



10.5281/zenodo.220958

THE COMMON ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN THE BALTIC THUNDER GOD *PERKŪNAS* AND HIS ANTIQUE EQUIVALENTS *JUPITER* AND *ZEUS*

Vytautas Tumėnas

The Lithuanian Institute of History, dept. of Ethnology (Vilnius, Lithuania)

Received: 07/03/2016

Accepted: 08/04/2016

Corresponding author: Vytautas Tumėnas (vytautui.vytui@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The problem of regional uniqueness and intercultural relations of traditional images of Thunder-god as mythological celestial, cosmogonic, astronomic-calendaric and atmospheric being remains relevant to this day. Perkūnas image, his representations and attributes share certain similarities in different European cultures but they are still not investigated from visual point of view.

This semiological investigation is mainly based on a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis of visual and narrative representations of the Baltic and Antique Thunder-gods. It aims to reveal the intercultural contextuality of the symbolic elements of images of Baltic *Perkūnas* and to demonstrate their similarities with the attributes of supreme Antique deities *Zeus* and *Jupiter*. A diachronic intercultural analysis of local, national or regional representations of Baltic Thunder-god helps avoid a localized ethno-centrism in explaining images of European deities as mere elements of a regional culture and will shed new light on their broader archetypal basis. It aims to bring some controversial, unique and fragmented interpretations of Baltic Thunder-god symbolism into the light of a wider transcultural historical context.

The author draws from a wide range of comparative data: from Lithuanian, Prussian, Eastern and Western European Christian, and other classical sources. This complex overview is primarily based on medieval and folk art images, artefacts and architecture. Folklore, language and other ethnographic material and mythology-related data are also used.

Such a comparative and interdisciplinary attitude to the European Thunder gods' attributes, drawing on anthropology, art history and folklore approached from a Baltic perspective, will help to establish new insights into the deeper understanding of celestial symbolism implicated in similarities of thunder god's attributes and congeniality of these mythical representations tradition till our days.

KEYWORDS: Baltic Thunder-god, Perkunas of Kernave, Jupiter, Zeus, Videvutis' flag, eight-pointed star, trident, axe, spiral.

1. INTRODUCTION

A detailed look at the particular symbolic elements of the Baltic Thunder-god helps us to formulate new insights about the essential features of this mythical being, its intercultural affinities and local uniqueness. Furthermore, closer analysis of the similar and common elements of symbolism of the thunder gods of Antiquity will help to outline their historical influence.

The attention must be paid to a comparison particular visual symbols and attributes of *Perkūnas* and *Jupiter* and *Zeus*: the symbols of thunder and water, their motion means and links with a calendar.

Previous investigations in the Baltic cosmological, atmospheric and calendar mythology of *Perkūnas* (Lithuanian, Latvian, Old Prussian) was based on historical records and folklore material, with reference to the related Slavic *Perun* and Germanic and Nordic *Thor*, and *Donar* folklore narratives (Brückner, 1904; Balys, 1939: 3-326; Gimbutas, 1973; Greimas, 1990; Lowmianski, 1986; Vėlius, 1987; Laurinkienė, 1996; Ivanov, Toporov, 1974; Kowalik, 2004; Rosik, 2000).

Though the importance of the Baltic *Perkūnas* and Slavic *Perun* in the mythology of Eastern European cultures is significant, the questions about Ancient Roman analogues of *Perkūnas*' visual representations and his folkloric affinities (Długossius, 1711; Sibley, 2009: 264-269) remain very actual. The 15th-century historian J. Długosz (Długossius) was one of the first authors to note the similarities between *Perkūnas* and *Jupiter*. The details of several historical visual images of Baltic god *Perkūnas* still are not precisely analysed from iconographical and comparative point of view.

2. PERKŪNAS AND THE CALENDAR

The Baltic *Perkūnas/Perkons* is one of the best known deities in ancient texts and was a popular mythical entity in folklore. The ethnoastronomical data has several references clearly linking Thunder-god with specific festive dates and days of the week.

The oldest data denoting the link of astronomic calculations with the Sun and *Perkūnas* comes from the temple of the 14-15th c. on Birutė Hill in Palanga. An idol of *Perkūnas* was erected there. Later it was transferred to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The paleoastronomic temple was mainly intended to observe and honour the sun and moon festive positions of solstitions and equinoxes (Klimka, 1989:73-85), and especially of the April 23rd (Žulkus, 1999: 41-47). In Latvian tradition this is the day of *Usiņš* who is a rider and owner of a pair of horses that draw the solar chariot. For Lithuanians this is the day of folkloric mythic person *Joris* and also Christian saint *šv. Jurgis* (St. George).

Analogically in Ancient Greece, April 23rd was dedicated to the Thunder-god *Zeus Georgius* (farmer). The Romans offered libations to *Jupiter* on this day as part of the *Vinalia urbana* or *Vinalia priora*. The Lithuanians on *Jurginės* festival paid respect to domestic animals: the cows were decorated with wreaths and led from the barn to the fields. This time is also associated with the first thunder of the year, which "awakens the earth" and stimulates it to blossom. This day is also known as *Jorė* (the name for the first spring greens) and folk songs invoke lonely *Joris* or *Jurja*, entreating him to thaw and unlock the earth, to release dew, and to marry. Seeking a rose for a wife, he is willing to break the garden fence, to flood the land with water and at least to pluck a flower (Misevičienė, 1972: 291, Nr. 425-426). This narrative image has strong connotations of *Perkūnas* wedding and fertile relations with Sun and earth.

