

ASTRONYMS IN BELARUSSIAN FOLK BELIEFS

TSIMAFEI AVILIN

Abstract

This article presents some known Belarussian “astronyms” and related beliefs based on folkloric-ethnographic sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries together with material collected by the author and other researchers in the last decade.

Key words: astronyms stars, folk astronomy, Belarussian folk-beliefs, ethnoastronomy, constellations.

Introduction

The study of “astronyms” – the names of celestial bodies (stars, constellations, planets, etc.) that can be seen with the naked eye – is an almost completely un-researched area of Belarussian onomastics. Some astronyms can be found in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Polish (K. Moszynski, M. Gladyszowa, M. Federowski et al.) and Belarussian (E. Romannov, A. Serzhputovski et al.) folkloric-ethnographic sources, but unfortunately they are few. However, Belarus is exceptional in that people in the villages have preserved their traditional knowledge about the stars, and related beliefs, right through to the present time. Some of the material presented in this article is original, having been collected by the author and various local historians during research expeditions between 2004 and 2007. These researchers used standard principles for collecting the “field” material during their expeditions, on the basis of a questionnaire¹ that was specially developed by the author for these purposes.

Stars are usually called *zorki*, *zory*, *zviozdy*, or *gviazdy* (Matskevich 1979, p.439) (from *gwiazda* – a star in Polish). In addition to a widespread belief that stars were lights that were lit and attached to a solid sky by God (NM 2003, p.189) it was also said regarding their origin that

“In old times there was always light and there lived a strong man who could do anything. People asked him if he could make darkness to cover the Sun. And he did cover the Sun. Everyone was frightened and started to light up lights which could be seen in the sky afterwards” (NM 2003, p.204).

¹ It is planned in the near future to publish that the questionnaire that has been developed. The questionnaire is partly based on those of M. Rut and J. Vaiškūnas (J. Vaiškūnas 1998) but is the first to have been specially developed to record star knowledge in the Belarussian context. (In other Belarussian sources there are only one or two questions related to astronyms and folk-astronomy.)

It should be mentioned that the ‘star’ astronym means both a single star and a constellation.

Stars are human souls: there are as many stars as people on Earth (Pietkiewicz 1938, p.11) and every star has its own name. When a child is born God or an angel immediately lights up its star, which brings fortune, love and happiness. When a man dies they put its star out and then it falls. But there is an opposite belief that stars are the souls of deceased people. Stars also are the souls of unbaptised children shining from the sky for their parents.

It is believed that stars are houses of angels. When stars are shining at night then it is said that angels have their windows open (NM 2003, p.197); alternatively, stars are candles lit by the angels every evening.

The brightness of a star indicates the social status of a man (a bright star for a rich man, a dim one for a poor) or else his age and spiritual qualities (a bright star for a young and kind man, a dim one for children and old or evil men and sinners).

Names of constellations and beliefs about them

1. **Aries** – a Ram (Nosovich 1870, p.15).
2. **Auriga** – a she-goat (*Kaza*) (Avilin 2007, p.48) (only α Aur). During the celebration of *Koliad* on December 24th and 25th the appearance of this star marked the time when people started to eat *kut'ia*² and (at a peak time in the celebrations) came out in the evening and walked carrying a pole with a star.
3. **Böotes** – a ploughman (*Rataj*) (Federowski 1897, p.150).
4. **Capricorn** – a wild goat (*Kaziarog*) (Katsar 1996, p.195). It was believed that a symbol of Capricorn wo-

² A traditional Slavic ceremonial meal made of cooked grains with honey, sugar and raisins.

ven on a *rushnik*³ could heal and guard domestic animals from diseases and evil supernatural beings. Such *rushniks* with this and other astronomical symbols were used for divination.

5. **Cassiopeia** – *Visazhar* (Nekrashevich 1928, p.182), *Kastsy* (‘mowers’) (Avin 2006, p.321) (α , β , γ , δ , ϵ Cas) are mowers (reapers) that “were put on guard and can slice and cut anyone” (Saharov 1990, p.114).

