Spiritual understanding of spatial definitions is represented by abstract solitude, which can be highlighted by the idea of triplicity (or trinity) in different pagan religions and, in common, pagan cultures. Modern monotheistic determination of the tripled god (so-called Trinity) was developed because of triplicity of gods in pagan mythology. It also can be applied to the Christianity, which summary has this concept – notion of the Trinity was introduced by Theophilus of Antioch between 170 and 175 AD. However, Christianity isn't the only one religion, which contains the concept of the Trinity: west religions also retained this principle as well as Hindu, Japanese, Chinese, Buddhist religions and other religious dogmas saved it too [8]. Celtic mythologeme of triplicity comes from the common theme of human origin. Celts counted that their first protoplasts were Three Mothers, which created the primary datum of human being: worshipers of these creatures were bounded by the cosmological theory of tribal unity. Moreover, this tribal unity was applied to all Celtic tribes, populating the Old Britain: it was rare case for these

Celtic tribes, which unity was broken by differentiation of them with geographical and military circumstances [9].

Referred mythologeme also reflects keynote of cultural superstitious perception: thus, cultural attitude to number “three” can be subdivided to the individual mythologeme, regarded to some kind of superstition. The motive of triplicity is clearly observed in world literature and human routine life, and mention of it is expedient in the context of this paper. However, some superstitious allusions to number “three” can be observed in the literary evidences of Celtic culture. Thus, popular compilation of hypothetical Celtic myths, composed in the 14th or 15th AD century, “The Mabinogion” has tripled structure of titles, tripled, in its turn, to different subsections, describing different elementary mythological appearances of the British culture. Several inscriptions showed that Celtic rituals were done with strict compliance of “Tripled Unity” – highest druid could execute his mystical performances, only met with two others druids, supporting him in his procession. Additional data demonstrated triple-divided system of initiation to religious supremacy in early Celtic mythological evidence [10]. In this connection, non-literary notions of the triad must be observed in other cultures, and spreading of the superstition about the triad commonly correlates with dense use of delimitations and limitations, connected with all spheres of life. Because of this fact triad in Celtic culture is one most mythological and superstitious element, considered as the mythologeme, spreading of which is wide enough at present.

Full description of spatial and temporal mythologemes can't be given without mention of celebrations, connected with coming of new periods. These celebrations, according to consciousness of ancients, are directed to meetings with spiritual essences of dead, searching

their ways to enter the world of alive. Generally, temporality of these meetings is continual and suggests long rituals, denoted by compliance of different religious superstitions, which authenticity wasn't questioned. Factually, celebrations of new year weren't strictly connected with scholastic interpretation of meetings with dead humans, but this attribute is applied to the vast majority of Norse cultures and different cultures of the West (eastern cultures are more prone to description of spiritual models of reincarnation, based on the common peculiarities of religious view of the world on these territorial plots). Mentioned tendentious features of mythological and religious understanding of chronological periods are regarded to four Celtic celebrations, originated from druidic calendars. There were Imbolg (February 1), Beltane (May 1), Lughnasadh (August 1) and Samhain (November 1). Chronological subdivision of Celtic periods was rather different than modern common-accepted model of Gregorian calendar. Thus, Samhain was the messenger of new year and coming of the winter. This celebration, as it was counted, contained mandatory commemoration of dead ancestors, and it had believing of coming of commemorated. Ancient Celts also offered their sacrifices to the Highest God (Irish Dagda and Gaelic Sucellus). This celebration was lasting from October 31 to November 2. Spatial aspect of this mythologeme was based on the following superstition: two worlds were mixed, and borders between both worlds of dead and alive became blurry. Creatures of the world of dead were named as faeries, and their appearance was accompanied by some superstitious charms, connected with definite use of dressing elements and josses, according to considerations of safety (these things are significant, according to further course of research in this paper). Beltane also was the meaningful celebration as it divided mentioned "lunar" and "solar" cycles, but this celebration suggested more continual period of solarly

(in this case “solar” period was connected with seasons of year). Lughnasadh and Imbolg ranked as distinguish celebrations, and these both reflected only comings of dead, but there was no temporal delimitation, it showed only spatial relationships between two worlds [11].

Obviously, mythological understanding of temporal zones, according to the notion of period, when dead meet alive, contains one more definition, important for determining of mythologems of British isles. It’s conception of two chthonic worlds, indicated by appearances of alive and dead representatives. Mythologeme of coming of dead ancestors is widely spread in the world culture, and it’s proved by evidences of Slavic, Harran and Nordic cultures. Furthermore, this mythologeme contains interaction of dead and alive in common sense of this fact; this element of spiritual knowledge is widely referred in mentioned cultures [12].

Mythological content of the British Isles’ culture includes general mythologemes of supernatural creatures, which are represented in the world culture. Historical scale of these personalized mythological essentials is differentiated by spreading of individuals and their mentions in oral transferring and literary writings. Thus, analysis of characters of the British folklore shows several similarities, expressed by the functional and culture role of mythological creatures, commonly known as faeries. First folkloric faery is directly regarded to household deities, evidences of which are clearly spectated in appearances of Roman Lares, Greek Callicansarides and Cofgodas of Anglo-Saxons. General mythological household folklore of the East is connected with several characters, most popular in eastern cultures: Son Chzhyus (Korean shamanism) and Domovoy (Slavic paganism) [13]. According to mythological understanding of the Britain, exactly

Celtic Brownie is to be denoted, because of strong influence of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon culture (that's why it can't reflect original mythologems, regarded to the British Isles). Anglo-Scottish (or Anglo-Celtic) Brownie was a personality, who had the same functions as all other "householders" in the world culture. His identity was expressed differently on plural territories of Britain – it had versions with special personal characteristics, which determined his functionality (as Hobgoblins and Bogies) [14].