The Thursday was associated with *Perkūnas* (Laurinkienė, 1996). Similarly Thursday was likewise dedicated to *Jupiter* in Roman cultures (*Iovis dies* in Latin, *joves* in old Portuguese, *jueves* in Spanish and *jeudi* in French).

This demonstrates that Lithuanian calendar bear striking similarities to the Greco-Roman calendar traditions linked with *Zeus* and *Jupiter*.

3. THE "TRADITIO LEGIS" TYPE HAND GESTURE OF PERKŪNAS

One of the oldest pieces of evidence testifying to early representations of *Perkūnas* is the so-called *Videvutis* flag (Fig. 1/1-2). The legendary king *Videvutis* lived in the 6th century and established the Prussian state of Balts (Stellae, 1518: 23-31). "The *Videvutis*' flag", according to Simonus Grunau "Preussische Chronik" (1510-1529) description, depicted the three main Prussian gods - *Potrimppo*, *Perkuno* and *Patollo* together with a heraldic pair of white horses beneath them. *Perkūnas*, as the highest god, is at the centre of the image. The Teutons invading the west coast of Lithuania found a wooden shelter beneath an oak tree, where an eternal fire was kept burning by pagan priests. The huge oak has three hollows that contained three idols honouring what might be termed the Baltic pagan Triad. *Perkuno* occupied the most prominent niche: he was depicted as middle aged, with a solemn ruddy face, a black beard, arrows in his hand, and a flaming crown upon his head. The permanently burning fire served to signify him (Grunau, 1875: 77-78).

It is evident that the attire of these gods is close to that of Renaissance style peasants' clothing. It is entirely possible that S. Grunau simply redrew the archaic sample of the flag by adapting the apparel of the characters to the style of the author's time fashion. This refers to the simultaneity between the text

and illustration of the flag in S. Grunau's book and his interpretation of pagan gods as an element of then-Prussian peasant culture.



Figure 1. The parallels in representation of the Old Prussian and Lithuanian folkloric Perkūnas (flames on a head and association with horses, and blessing gesture) with the Roman Sun God and Christ in Glory, and St. Peter: 1) Videvutis' flag (medieval Prussia); 2) Perkūnas image from king's Videvutis flag; 3) tympanum *The Last Judgment*, Elstertrebnitz, 12th c., Saxony; 4) St. Peter, mosaic in St. Mark Basilica, 12-13th c., Venice; 5) the Prussian grave good saddle with horses image; 6) Sol in Chariot, metope from Athena temple, 4th c. BC, Troy VIII, (Altes Museum, Berlin); 7) the Roman Sun-god Sol, silver leaf disc, 3rd c., Pessinus, Bala-Hissar; 8) beehive roof decoration, 19th c., Lithuania (Dundulienė, 1988, ill. 43); 9) monumental pillar *Horses of Perkūnas* by V. Kašuba, 1938, Kaunas.

Videvutis' flag (medieval Prussia); 2) Perkūnas image from king's Videvutis flag; 3) tympanum *The Last Judgment*, Elstertrebnitz, 12th c., Saxony; 4) St. Peter, mosaic in St. Mark Basilica, 12-13th c., Venice; 5) the Prussian grave good saddle with horses image; 6) Sol in Chariot, metope from Athena temple, 4th c. BC, Troy VIII, (Altes Museum, Berlin); 7) the Roman Sun-god Sol, silver leaf disc, 3rd c., Pessinus, Bala-Hissar; 8) beehive roof decoration, 19th c., Lithuania (Dundulienė, 1988, ill. 43); 9) monumental pillar *Horses of Perkūnas* by V. Kašuba, 1938, Kaunas.

The middle figure is shown en face, while the surrounding characters are turned at $\frac{3}{4}$ angle, and this measure of construction of the hierarchical superiority reflects the strong relation with the context of the time or even older Christian arts tradition. This method of portrayal is quite different from the method of frontal depicting the divine triad in the Roman period (for example see the Capitoline Triad of *Iuppiter*, *Iuno* and *Minerva*).

The most important characteristic of Perkūnas' representation on Videvutis flag contains features of Catholic and Orthodox iconic images of an enthroned Christ, which was one of the first of his images to emerge from early Christianity. In Catholic Europe this is known as *Maiestas Domini* (*Christ in Majesty* or *Christ in Glory*) (for example ; in Orthodox Christianity it is called *Pantokrator* (Greek Παντοκράτωρ). Both convey just one of the many names for god in Judaism. *Pantokrator* was used both for YHWH *Sabaoth* (*Lord of Hosts*) and for *El Shaddai* (*God Almighty*) in the Greek translation of the Bible. Latourette (1975: 572) argues that the enthroned

Christ - *Pantocrator* iconography is a Christian adaptation of earlier representations of an enthroned *Zeus*, such as the great statue of *Zeus* at Olympia. The most important here is the hand gesture of "Christ Pantocrator" which is known from early Christian art and has its origins in ancient Rome, where it was known as *Traditio legis* (*Transmission of the Law*). This gesture was directly borrowed with the formulae of depiction of the enthroned Roman Emperor. This type gesture of a vertical palm with three fingers pointed to the sky and two bent downwards, is also peculiar to the iconography of some Christian saints. This gesture of the right palm raised to the chest level is more characteristic of Orthodox *Christ Pantocrator*. This is also peculiar to Catholic and Orthodox representations of St. Peter (for example *St. Peter Enthroned* statue from the 5th or 13th century in St. Peter's Basilica; St. Peter mosaic in St. Mark Basilica, 12-13th c., Venice) (Fig. 1/4).