6. **Coma Berenices** – *Sito* (‘a sieve’) (Karlłowicz 1906, p.120). It was said that “God used to sift grains of *zhitto*⁴ through it”.

7. **Corona Borealis** – *Karona* (‘a crown’) (Dobrowol’skii 1914, p.3), *Karuna* (‘a crown’) (Krasnevich 1926, p. 112). The constellation was a symbol of the thorn wreath that was put on Christ’s head. It is also said that “a star’s crown impended over the earth” (Avin 2007, p.100).

8. **Cygnus** – *Petrova Palka* (‘a Peter’s stick’) (Kryvitski 1987, p.10), *Petrou Krest* (‘a Peter’s cross’) (Biryly 1994, p.25), *Tsarou Krest* (‘a Czar’s cross’) (Kryvitski 1987, p.262) (α , γ , η , β – a vertical beam, ϵ , γ , δ – a cross beam).

- *Petrova Palka* (‘a Peter’s stick’) and *Petrou Krest* (‘a Peter’s cross’)⁵. The first two names refer to a staff (made in a shape of a cross) and a symbol of St. Peter.
- *Tsarou Krest* (‘a Czar’s cross’). This name is linked to one of the czars. Thus it could not have appeared any earlier than the fourteenth century, since in Russia it was Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) who first acquired the title of Czar.

It is also said that “the stars in a shape of a letter T form the name of St. Teresa” (β , γ , δ ϵ , ζ Cyg?).

9. **Draco** – *Zmej* (‘a serpent’) (Pietkiewicz 1938, p.11) (β , γ , ζ , ϵ , ν , δ Dra, α UMi?). “St. Yuri killed this serpent and hung it near the star that always stands in the same place” (ibid.). It seems that this name is connected with a myth about the slaughter of a serpent, one that is known to many peoples in the world. In this case it is told from a Christian perspective.

10. **Gemini** – *Blizniuki* (‘twins’) (Karatkevich 1990, p.111), *Litwa* (Karlłowicz 1902, p.479) (α Gem), *Korona* (‘a crown’) (ibid.). (β Gem). These two stars (α and β Gem) served as a symbol of two states: the Great

Lithuanian Princedom and the Polish Kingdom. Their original names were probably *Lele* and *Polele*, who were two characters in pagan myth. It is also said that “the Blizniuki star usually appears before the rain”⁶.

11. **The Hyades** – *Dazhdzhaviki* (Nekrashevich 1928, p.79), *Vuzhy?* (‘grass-snakes’) (Grynblat 2005, p.161), *Charviaki?* (‘worms’). Unfortunately, little is known at present about this cluster; perhaps future expeditions will reveal more about it.

- *Charviaki?* (‘worms’). This name can nonetheless be found, together with the names of other constellations, in the work of the Polish-Belarusian poet *Tomasz Iewlewicz* in his “*Labirynt, abo Droga zaklana*” (printed in 1625): “...wherefrom Artur, and Voz, and Charviaki, and Kosy...”

12. **Lyra** – *Niavesta* (‘a bride’) (α Lyr), *Dva braty* (‘two brothers’) (β , γ Lyr), *Sapernik* (a rival) (δ Lyr) (Karatkevich 1990, p. 111). These names are mentioned in “*Khrystos przyiamliusia u Garodni*” (“Christ landed in a Garodnia city”) by a famous Belarusian writer, V.S. Karatkevich.