One more creatural mythologeme is a mermaid, whose nature represents a combination of fish tail and female body. This figure is widely mentioned in modern culture, but its origin is set in European, Greek and Eastern mythologies. Thus, European image of mermaids is regarded to well-known Sirens, who had different intensions, according to their attitude to human. Their patron was goddess Atargatis, imaged as some kind of a fish with human head. European representations of mermaids are differentiated by geographical peculiarities of definite zone. West Europe has Melusine, which identity isn't completely defined, and Eastern Europe denotes mermaids as an accumulative term "rusalkas". Indirect references of mermaids can be observed in Chinese, African and Hindu cultures, but their view to functions of mermaids are rather different than other ones in West cultures. Accordingly, British form of mermaids is represented by Ceasg and Merrows – mythological characters, which were created by collective mythological consciousness of the territories of modern Scotland and Ireland. Their functionality wasn't denoted, and their epistolary expression was based only on the description of their external characteristics and activities [15].

It must be considered that British Isles' folkloric culture as the ancestor of the modern European mythological culture contained

common European mythologems of lycanthropes (or werewolves) and doppelganger. Despite of only European identity of these mythological creatures, they were reformulated by Eastern cultures, which had different terms, denoting them. Lycanthrope as a living essence of creatural knowledge in mythology can't be denoted as symbolic or sacral creature, and it has only instinctive and eliminating motives, connected with his nature and origin (this statement is indirectly approved by the fact that this personality isn't determined as faery in Anglo-Celtic mythology) [16]. In this connection, doppelganger has definite semantic load: it denotes future events of life of a person, who saw him (like a death). Furthermore, this personality doesn't have any concrete external image and represented as the metaphysical and abstract personalized category [17].

All above-mentioned assertions allow researchers to develop the idea of linguistic mythologeme, founding its affirmation in the language. Analysis of mythologems shows that the British Isles' mythological consciousness has bounded and strict emphasis, underlined by the traditionalism of the ritual executing, which had been done by the Celts. Thus, the Celts, being the factual founders of the British mythological culture, determined such peculiarity, suggesting all image of the British mythological culture at all. Mythologeme can be interlinguistic and extralinguistic appearance at the same time: according to this fact, mythologeme, though the universalized character hasn't conformity of the denotation and its semantic load.

In this case, linguistically-expressed mythologeme is a sequence of the specific plat of the culture: language became a tool, creating structures, complicating their context by themselves. Mythological concepts don't need some unity of morphological and semantic

expressions, what origins mythological archetype, showing the magic-sensed understanding of the whole world by native speakers of some ethnos. Explication of this statement is easily highlighted due to the linguistical-oriented reflection of the myth: for example, British demony can be transmitted only with the language, and this transmitter is the English language. In this case, language is the most representative way to express the mythological object without any additional notes and spots; furthermore, there are issues, which can be denoted only linguistically. It's inexpedient to create a dictionary of mythologems, especially in the context of this research, because it can cause affirmation of big count of terms, which semantic content isn't always obvious, that's why it can be only accepted that mythologeme is the codification of collective consciousness, actualized by national memory and verbalized by nation at all. For example, in the English language it's impossible to express the solidarity of the concepts "time" and "space" without verbalized denotations – there is a way of building of the new lexical form, but it would be complicate to the native speaker, leading the language to more and more complex structure; inter alia, it would also be dissonant with existing mythological representations. According to this example, it can be clearly seen that linguistic way of expressing the mythologeme must be strictly connected with multi-functional meanings (as "time" and "space" can reflect other vector of the reality), which have to be individualized from other meanings of the same word, and, at the same time, must be universalized, because the absence of that universalization make the mythologeme excluding nationalized and restricted and turns it into the only myth. There also must be some nuclear contextual-semantic idea of the mythologeme. For example, linguistic expression of the word "dead", linking to the spiritual sphere, isn't equal to the term "spirit". In the English language exactly

“dead” reflects the essence of some spirit, but the word “spirit” doesn’t do the same in it; precise of this peculiarity constitutes the conceptual nucleus of the mythological knowledge. However, these denotations represent the same semantic and lexical meanings, apart from the mythologemes of English language. According to this model, if each mythologeme consists of the nucleus and similar term, expressed differently, it is the well-analyzed linguistic form in any language; if the expression and meaning is identical, there must be more attention to the applying of the semantic background.

In this way, linguistic expression of the mythologeme is hardly-originated and explicated and usually functions within the confines of the only denotative instrumental role, excepting some cases, suggesting the differentiation in the categories of homonymy and, oppositely, full denotative and distinctive lexical forms. These forms, despite of the all individuality, must be occurred in the mythological solitude of the universalized and nationalized thesaurus, and the only small number of factors can lead to other understanding of mythologeme and mythological reality at all. It’s quite that functional role of the language (exactly – denotative) is utilitarian in the aspects of the mythologeme, but it represents inseparable connection between specific cultural and cognitive understanding of the world and its relative linguistic expression. Essentially, environmental role of the mythologeme, according to its linguistic meaning, is to be considered: mythologeme isn’t a word with rich accumulated semantic load, reflecting the definite culture, but also the environmental term, causing an activation of most popular and referred images of things, developed in the world culture and elementary universalized forms of it.

Conclusions: Thus, original mythologems of the British Isles show strong connections of its mythological knowledge with the whole world, but appearance of these mythologems have its own individuality and thesaurus, content of which is unique in comparison with its analogues in the world mythological and folkloric culture. Hereby, mythological knowledge of the British Isles also showed that their cultural basis was developed with compliance of all processes, demanded for establishment of common characteristics, which compound appearance of concrete linguistically expressed mythologems in the mythology of Britain.

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