The *Traditio Legis* type gesture is evident in Romanesque style tympanum *The Last Judgment* of Martinskirche in Elstertrebnitz (12th c., Saxony, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, SAV 2611). Here a conversion of pagan worshipers of Jupiter into Christianity possibly is depicted (Fig. 1/3). The artistic style and hierarchy of this three partial frontal composition - the turn of lateral figures to the main central person of Christ with uplifted hand in *Traditio Legis* type gesture - this is very similar to the scene of *Videvutis' flag*. The carriage wheel with eight winged cross in the left side is the attribute of "palmer" with halo. A three-leaved trident of *ceraunia* is also depicted next to him. He prays to the *Christ in Majesty*, who is visually interpreted as a bust of a hero/god on the Roman stepped altar.

The most important characteristic of *Perkūnas'* image on Videvutis flag it is his *Traditio Legis* type gesture. But, on the other hand, his gesture of the left hand represents a mirror reflection of the right hand gesture characteristic of the *Traditio Legis* tradition.

In the Baltic and other Indo-European traditions the age of gods and their respective functions related to the expression of their vitality were conventionally listed in succession from their youth and right to the old age. The calendar cycles conventionally commence with the idea of the creation of the world and the youth, and completed with the idea of the old age and death. The moon phases' hierarchy was conventionally described starting with the young-moon phase and completing with the old-moon phase. The famous Hindu triad of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* is in a similar manner related to the function of creation, maintenance and destruction. In textual explanation of Baltic Prussian divine Triade: the young god *Patrimpas* is mentioned the first and the god of death - *Patulas* is the last. Therefore, the inter-

pretation of the Prussian gods in Videvutis flag starting from *Patūlas*, shown in the left, does not look logical or characteristic of archaic traditions and differs from S. Grunau's textual description. That leads to a conclusion that the original image of the divine Triad must have been a mirror reflection of the later representation. This suggests mistakes made subsequently by those redrawing the original pictures based on conventional iconography (Antique, Christian or pre-Christian Baltic Prussian). Furthermore, *Perkūnas* hand is unusually expressly leaning diagonally to the right. This unique and strange interpretation of *Traditio Legis* type gesture is undoubtedly local phenomenon.

4. HORSES AND THE HEAD OF CELESTIAL GOD EMANATING FLAMES OR RAYS

The decoration with an image of a pair of horses painted below the Videvutis flag in the illustration of S. Grunau (Fug, 1/1) is closely associated with an authentic necrocult image of a pair of white horses on a saddle found in a shroud of a Prussian burial (Fig. 1/5) (Širouchovas 2011: 281). It means that the image of a pair of white horses is not accidental; it is related to the Prussian tradition of sacred visual culture. In the Baltic tradition *Perkūnas* appears riding the horses. While a pair of horses in the celestial god *Dievas* folklore sometimes is associated with the twin sons of Celestial god *Dievas*.

In Latvian folklore God's twin sons (*Dieva Deli*) saddle the horses and ride them. This mythic poetic image of horse pairs is highly popular in the decorations of roof ridges in the ethnographic architecture of Lithuania Minor. Similarly, in ancient Rome mythology a white horse is associated with Jupiter. In the late Antiquity the iconography of *Jupiter* is sometimes equalised with *Sol*, the god of the Sun. *Sol*, the male Roman god of the Sun is often depicted as riding four horses (*Sol in quadriga*), or with a pair of horses (Fig. 1/6-7).

The head of *Perkūnas* surrounded with flames in the Videvutis' flag (Fig. 1/2) corresponds to the Lithuanian folklore image of *Perkūnas*, who is shown as a bearded old man with flames on his head (LTR 832/38). Such images of heads in flames without a halo have not been found in Christian art. However, the origins of depicting the head of *Perkūnas* surrounded with rays can be discerned in Roman images of the Sun god *Sol*.

The decorative roof elements in a form of horse pair *lėkiai* in Lithuanian folk architecture corresponds to the images of *Sol* of the ancient Roman art (Fig. 1/8, 6, 7). Similar analogies may be found even in the modern Lithuanian art: Vytautas Kašuba erected in Kaunas (1938) a monumental col-

umn portraying the figure of *Perkūnas* with a pair of horses (Fig. 1/9).

The disclosed contexts of the image of *Perkūnas* imply an assumption that the image of Videvutis flag in the book by S. Grunau may be an adapted interpretation based on earlier authentic sources that are related not only to the local sacred Prussian, but also to the Antique origin of *Jupiter* and *Sol* iconography motifs.

5. THUNDER GOD'S WEAPON OF THUNDERBOLT REPRESENTED AS ZIGZAG LIGHTNING, SPIRAL, TRIDENT, AXE AND FLINT STONE

Another interesting well-known interpretation of Videvutis' flag *Perkūnas* comes from the work of the 19th century historian T. Narbutas (Narbut 1835: Fig. 41). He published a rather strange image of *Perkūnas* in which the Thunder-god wields a thunderbolt of four zigzags and a spiral sceptre in his right hand and holds a loaf of bread in his half-raised left hand (Fig 2/1).

There have not been identified in the Lithuanian tradition any direct links between *Perkūnas* and bread. However, he is strongly associated with grindstones and flour milling. The association of *Perkūnas* with bread is clearly reflected in folklore images of thunder where it is caused by *Perkūnas* milling and making flour, cakes, peas or beams (LTR 763/9; 1001/493; 757/148; 828/24). Interestingly, God - *Dievas* (in the Baltic tradition specifically close to *Perkūnas*) in his heavenly realm has not only a carriage, but also stores bread leaven in the tub (LTR 038 (418), LTR 2750(356), LTR 4318(132)).