13. **Orion** – *Kreselca Pana Jezusa* (‘Lord Jesus’s chair’) (Gladyszowa 1960, p.48) (Orion), *Grabli* (‘a rake’) (Kas’piarovich 1927, p.83), *Kastsy* (‘mowers’) (Matskevich 1979, p.435) (“a sword” and δ , ϵ , ζ Ori), *Try Karali* (‘three Kings’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Kasar* (‘a mower’) (Pietkiewicz 1938, p.11), *Karomyselko* (‘a small yoke’) (Gladyszowa 1960, p.48), *Tri Siostry* (‘three sisters’) (ibid.), *Prahi, Papradki* (‘yarn spinners’) (Krasnevich 1926, p.112), *Traiko, Asilki* (*asilak, bagatyr* is the name of an epic hero, cf. Belarusian “Kasary – the three stars. It is said these are stars- *bagatyrki*” (Poleskii Arkhiv)). (Avin 2006, p.324) (δ , ϵ , ζ Ori) (Matskevich 1979, p.435), *Kigachi* (Lastouski 1924, p.419), *Matawila* (‘a reel’) (Serzhputouski 1930, p.11), *Kosy* (‘scythes’) (Gladyszowa 1960, p.37), *Chepiga* (Sanko 2004, p.507), *Kichagi ragachy* (“shaft of a plough”) (Lastouski 1924, p.419), *Kryzhe* (‘a cross’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Chesnyj hrest*⁷ (‘Chesnyj cross’) (Poleskii Arkhiv), *Lisa* (‘a fox’) (ibid.), *Trohkutnaia* (lit. ‘with three corners’) (ibid.).

- *Kreselca Pana Jezusa* (‘Lord Jesus’s chair’). The first name derives from a comparison between this constellation and the heavenly throne of Jesus Christ.

³ A name for a traditional Belarusian woven fabrics decorated with certain patterns.

⁴ Usually rye or barley in Belarus.

⁵ It should be noted that these constellation names sometimes refer to Orion’s sword and belt rather than to Cygnus, but this is because of possibly erroneous researchers’ records.

⁶ This record was collected by Ganna Sharenda (Local History Department, Lenin Regional Library, Gomel).

⁷ This astronym (*Chesnyj hrest*) is also identified with the constellation Cygnus in the Poleskii Arkhiv, but this interpretation is most likely incorrect. Compare, e.g., with Ukraine *Česny chrest* (Polish transcription) (Orion).

- *Try Karali* ('three Kings'). It was said that these three kings were the evangelical Three Wise Men (The Magi) who came to see Christ. In some areas of Belarus this constellation represented a celebration of *Vodokrescheniia* (Baptism ceremony on January 6th), the constellation's time of appearance at a certain location in the sky marking the beginning of the celebration.
- *Tri Siostry* ('three sisters'). It is probable that the names *Tri Siostry* ('three sisters') and *Prahi, Papradki* ('yarn spinners') are connected with a myth about three cursed sisters who, after their death, remained in the sky as three shining stars. The sisters are widely invoked in magic spells and three stars symbolising the three sisters are frequently used in the ornamentation on *rushniks*.
- *Kastysy* ('mowers'). The name *Kastysy* ('mowers') reflects an image of those who mow in the sky: "Three stars stand one after another in the manner of people mowing the fields" (Matskevich 1979, p.435). The Polish maintain a belief that "*Babki* ('old women') (the Pleiades) carry meals for people who are mowing (Orion)" (Gladyszowa 1960, p.36). Among the Belarussians there are numerous tales and legends in which *babki* and *kastysy* are the main characters. They are working in a field when God comes to them walking along a road and different miracles take place. The same images can be seen in the sky: the people mowing form part of the constellation of Orion, the old women are the Pleiades, the road is the Milky Way, and the field is the sky. These three stars are also called "*svetovaia, zahodnia, poznia*, but some people say these three stars are called *Kosary*" (Polesskii Arkhiv). One of these three stars has the name *Paraskeva Piatmitsa* (This record was collected by Ganna Sharenda).
- *Matawila* ('a reel'). It is possible that researchers mistakenly ascribed the name of *Motowilo* to Orion. It is more likely that it was the constellation of Perseus (Sanko 2004, p.308). Moreover, this name can be found in different folk-riddles, e.g. "Shylamatawila has been in the sky, has lost the keys, and a star with the Moon has stolen them" (answer to the riddle: a swallow).
- *Koromysselko* ('a little yoke'). Taking into consideration the Ukrainian and Belarussian notion of a "belt" being a "*divka vodu niase*" (Polesskii Arkhiv) ('a young maiden carrying water') and the Belarussian name *Koromysselko* ('a little yoke') it follows that they saw a young maiden who carried a yoke in "Orion's belt and sword".

