

MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM IN MODERN RUSSIAN PAGANISM

The worldview of modern Russian pagans is based on the combination of monotheism and polytheism. The gods are considered emanations of the one God, manifestations of his various components. Modern Russian pagans believe that the world is unknowable for subjective human perception. This worldview concept is a manifestation of Plato's idealism in the modern world.

The formation of such a concept is facilitated by the presence of a single Creator Deity, who created the world, in the Slavic pagan pantheon (Rod or Svarog). Folkloric texts, such as "The Verse about the Book of the Dove" and the "Symbol of the World Tree" also provide examples that support the concept that unites monotheism and polytheism. Combining mono- and polytheism is a key component of the ideological structure of modern paganism. It determines other parameters, such as religious tolerance, the attitude towards dynamism and modernization of tradition, the syncretism of some pagans' worldview, the desire to comprehend the world (including through direct knowledge), interest in omens and reading signs, and the formation of specific symbols. The article is based on field research conducted in 2023–2024. During the study, the author conducted 35 individual and group semi-standardized in-depth interviews with pagans and attended various events related to paganism (primarily calendar rituals). Additionally, he explored neo-pagan literature, publications from specialized media, and social networks.

Keywords: neo-paganism, monotheism, polytheism, idealism, Plato

Author Info: Gromov Dmitry V. — Doctor of History, Leading Researcher, the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow, Russian Federation). E-mail: gromovdv@mail.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0443-8718>

For Citation: Gromov, D. V. 2025. Monotheism and Polytheism in Modern Russian Paganism. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 3: 245–258.

Funding: This research was carried out as part of the project «Neopaganism in the Russian Federation» within the Scientific Research Program on the Ethnocultural Diversity of Russian Society, aimed at strengthening Russian identity, 2023–2025.

References

- America's Changing Religious Landscape // Pew Research Center. May 12, 2015. P. 159. RLS-08-26-full-report.pdf
- Averintsev, S. S. (ed.). 1995. *Khristianstvo: entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* [Christianity: Encyclopedic Dictionary]. V. 3. Moscow: Bol'shaia rossiiskaia entsiklopediia. 781 p.
- Beskov, A. A. 2014. Paradoksy russkogo neoiazychestva [Paradoxes of Russian Neo-Paganism]. *Colloquium heptaplomeres: nauchnyi al'manakh*. N. Novgorod: NGPU. 1: 11–23.
- Gaidukov, A. V. 2000. *Ideologiya i praktika slavianskogo neoiazychestva* [Ideology and Practice of

- Slavic Neo-Paganism]. Ph.D. diss., A. I. Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. 165 p.
- Gappasova, A. G., and T. M. Sadykova. 2018. *Religiovedenie: uchebnoe posobie* [Religious Studies: A Tutorial]. Astana: Izdatel'stvo KATU. 140 p.
- Kutarev O. V. 2017. «Soiuz Venedov»: istoriia i vozzreniia slavianskoi neoiazycheskoi obshchiny (1990–2017) [“Union of Veneds”: History and Views of the Slavic Neopagan Community (1990–2017)]. *Colloquium heptaplomeres: nauchnyi al'manakh* 4: 66–72.
- Kutarev, O. V. 2013. Kharakteristika Roda i Rozhanits v slavianskoi mifologii: interpretatsii B. A. Rybakova i ego predshestvennikov [Characteristics of Rod and Rozhanitsy in Slavic Mythology: Interpretations by B. A. Rybakov and His Predecessors]. *Religiovedenie*. 4: 170–177.
- Lemesheva, Ye. M. 2014. *Neoiazycheskie soobshchestva v sovremennom rossiiskom obshchestve: sotsiologicheskii analiz* [Neopagan Communities in Modern Russian Society: A Sociological Analysis]. Ph.D. diss. abstract, Ogarev Mordovia State University.
- Losev, A. F. 1993. *Ocherki antichnogo simvolizma i mifologii* [Essays on Ancient Symbolism and Mythology]. Moscow: Mysl'. 959 p.
- Nemirovskaiia, L. Z. 2010. *Religiovedenie. Istoriia religii: Uchebnoye posobiie* [Religious Studies. History of Religion: Study Guide]. Moscow: RosNOU. 368 p.
- Neo-paganism. 2006. *Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions*, ed. by W. Doniger. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Incorporated. 794–795.
- Pike, S. M. 2001. *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community*. Los Angeles; London: University of California Press. 314 p.
- Rybakov, B. A. 1994. *Yazychestvo drevnikh slavian* [Paganism of the Ancient Slavs]. Moscow: Nauka. 607 p.
- Shizhenskiy, R. V. 2014. Kontsept yazycheskoi remifologizatsii (na primere «Znamenii» obshchiny N. N. Speranskogo) [The Concept of Pagan Remythologization (Based on the “Signs” of N. N. Speransky's Community)]. *Colloquium heptaplomeres: nauchnyi al'manakh* 1: 96–100.
- Shizhenskiy, R. V. 2024. *Sovremennoye russkoye yazychestvo: religiovedcheskaia kontseptualizatsiia* [Modern Russian Paganism: Religious Studies Conceptualization]. Ph.D. diss., Minin University. 513 p.
- Smul'skiy, E. V. 2014. K razvitiuu voprosa o poniatii «Neoiazychestvo» [On the Development of the Question of the Concept of “Neo-Paganism”]. *Colloquium heptaplomeres: nauchnyi al'manakh* 1: 24–33.
- Zubov, A. B. 1997. *Istoriia religii. Kniga pervaiia: Doistoricheskie i vne istoricheskie religii. Kurs lektsii* [History of Religions. Book 1: Prehistoric and Extra-Historical Religions. Lecture Course]. Moscow: Planeta detei. 344 p.