The association between *Perkūnas* and bread may be uncovered analysing the Lithuanian customs. The girls are allowed to participate in the first bread making only having reached their sexual maturity, i.e. after their first periods (Šaknys 1998: 45-46) which in the mythical world outlook are indirectly associated with *Perkūnas* activities. The figurative relation between the thunder roar and menstrual blood is revealed in a Lithuanian folk song about Sun Maiden - *Aušrinė* "Aušrinė was celebrating the wedding/ *Perkūnas* came on his horse through the gates/ Struck the green oak/ The oak's blood was dripping/ The blood sprinkled on my clothes/ The blood sprinkled on my wreath..." (Rėza 1958, 1: Nr 62).

It is evident that the image of bread in *Perkūnas*' left hand is much closer to Lithuanian folklore tradition. However his thunderbolt in T. Narbutas' depiction is strikingly similar to Roman representations of *Jupiter*.

The similar double trident, (six pointed) zigzagged thunderbolt in the right hand was characteristic of the image of *Jupiter* as a rider slaying a giant

snake in the latest North Antiquity in Germany (Fig. 2/6). The attributes of *Jupiter Keraunos*, who is always represented with a forked or zigzagged thunderbolt in his hand, according to A. Clark, are similar to the horns of rays *kernains* coming out of the Hebrew God's hand according to "Prophet Habakkuk book" (Clarke 1836: III part, 956/4rd verse). The double trident in *Iovis* right hand is very clear in Roman coin of Elagabalus 219 AD (i23598). The double trident thunderbolt or triple bladed arrow was a popular attribute of Zeus (Fig. 2/4,5). The trident thunderbolt or triple arrow is characteristic of the Etruscan god *Tinia* (Fig. 2/7). Like Zeus and Jupiter, he was the supreme ruler of the sky, storms, and thunder.



Figure 2. The parallels of *Perkūnas*' thunderbolt with Antique tradition: 1) *Perkūnas* from *Videvutis*' flag, depicted by T. Narbutas; 2) *Perkūnas* from *Kernavė* (probably Romanesque bronze sculpture, likely imported from Lower Saxony, 13th c., Germany?); 3) Celtic thunder-god *Taranis*, bronze figure, 2nd-3rd c. from the collection of Ex Sir Sidney Nolan: Phoenix Ancient Art

[<http://www.phoenixancientart.com/work-of-art/statuette-representing-the-gallo-roman-god-taranis> - accessed 28.04.2016]; 4) Zeus with double trident form thunderbolt in the scene of *The birth of Athena*, the Greek black figure vase painting, 560 BC (British Museum, London); 5) Greek Zeus hurling lightning, holding a spiral and thunderbolt, archaic bronze statuette (Glyptothec Munich); 6) Roman monument of *Iupiter* holding zigzag *ceraunos* and killing *Gigant*, Archaeologic park in *Xanten*, Germany; 7) Etruscan thunder-god *Tinia* with three-pronged (trident-lily form) thunderbolt, vase painting, 420-400 BC; 8) monumental copper sculpture *Perkūnas* by J. Ruzgas, 1967, *Kaunas*.

In T. Narbutas' illustration, *Perkūnas* has a zigzag symbol above the head (Fig. 2/1). This corresponds

with the insight of R. Wittkower that the zigzag form of the snake was equated with the thunderbolt in ancient times (Wittkower, 1939: 2 (4): 293-325; 309). Likewise, J. S. Hayes suggests an affinity between *Jove's* thunderbolt and the snake in Roman mythology (Hayes 2014: 10).

Most Lithuanian researchers believe that this image is actually the result of T. Narbutas' imagination. Though it is surprising to what extent the depicted attributes of *Perkūnas* are similar to the representations of *Jupiter* and *Zeus* in the Antique tradition. Therefore T. Narbutas' adaptive compilative interpretation has quite unique hybrid features of the Antique and later Baltic cultural elements.

Another divine weapon and archetypal symbol in the hands of Antique thunder-gods was the drill-shaped spiral arrow (Fig. 3/5; 4/1). Together with the trident thunderbolt it is characteristic of *Jupiter Dolichenus*, who is standing on a bull and also has an axe (Fig. 4/1,4) (Nash-Williams 1952). He was usually accompanied by a pair of male figures *Castores*. They are depicted either as the classical *Dioscuri* (i.e. *Castor* and *Pollux*, twin boxers leading horses) or else as *caryatids* (Merlat 1947).

The thunderbolt in the form of a drill-shaped spiral may also be linked to *lovem Lapidem*, a stone symbol for worshipping *Jupiter* (Aulus 1927: 21; Smith 1873), and *Lapis Manalis*, a sacred rain-stone which was used in prayers, processions and water pouring dedicated to *Jupiter*. A cylindrical rain-stone was prayed to as a personification of *Jupiter Pluvius* in order to bring about rainfall (Bailey 1907: 5-6). Meteorites, fossils may also have fulfilled this role. The flint stone *Lapis Silex* or red onyx *ceraunium* also served as a token of god's axe and representation of *Jupiter*. Italian folklore believed that *ceraunia* were the remains of spent thunderbolts (Dwight 1873: 121; Sibley 2009: 119-121, 125). *Ceraunia* name was given to the Stone Age weapons (axes, arrows and spears) and was believed to be leftover matter from divine thunderbolts. In Denmark and Britain, fossilized belemnites, sea urchins and stone axes were similarly regarded as thunderbolt remains and were placed in tombs and dwellings (Sibley 2009: 26). The axe was an important symbolic attribute of *Perun* in Slavic cultures (Darkevich 1961: 94-102).