About these three stars it was said: "They consist of three people. They are seen mostly during winter-time" and "The three stars somehow relate to lords".

Using this constellation they determined the time of night: "People knew which pair of them would show up, it was time to wake up, it was said that the Mowers had walked far so it was time to get up." (Matskevich 1979, p.435). It also indicated the weather: "When *Kosy* is in the sky it will rain" (Polesskii Arkhiv).

14. **The Pleiades.** *Olosozar* (Moszynski 1928, p.156), *Wosozhary* (Gladyszowa 1960, p.187), *Velisazar* (Kas'piarovich 1927, p.56), *Valasazhar* (Matskevich 1979, p.272), *Czary-valasazhary* (Kryvitski 1987, p.137), *Polosozar* (ibid. p.147), *Visazhar* (Narodnae 1976, p.51), *Valoski* (Kas'piarovich 1927:52), *Valosny* (lit. 'hair') (ibid. p.52), *Baby* ('women') (Lastouski 1924, p.476), *Sitsiachko* (Avin 2006, p.325), *Reshata* (Matskevich 1979, p.334), *Maloe Sita* ('a little sieve') *Gniazdo* (lit. 'nest', probably a beehive) (Lastouski 1924:476), *Kuchki* (ibid. p.476), *Kurochka* ('a hen') (Kuntsevich 2001, p.67), *Kurki* ('hens') (Moszynski 1928, p.156), *Kupki* (Gladyszowa 1960, p.158), *Stazherka* (Kas'piarovich 1927, p.291), *Koronka?* ('a crown') (Polesskii Arkhiv), *Venochok* ('garland') (ibid.), *Buket tsvetov* ('a bunch of flowers') (This record was collected by Igor Zhitin).

- *Velisazar*. The name *Velisazar* and other names resembling it were originally connected with a Slavic pagan god, *Veles*, "the god of cattle" who is also the ruler of the underground kingdom. It is evident that this name itself originates from the archaic Russian word *Vlasezhelische* (Sreznevskii 1893, p.270), which means a place where *Veles* lived – the underground kingdom or an entrance to it. But with the coming of Christianity the name and its meaning started to change, because the Christian counterpart of *Veles* was standing close to the Devil.
- *Valosny* (lit. 'hair'). It is likely that the names *Valoski* and *Valosny* also originate from the early Russian word *Volosyni* (ibid. p.294). Some scientists are of the opinion that it represented the names of *Veles*' wives. Interestingly, a surviving legend from the Horvats tells of seven *vil*, souls of deceased brides who live in the Pleiades and take part every night in *khovorod* (walking in a circle holding hands with each other). (Afanas'ev 1994, p.229).
- *Sitechko* ('a sieve'). It is said of *Sitechko* (*Rasheto, Sittse*) ('a sieve') that in this place "angels sift righteous souls from sinful ones" (Serzhputouski 1930, p.7).

- *Kuchki*. *Kuchki* means “ten sheaves”: *kupki* means “a few piles” and *stazherka* (*stazhary*, *stazhar’e*) means a support pole that was put in the middle of a haystack under which branches and straw were laid.
- *Visazhar*. *Visazhar* is another name for the Pleiades which may come from the archaic Russian word *viss* (*vissa*, *visson*, *vissos*), the name of a plant whose tincture was used to make colour fabrics: a stained cloth made from flax, and such clothing in general, were considered valuable, being thin and soft. It is likely that in the past the beauty of the rising Pleiades at sunrise was associated with such wonderful cloth, cf., for example, the Belarussian phrase “[The Pleiades] are a *runia* [‘a fleece’] of *zarnitsa* [‘daybreak’]” (Poleskii Arkhiv). In a metaphorical sense this name could relate to Christ’s clothes: “There sits on the throne my Lord Jesus Christ in *visos* shining with crimson and throwing sparks”.
- *Gniazdo* (lit. ‘nest’, probably a beehive). The term ‘nest’ is used for the inner part of a beehive where frames with honeycombs are placed and where bees spend the winter. Examples of Russian names for star groups or clusters are *Ulej* (‘a beehive’) and *Os’e Gnezdo* (‘a wasp’s nest’) (Rut 1987, p.15). It is known that the eastern Slavs thought that the souls of the deceased in the form of bees depart to the other world during the winter and return to Earth in the springtime when all of Nature is waking up. The rebirth of Nature is most intense during the spring festivities of St. Yuri on May 5th-6th (April 23rd in the old-style calendar of the nineteenth century). By the seventeenth century this date was already used as a legal term. It defined the start date for the lease of a *folvarks* (‘farm’) and from which the hiring period for workers was determined. On this date, cattle were released to graze for the first time after the winter. On this date the Pleiades sets (heliacal setting) while on December 8th-9th (November 26th in the old-style calendar) they rises (achronal rising) during autumn festivities for St. Yuri. Thus the beginning and ending of agricultural activities was determined by the setting and rising Pleiades. Cf. the Russian name for the Pleiades – *Kliuchy Petrovy* (lit. ‘Peter’s keys’). It was believed that using these keys St. Peter or St. Yuri “opens the earth” (i.e. brings about the beginning of spring and of agricultural work).

Besides determining the beginning of annual festivities, this star cluster was used to determine the time. In bygone days when the spinning of yarn continued

almost until morning, it was said that “*Velisazhar* is already in the south – it is time to sleep” (Matskevich 1979, p.272) or “*Velisazhar* is already in the south – it is time to go to thresh” (Kas’piarovich 1927, p.56). In some regions it is said: “*Volosozhary* shows the coming rain” (Poleskii Arkhiv) or “If *Volosozhar* goes low, the autumn will be rainy; if it goes high, then autumn will be dry” (ibid.). The Christian Slavonic astronyms of the Pleiades (*Vlasozhelets*) and Orion (*Prakhodnia*) also appear in the Bible printed by the famous Belarussian pioneer printer *Frantsisk Skaryna* in the year 1517 (Book of Job 38:31-32, 9:9).

15. **Polaris** – *Gvozd* (‘a nail’) (Avin 2007, p. 100), *Zorny Kol* (‘a star pole’) (Karatkevich 1990:7), *gwiazda polnochna* (Gladyszowa 1960, p. 62), *polunochna zora* (Moszynski 1928, p.156) (lit. ‘a midnight star’), *Stazhar* (Min’ko 1993, p.104).

- *Stazhar*. It was believed that the Milky Way was a pole (in the sense of a post or pillar) with the star *Stazhar* on the top of it.
- *Gvozd* (‘a nail’). The name of *Gvozd* can be found in the tale *Neba i Pekla* (‘Heaven and Hell’): “He has hammered a nail in the sky, lit a fire, and laid down and is smoking his pipe” (Serzhputouski 1911, p.1).

The knowledge of the star’s permanent location in the sky allowed a person to get his bearings on the ground.

16. **Ursa Major** – *Voz* (‘a cart’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Voz faraonski* (‘a Pharaoh’s cart’) (Gladyszowa 1960, p.55), *Illyouo voz* (‘Elias’s cart’) (Kas’piarovich 1927, p.145), *Vialiki voz* (‘a large cart’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Kon’s vazom* (‘a horse and cart’) (Avin 2006, p.326), *Kon’ i Kaliosy* (‘a horse and wheels’) (Biryly 1994, p.25), *Koni* (‘horses’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Pavozachka Aliashova* (‘a small cart of Elias’) (Matskevich 1979, p.282), *Kaliasnitsa* (‘a chariot’) (ibid. p.387), *Kareta* (‘a carriage’) (ibid. p.429), *Kaliaska* (‘a carriage’) (ibid. p.386), *Brychka sv. Iakuba* (‘a britzka of St. Jacob’) (Gladyszowa 1960, p.55), *Brychka* (‘britzka is a cart similar to a tilbury’) (Avin 2006, p.2), *Buda* (Sanko 2004, p.233), *Grazhulia Koly* (Matskevich 1979, p.474), *Kaliosy* (‘wheels’) (Biryly 1994, p.25), *Bal’shyia Kaliosy* (‘big wheels’) (ibid. p.25), *Kish* (Avin 2006, p.77), *Randelechak* (Biryly 1994, p.25), *Palojnik* (ibid. p.25), *Apalonychak* (Matskevich 1979, p.84), *Koushyk* (‘a ladle’) (ibid. p.509), *Karets* (Pietkiewicz 1938, p.8), *Chasha* (‘a cup’) (Narodnae 1976, p.56), *Sitso* (‘a sieve’) (Avin 2007, p.100), *Stazhar’e* (ibid.), *Sahachy* (Lastouski 1924, p.814), *Viadmedzitsa* (‘a she-bear’) (Matskevich 1979, p.385), *Majsash* (Bir-