Similarly in Lithuanian folklore *Perkūnas* is believed to have another prominent attribute, i.e. belemnites, referred to as *Perkūnas' bullet* (*Perkūnkulkė*), and the stone axes of the Stone Age origin is called *Perkūnas's axe* (*Perkūno kirvis*). The parallels with Roman traditions are evident in the 16th century account by the historian M. Strijkowski that the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas built an idol for *Perkūnas* (*Perkun*, *Piorun*) made from a huge flint stone in Vilnius Castle in the 14th century. The

priests striking the flint-stones in their hands created a forever lasting fire from them. This fire of oak wood was burned day and night in worship of Perkūnas (Strykowski 1846: 4).

In this context another retold story about the worship of miraculous hammer made of metal in Lithuania of the 15th c. becomes important. The Jesuit chronicler Jerome of Prague (1369-1440) had told about how this hammer was forged by the blacksmith *Televelis* and used by Zodiac signs in liberation of the *Sun* (Piccolomineus 1571: 418). This hammer worship is similar to the adoration of the double hammer by the Lappis and Saamis (Fig. 3/2, 5). This artefact is comparable to the thunderbolt of *Jupiter Dolichenus* in a form of hammer or axe.

The worship of the hammer of *Televelis* corresponds with the tradition of the double-edges axes/hammer's worship related to the Ruler of Thunder, and known not only in Antique arts but also in other European cultures (Baltic, German, Saami and Slavic).

A spiral or wave and fire form attributes are another common feature of Thunder-gods. The medieval bronze sculpture of so-called "Perkūnas from Kernavė", discovered in the 19th century in the environs of the ancient Lithuanian capital, holds a weapon of this form in his hand (Fig.2/2). According to the hypothesis of Russian archaeologist A. Darkevich (1963: 221-223), it is Romanesque candle stick from Lower Saxony, depicting one of four Biblical mythological characters holding the four rivers of Paradise. He also supposed this sculptural image derived from the Antique iconography of Jupiter. Therefore, his insight about the enthroned *Jupiter* iconography present in a piece of medieval Christian decorative art seems to be appropriate, because that could be acceptable for the pre-Christian Lithuanian mentality. This figurine's similarity with the image of *Perkūnas* might have prompted its import to Kernavė.

The arguments of the archaeologist did not refer to close historic analogues; however, nobody ever even attempted to challenge his assumptions. On the other hand very similar is 2nd-3rd AD bronze figure of "Gallo-Roman God *Taranis*" from the private collection of Ex Sir Sidney Nolan (Fig. 2/3). This fact supports presumption about the much earlier origin of "Perkūnas from Kernavė" and his stronger relation with *Jupiter/Taranis* iconography.

The Antique link of spiral thunderbolt with *Jupiter*, and his typological similarity to *Perkūnas* were intuitively reflected in the monumental sculpture of "Perkūnas" created in Kaunas in late 20th c. by Juozas Ruzgas who was not seriously interested in Antique symbolism. *Perkūnas* is holding lightning in

his left hand and a spiral roll may be seen in the palm of his right hand (Fig. 2/8).

purely intuitively conveyed the archetype iconographic features of the God of Thunder that specifically corresponds to the Antique tradition.

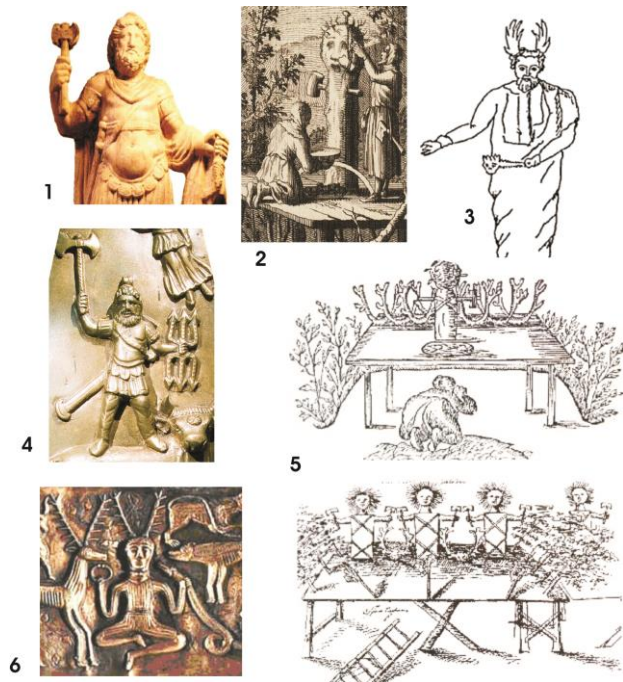


Figure 3. Horns and axes as attributes of thunder-gods: 1) The statue of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus*, Museum Carnuntinum; 2) Lapponian divinity *Thoron*, copper engraving by Bernard Picart in 1726 (as described by Schefferus in 1674) (Moubach, 1729: 310); 3) *Perkūnas* with a horned head (Schmith, (1863), Sweden); 4) *Jupiter Dolichenus* in a fragment of votive metal plaque from Heddernheim, 4th c. (Römermuseum Osterburken); 5) The Lapponian altars of 17th c. with installed deer horns and deities holding double axes or hammers (Malzer, 1971: 56-57); 6) The horned Celtic god *Cernunnos*, Gundestrup cauldron, 1st c. (National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen).