ly 1994, p.25), *Piiasash* (Biryly 1994, p.25), *Paprytsa* (Biryly 1994, 25) (all are α , β , γ , δ , ϵ , ζ , η UMa).

- *Voz* ('a cart'). Most of these names were given to the constellation because of its obvious resemblance to a cart or a ladle. A cart was also called a *koliosa*, *buda*, or *britzka* and a ladle a *palojnik*, *apalonichak* or *karets*. This explains the origin of the names. St. Ilia (Aliash) rides in this cart in the sky, the souls of the deceased are carried in this cart along the sky road to *tot svet* ('the other world'). There also exists a belief that before the end of the world the anti-Christ himself will ride in this cart and seduce righteous people so that they forget God. While describing the constellation it is said that the cart is harnessed with a horse or bears, and that it has a broken beam (ϵ , ζ , η UMa). Biblical Egyptians were sometimes called *Pharaohs* and it was believed that they were half-human and (the lower half) half-fish.
- *Stazhar'e*. The name *Stazhar'e*, which means a support pole in the centre of a haystack, possibly arises from a comparison between the sky full of stars and a field full of ears of corn. Cf. the folk-riddle: "Lay the road, scatter the peas, and lay down a hunk of bread" or "The field is not measured, the sheep are not counted, and the shepherd is horned" (answer to the riddle: the sky, stars and the Moon).
- *Sahachy* ('a moose'). *Sahachy* was the name for a moose. Generally the name *Los'* ('a moose') (Sreznevskii 1893, p.295) and the name *Baby* ('old women') are very old and can be found in the fifteenth-century "*Hozhdenie za tri moria*" ("A journey beyond three seas") by Afanasiy Nikitin.

The position of the constellation in the sky allowed people to determine the time of night: "From the north a cart walks over to the south – morning is near" (Matskevich 1979, p.323).

The name *Kolesnitsa* can also be found in magic spells: "standing under a serene sky, at a clear dawn, facing the fine stars, in front of the hot sun and lucid moon and heavenly *kolesnitsa* ('a chariot')".

17. **Ursa Minor** – *Karomisla* ('a yoke') (Matskevich 1979, p.422), *Vyshezar* (Rut 1987, p.22), *Stozhar'e* (ibid.), *Maly vos* ('a small cart') (Matskevich 1979, p.27), *Kurochka?* ('a small hen') (Avinin 2006, p.328) (all are β , γ , δ , ϵ , ζ , η UMi). It must be said that some of these names (e.g. *Kurochka*, *Stozhar'e*) may not relate to this constellation. The main reason for this is probably that the people who lived in the villages at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries had typically completed a few educational classes

but frequently confused the Pleiades and Ursa Minor, leading researchers collecting such material to associate the names with the wrong constellations.

Some constellation and star names do not correspond to known ones: thus *Karomysly* ('yokes', pl.) (Dobrovol'skii 1914, p.346), *Metla* ('a broom') - "stars were scattered" probably referred to a comet (ibid. p.23, *Grob* ('a coffin') (ibid. p.145); *Kaza* ('a she-goat') was most likely Capella (α Aur) (Avinin 2006, p.328); *Shesternia* ('six stars') (Dobrovol'skii 1914, p.999), "there (near "Orion's belt") walks one star which is a sister of *Kosari* ('mowers') to tell them that her step-mother wants to beat her up" (Avinin 2006, p.328); *Liaska Jakuba*⁸ ('Jacob's staff') (Avinin 2007, p.100); *Bal'shoe Sita* ('a big sieve') (ibid.); the star *Miadvedzitsa* ('bear') (ibid.); *Vuzh* ('a grass-snake') (Polesskii Arkhiv); and *Vadaliv* ('If the *Vadaliv* star appears, people stay opposite it and throw a boot over a fence'. This record was collected by Ganna Sharenda).

In this article we have made one of the first attempts to present the majority of astrononyms known from the literature and collected by local historians. This material may be useful in the comparative analysis of Baltic and Slavonic astrononyms and in educational programs as an excellent example of preserved 'oral history'. The author wishes to emphasize that most of the data presented here were collected during the last decade. This shows that it is still possible to record archaic pagan beliefs continuing to exist today in the region of Belarus.

References

- AFANASEV, A., 1994 (reprint 1865). *Poeticheskie vozzreniia slavian na prirodu*, 1. Moskva: Indrik.
- AVILIN, T.V., 2006. Belarusskaia NM astronomiia. In: *Istoriko-astronomicheskie issledovaniia* (Studies in the History of Astronomy), 31. Moskva: Nauka, 314-322.
- AVILIN, T.V., 2007. Belarusskaia NM astronimiia u suchasnykh zapisah. In: *Romanovskie chteniia-III: sb. trudov Mezhdunarodnoi nauch. konferentsii*. Mogilev: MGU, 100-102.
- BAHANKOVA, A.YA., ed., 1976. *Narodnae slova*. Minsk: Navuka i tehnika.
- BIRYLY, M.V., MATSKEVICH, YU.F., ed., 1994. *Leksichny atlas belaruskikh narodnykh gavorak*. Minsk: Minskaia kartagrafichnaia fabryka.
- DOBROVOL'SKIY, V.N., 1914. *Smolenskii oblastnoj slovar*. Smolensk: tip P.A. Silina.
- FEDEROWSKI, M., 1897. *Lud bialoruski na Rusi Litewskiej*, 1. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Komisji Antropologicznej Akademii Umiejtnosci w Krakowie.
- GLADYSZOWA, M., 1960. *Wiedza ludowa o gwiazdach*. Wroclaw: wyd. Polskiej Akademii Nauk.

⁸ This astrononym is most probably Orion's belt. Cf., for example, the Polish names *Jakubowa policzka*, *laska* or *kosztur Jakuba*.