6. HORNED THUNDER-GOD

Another important unique ancient Lithuanian statuette of *Perkūnas* with elk horns on the head and a mace in his hand was represented by archaeologist Carl von Schmith in 19th century (Schmith, 2006: 4, 101) (Fig. 3/3). An analogy for such iconography can be seen in the image ascribed to *Cernunnos* – a Celtic deity, ruler of wild animals (Fig. 3/6). (Here the links with the semantic field of *Perkūnas* and *Jupiter* might be also discerned in the similarity of the name of *Cernunnos* with *Perkūnas* and a Latin *quercus* (a rock) and *ceraunios*, *craunia*, or a Slavic *kremen* (a flint stone).

The association between the horned elk and thunder-god (who is the ruler of rains) and may be unfolded appealing to the relict of old Lithuanian believe in swimming elk help in protection against

floods: the Christian legends from Zapyškis tells that an elk with the holy picture was released to swim from Vilnius down the river Neris to Nemunas, in order to protect people from an anger of rivers (Kviklys, 1966: 271).

The two-sided elk horns, hammers/axes, and sun images decorating frontal altars of Thunder-god was known in Finland three centuries ago (Manker 1971) (Fig. 3/2,5). Here we see the symbolic link of horns and hammer/axe with Thunder-god. Possibly such altars represent the link between Thunder-god and Sun-god, because the association of the sun movement with running reindeer is well known in Nordic folklore.

The symbolic association of deer with the sun is evident in Lithuanian folklore also. An Advent-Christmas folk song "Here comes a nine horned deer" ("Atbėga elnias devynragis") speaks about a miracle of a rose (a symbol of Sun) burst into blossom on the Christmas morning, and about a deer with a flame burning and blacksmiths hammering on his horns (LMTA MIES, Nr. KF 3503). This discloses and represents the relation between metalsmithery, hammer and celestial bodies. The metalsmiths working on the horns of the deer are asked to make a golden cup, what is again related to the symbolism of the Sun.

So we can find a lot of analogies of a deer/elk horns link with the Sun and Thunder-god's hammering in local and neighbouring traditions.

7. CHARIOT WHEEL, EIGHT-POINTED CROSS AND PENTACLE AS SYMBOLS OF THUNDER-GOD

Quite obviously, the form of a six-winged cross/star matches the geometry of the double three-forked lightning of Jupiter.

Based on Slavic archaeological data, the reconstruction of the ancient temple of the Slavic deity *Perun* in Novgorod region was made by V. Sedov (1953). Its topographic design consists of a sacrificial fire places erected on a strictly geometrical eight-pointed cross axes (Fig. 4/6), which resembles the so-called *Pentacle of Jupiter* and the *Key of Solomon* in the Kabbalah tradition (Fig. 4/8, 7).

This type of construction, based on the eight-pointed leaf star also has similarities with geometric representations of *Perkūnas*. The interpretation of eight-pointed leaf star as symbol of sun is popular in contemporary studies on Latvian folk design (Celms 2008: 153-158). Comparative material from European Medieval culture reveals this symbol as being peculiar to alchemy. This kind of star sign is also peculiar to the Jewish tradition where it is known as *The Flower of Life* (Fig. 4/9). It also features prominently in ancient Roman and Greek traditions. The geometrical form of the *Pentacle of Jupiter* may be

observed in the symbol of a wheel of *Jupiter's* chariot (Fig. 4/1-3; 1/3). This means that the eight or six-pointed star/cross and *Jupiter's* chariot wheel corresponds with the attributes of Baltic *Perkūnas/Perkons* and Slavic *Perun*. *Jupiter* is depicted as riding a *quadriga*; similarly *Perkūnas* is a celestial charioteer riding through the sky in the Baltic mythology. Thunder is the consequence of his journey through the sky. According to folk belief, it thundered when *Perkūnas* was grinding wheat for bread using the two circular stone wheels of his chariot. Folkloric images of *Perkūnas* riding a chariot are popular in modern Lithuanian folk art: it is visually interpreted by the famous Lithuanian folk sculptor of the second part of 20th century - Ipolitas Užkurnys (Fig. IV/4). It is worth noting that neither folk artist had much knowledge of Antique art at the time.

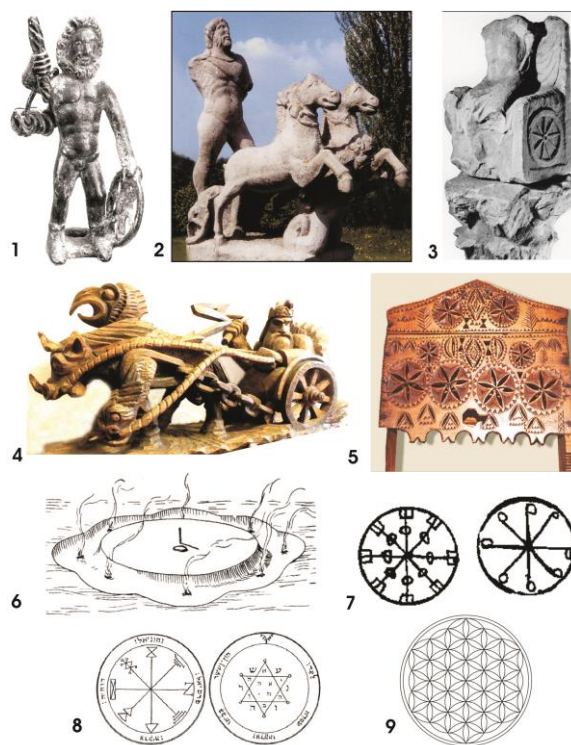


Figure 4. Eight or six pointed cross, chariot wheel or pentacle as an attributes of Thunder-gods: 1) Jupiter, 3rd c., Antikensam-mlung, Kassel, Germany; 2) Jupiter riding a chariot and slaying the giants on the top of Jupiter column, Ludwigsburg; Baden-Württemberg; 3) The enthroned Jupiter column with wheel symbol, Germany; 4) *Perkūnas*, wooden sculpture by I. Užkurnys, 1971; 5) Wooden towel horse with an eight pointed star patterns, 19th c., Lithuania; 6) hypothetical *Perun* temple near Novgorod, 1st millennium, Russia; 7) Pentacles from the Greek *Key of Solomon* (Harley MS. 15th. C., 5596, *Geomancy*: 31); 8) *Jupiter Pentacle of Kabbalah*; 9) *Flower of Life sign in Kabbalah*.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The Baltic images of *Perkūnas* have a range of the similar specific elements known in the Antique culture.