- GRYNBLAT, M.YA., GURSKI, A.I., ed., 2005. *Legendy i padanni*. Minsk.
- KARATKEVICH, U., 1990. *Hrystos pryziamlusia u Garodniu. Zbor tvorau u 8t*, 6. Minsk.
- KARLOWICZ, J., KRYNSKI, A., NIEDZWIEDZKI, WL., eds., 1902. *Słownik języka polskiego*, 3. Warszawa: dr. "Gazeta Handlowaja".
- KARLOWICZ, J., KRYNSKI, A., NIEDZWIEDZKI, WL., eds., 1906. *Słownik języka polskiego*, 6. Warszawa: dr. "Gazeta Handlowaja".
- KATSAR, M. S., 1996. *Belaruskii arnament. Tkactva. Iŭshyuka*. Minsk.
- KASPYAROVICH, M.I., 1927. *Vitsebski krayovy slounik*. Vitsebsk: Zaria zapada.
- KRASNEVICH, A., 1926. Kryvichanskiia nazovy gviozd. *Kryvich. Mesiachnik lit., kul'tury i gramad. zhytstsia*. Studzen-cherven №11(1), 112, Kaunas.
- KRYVITSKI, A.A., TSYHUN, G.A., YASHKIN, I.YA., eds., 1987. *Turauski slounik*, 1. Minsk: Navuka i tehnika.
- KUNTSEVICH, L.P., YASHKIN, I.YA., ed., 2001. *Zhyvoe nasha slova: Dyialektal. zb.* Minsk: Bel. Navuka.
- LASTOUSKI, V., 1924. *Padruchny rasijska-kryuski (belaruskii) slounik*. Kouna: Druk. A. Baka.
- MATSKEVICH, IU.F., GRYNVETSKEIENE, E., RAMANOVICH, IA. M., eds. 1979. *Slounik belaruskich gavorak Paunochna-Zahodniaj Belarusi i iae pagranichcha*, 1. Minsk: vyd. Navuka i tehnika.
- MINKO, L.I., 1993. *Narodnyia vedy. Gramadski byt i kultura selskaga naselmitstva Belarusi*. Minsk: Navuka i tehnika.
- MOSZYNSKI, K., 1928. *Polesie wschodnie*. Warszawa: kasa im. Mianowskiego.
- NEKRASHEVICH, S.M., BAIKOU, M.YA., 1928. *Rasijska-belaruskii slounik*. Minsk: Dziarzhvyd. BSSR.
- NM, 2003 - *Narodnaia mifalogiia Gomel shchynny: fal'klorna-etnagrafichny zbornik*. Minsk: LMF „Ninom”.
- NOSOVICH, I. I., 1870. *Slovar belorusskogo narechiia*. SPb.
- PIETKIEWICZ, CZ., 1938. *Kultura duchowa Polesia Rzezyckiego*. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe warszawskie.
- POLESSKII ARKHIV – digital archive of the Institut Slavianovedenia RAN. Moscow.
- RUT, M. E., 1987. *Russkaia narodnaia astronomiia*. Sverdlovsk: UrGU.
- SAHAROV, I.P., 1990. *Skazaniia russkago naroda: Narodnyi kalendar'*. Moskva: Sov. Rossiia.
- SANKO, S., VALODZINA, T., VASILEVICH, U., ed., 2004. *Belaruskaiia mifalogiia: Entsyklaped. Slounik*. Minsk: Belarus.
- SERZHPUTOUSKI, A.K., 1930. *Prymhi i zababony belarusau-paleshukou*. Minsk.
- SERZHPUTOUSKI, A. K., 1911. *Skazki i razskazy belorussov*. Minsk.
- SREZNEVSKII, I.I., 1893 (reprint 1989). *Materyaly dlia slovaria drevne-russkogo iazyka*, 1. SPb.
- VAIŠKŪNAS, J., 1989. *Liaudies astronominių žinių klausimynas*. Vilnius: Lietuvos kraštotyros draugija.

Received: 1 November 2007; Revised: 30 May 2008

ASTRONOMIJA GUDŲ LAUDIES TIKĖJIMUOSE

Tsimafei Avilin

Santrauka

Gausioje gudų žodinėje liaudies kūryboje (dainose, mįslėse, liaudies pasakose ir kt.) iš dangaus šviesulių dažniausiai minimi: Saulė, Mėnulis, Venera ir žvaigždės (kartais Sietynas). Dangaus šviesuliai dažnai yra personifikuojami: Mėnulis ir Saulė yra brolis ir sesuo, Venera yra Mėnulio žmona, o žvaigždės – Mėnulio vaikai.

Liaudies tikėjimams apie žvaigždes dažniausiai būdingi du archajiniai motyvai – žvaigždė yra žmogaus siela ar gyva dvasia; vėlesniuose krikščioniškuose tikėjimuose žvaigždės yra: angelai, angelų buveinės arba tiesiog – žvakutės. Tikėta, kad susispietusios žvaigždės yra šeimos, žvaigždžių šviesis atitinka žmogaus socialinį statusą, mentalinį lygmenį, amžių.

Straipsnyje bene pirmą kartą apžvelgiama gudų liaudiškų dangaus šviesulių vardų visuma ir su jais susiję tikėjimai. Remiamasi tautosakiniais-etnografiniais XIX–XX a. duomenimis bei medžiaga, surinkta paties autoriaus per paskutinį dešimtmetį.

Vertė Jonas Vaiškūnas, Algirdas Girininkas