The interface of the April the 23rd and a Thursday of the Lithuanian traditional calendar with the field of symbolism of the Thunder-god corresponds to the Greco-Roman traditions of the holidays dedicated to *Zeus* and *Jupiter*.

The most important depicted attributes of the Baltic thunder-god *Perkūnas* are connected with lightning (*Perkūnas' bullets* and *Perkūnas' axes*). Similarly the lightning of *Zeus* and *Jupiter* often is represented by a double trident zigzag, spiral bullet or double axe.

The range of the similar specific elements known in the Antique culture would include an idol for *Perkūnas* built by the King Gediminas of a huge piece of flint stone that is very similar to the *ceraunia* of *Jupiter*; and the *Traditio Legis* type gesture of *Perkūnas* and his central position in the tripartite hierarchical composition of "Videvutis flag", that conforms the Roman divine Triad scene.

The figure of *Perkūnas* in T. Narbutas's picture is holding a six-pointed zigzag lightning and a spiral bullet very characteristic of the rulers of thunder in the Antique cultures. It is also assumed that "Perkūnas from Kernavė" sitting and holding spiral in his hand is much more closer to *Jupiter* iconography and Celtic art than it was thought earlier.

The image of *Perkūnas' head* decorated with elk's horns presented by Swedish archaeologist C. Von Schmith reminds the post-Antique iconography of the Celtic *Cernunnos*. The ancient Lithuanian adoration of the hammer which was made by *Televelis* for salvation of the Sun is an analogy of the quite archetypal worship of double-edged axes/hammers that is related to the Ruler of Thunder. This fact was known not only in Antique art, but also in Baltic, German, Saami and Slavic cultures.

The Baltic representation of *Perkūnas* as a celestial rider and charioteer with white horses and with the head surrounded by flames shares many similarities with the iconography of Antique Thunder-gods and Sun-god. The modern interpretations of an eight-winged star symbolism in the Baltic art are very much in line with the Antique tradition where the star pattern was an attribute of Thunder-god linked with the wheel of his chariot. The forms of the decorative roof elements *lėkiai* correspond to the images of the God of Sun *Sol* in the ancient Roman art. The Antique analogies are abundant in the images of *Perkūnas* in Lithuanian folk art, and even in the modern art *Perkūnas* representations as well.

The entirety of the observations suggests an assumption of a much closer interactions between the Antique art and the Baltic tradition - both authentic and reconstructed or compiled.

REFERENCES

- LMTA MIES – Dept. of Ethnomusicology of The Institute of Lithuanian Musicology, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.
- LTR - The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Folklore Archyve.
- Aulus, G. (1927) *The Attic Nights* (Translated by John C. Rolfe), London, Harvard University Press, vol 1: 21.
- Bailey, C. (1907) *The Religion of Ancient Rome*, London: Archibald Constable & Co Ltd.
- Balys, J. (1939) Griaustinis ir velnias Baltoskandinavijos kraštų tautosakoje. *Tautosakos darbai*, vol. 6: 3-236, Kaunas.
- Bertram, L. (1974) *Classical Mythology and Arthurian Romance – A Study of the Sources of Crestien de Troies' "Yoain" and Other Arthurian Romances*, Geneve, Slatkine Reprints: 64-66.
- Brückner, A. (1904) *Starożytna Litwa. Ludy i bogi. Szkice historyczne i mitologiczne*, Warszawa, Księgarnia Naukowa.
- Celms, V. (2008) *Latvju raksts un zīmes*, Rīga, Folkloras Informācijas Centrs.
- Clarke, A. (1836) *The Holy Bible Containig the Old and New Testaments: the Text Printed from the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorized Translation Including Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts. With a Comentary and Critical Notes. Designed as a Help to the Better Understanding of the Sacred Writings*, Baltimore, John J. Harrod, agent for the book company of the Methodist Protestant Church.
- Darkevich, V.P. (1963) O tak nazyvajemom "idole Perkuna" iz Kernova. *Sovetskaya arxeologia*, No. 3: 221-223.
- Darkevich, B.P. (1961) Topor kak symvol Peruna v drevnerusskom jazychestve. *Sovetskaya arxeologia*, No.4: 94-102.
- Długossius, I. (1711) *Ioannis Długossi sev Longini Canonici Qvondam Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae... Liber XIII et vltimvs*, Lipsk, Svmptibvs Io. Lv dov. Gleditschii & Mavritii Georgii Weidmanni. Pars II saeculi XV (AD 997).
- Dwight, M. A. (1949) *Grecian and Roman Mythology*, intr. T. Lewis, New Yor, Chicago, A. S. Barnes & co.
- Gimbutas, M. (1973) *Perkūnas: Perun the Thunder God of the Balts and the Slavs*, *The Journal of Indo European Studies*, No 1 (4).

- Greimas, A. J. (1990) *Tautos atminties beieškant: Apie dievus ir žmones*, Chicago, A. Mackaus knygų leidimo fondas.
- Grunau, S. (1875) *Preussische Chronik: Im auftrage des Vereins für die Geschichte der Provinz Preussen*, herausgegeben von Dr. M. Perlbach, Band 1, Leipzig, Verlag von Duncker & Humblot.
- Harley MS. (15th c.) 5596, Geomancy (manuscript, British Library).
- Hayes, J. S. (2014) Jupiter's Legacy: The Symbol of the Eagle and Thunderbolt in Antiquity and Their Appropriation by Revolutionary America and Nazi Germany, *Vassar College Digital Window @Vassar, Senior Capstone Projects*, Paper 26: 1-39.
[http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1260&context=senior_capstone - accessed 03.01.2016].
- Ivanov, V.V., Toporov, V.N. (1974) *Issledovanija v oblasti slovianskih drevnostej*, Moskva, Nauka.
- Klimka L. (1989) Birutės kalnas-astronominių stebėjimų vieta. In *Lietuvos pajūrio žemės viduramžiais*. Vilnius, Mokslas: 73-85.
- Kowalik, A. (2004) *Kosmologia dawnych Slowian: Prolegomena do teologii politycznej dawnych Słowian*, Krakow, Nomos.
- Kviklys B. (1966) *Mūsų Lietuva*, Boston, Lietuvių enciklopedijos leidykla, Vol. 3.
- Latourette, K.S (1975) *A History of Christianity Volume 2: Reformation to the Present (AD 1500 - AD 1975)*.
- Laurinkienė, N. (1996) *Senovės lietuvių dievas Perkūnas: kalboje, tautosakoje, istoriniuose šaltiniuose*, Vilnius, Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas.
- Łowmiański, H. (1986) *Religia slowian i jej upadek (w. VI - XII)*, Warszawa, Państwowe wydawnictwo naukowe.
- Manker, E. (1971) *Samefolkets konst*, Halmstad: Askild & Kärnekull.
- Merlat, P. (1947) Jupiter Dolichenus, Sérapis et Isis. *Revue archéologique*, 6e série, vol. 27, (January-June): 15-19.
- Misevičienė, V. (1972) *Lietuvių liaudies dainų katalogas: Darbo dainos. Kalendorinių apeigų dainos*, Vilnius, Vaga.
- Moubach, A. (1729) *Naukeurige beschryving der uitwendige godtsdienst-plichten, kerk-zeden en gewoontens van alle volkeren der waereldt. Deel 4*. Hermanus Uytwerf, Amsterdam/ Jan Daniel Beman, Rotterdam/ Isaak van der Kloot, Den Haag.
- Narbutt, T. (1835) *Dzeje narodu litewskiego*, Wilno, Nakładem i drukiem A. Marcinkowskiego, Vol. 1.
- Nash-Williams, V. E. (1952) Iuppiter Dolichenus. *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 21, No 62: 72-77.
- Piccolomineus, A. S. (1571) *Opera quae extr omnia...*, Basileae; (Vėlius, N. (ed.) (1996) *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai, vol. 1: Nuo seniausių laikų iki XV amžiaus pabaigos*, Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla: 588-597.
- Rėza, L. (1958) *Lietuvių liaudies dainos*, Vilnius, Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, Vol.1.
- Rosik, S. (2000) *Interpretacja chrześcijańska religini pogańskich Słowian w świetle kronik niemieckich XI-XII wieku (Thietmar, Adam z Bremy, Helmold)*, Wrocław, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Sedov, V. (1953) Drevnerusskoje yazycheskoje sviatylishche v Peryni. *Kratkie soobshchenia Instituta istorii materialnoj kultury*, vol. 50: 92-103.
- Sibley, J. T. (2009) *The Divine Thunderbolt – Missile of the Gods*, USA, Xlibris Corporation.
- Smith, W. (1873) *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology*, London, John Murray, printed by Spottiswoode and Co.
- Stellae, E. (1518) *Erasmii Stellae Libonothani De Borussiae Antiquitatibus Libri Duo*, Germaniae, Basileam.
- Strykowski, M. (1846) *Kronika polska, litewska, żmódzka i wszystkiój Rusi Macieja Strykowskiego*. Wydanie nowe, będące dokładnym powtórzeniem wydania pierwotnego królewieckiego z roku 1582, poprzedzone wiadomością o życiu i pismach Strykowskiego przez Mikołaja Malinowskiego, oraz rozprawą o latopiscach ruskich przez Daniłowicza, pomnożone przedrukiem dzieł pomniejszych Strykowskiego według pierwotnych wydań, Warszawa, Nakład Gustawa Leona Glücksberga, Księgarza, Vol 1.
- Šaknys, Ž. (1996) *Jaunimo brandos apeigos Lietuvoje XIX a. pabaigoje-XX a. pirmojoje pusėje*, Vilnius: Pradai.
- Širouchovas, R. (2011) Nauji prūsų X-XIII a. kapinynų tyrimai vakarų baltų kultūros kontekste. *Lituanistica*, vol. 57, No. 3(85): 276-304.
- Vėlius, N. (1987) *Chtoniškasis lietuvių mitologijos pasaulis: folklorinio velnio analizė*, Vilnius, Vaga.
- Von Schmith, C. (1863/2006) *Necrolituanica*, Griškaitė, R., Katilius, A., Kazakevičius, V. (eds.), Vilnius, Versus Aureus.
- Wittkower, R. (1939) Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols. *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 2 (4): 293-325.
- Žulkus, V. (1999) Palangiškiai pagonys. In Žulkus V. (ed.) *Palangos istorija*, Klaipėda, Libra Memelensis: 41-47.