Conclusion

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This work tried to bring an interpretation of certain Indo-European /IE/ mytho-logical topics within their complex context. Especially historical (macro-contextual) and socio-cognitive (mezzo-contextual) aspects of their background were taken into consideration. Archaeology, linguistics and historical, as well as socio-anthropological concepts and theories (wörter und sachen, ethnogenesis theory, a concept of the Big Man System, Cargo Cult analysis) were applied to model contextual aspects of analysed myths.

By means of this approach, it was possible to propose an innovative interpretation of an otherwise traditional mythological theme as well as to introduce a new one.

In the first interpretative part of the book, the topic of the well-known IE creation myth was discussed. First, in order to model its mezzo-contextual background, an attempt was made to reconstruct certain features of the original IE social organisation.

It was argued that ancient IE societies were probably organised along the principles of the Big Man System. The political power was in the hands of those single males, who were able to distribute resources among their followers in exchange for their support and service. As a supreme leader, the Big Man represented both sacral and worldly authority, operating as the priest-king.

Further, it was argued that the anthropological concept of the Big Man System seems to be compatible with the ethnogenesis theory produced by historical science. Ethnogenesis theory claims that historical "ethnic" groups of ancient and medieval Eurasia should be seen as hierarchal political units, so-called Gentes, gathered around the dynastically imposed leader and the core of his followers. The presence and the name of the leader and his followers (war band) were the

main elements responsible for the formation of Gens' group identity. Focusing on some anthropologically acceptable moments of ethnogenesis theory, it seems to be compatible with the concept of the Big Man System. Combined, they were chosen to be a tool to model the social body of ancient IE groups.

As for the modeling of macro-contextual processes behind IE creation myth, the well-received ideas concerning the formation of IE Urheimat proposed by David Anthony were applied. Anthony theorized that in the very beginning there was contact between two essentially different cultural systems. At the end of the 6th millennium BCE on the western border of the Pontic-Caspian steppes, semi-nomadic steppe hunters came into contact with a civilization of settled farmers of Afro-Asian /AA/ origin.

Pre-Proto-Indo-European /PPIE/ hunters accepted rather unwillingly agricultural technologies brought by the new neighbours. Moreover, even if they did so, over several generations they did not consume the fruits of their imitation as their daily diet.

The area of Dnieper Rapids was of key importance in this regard. Since the last Ice Age, it was inhabited by culturally unique hunters living in permanent densely populated settlements. They showed an increased level of military activity, differentiation of social status and the unusual habit of building permanent intergenerational graveyards. These hunters also started to practice stockbreeding; however, not as a source of daily food for generations. They used cattle only in sacrificial communal feasting associated with burial ceremonies of the new elite, whose appearance corresponds only with the emergence of stockbreeding. Another important moment was that this innovative culture of richly equipped Big Men, of sacral stockbreeding and permanent graveyards started to spread into all the other steppe areas as a cultural complex.

It was argued that this process shows many features of so-called Cargo Cults.

Cargo Cults were documented during the last centuries in several world locations, but mostly in the southern Pacific area in the second half of the 20th century. They became famous as quasi-religious movements organized by native communities in order to adore and obtain the products of western industrial economies; for instance, ritual operation of dummy bamboo airports in order to receive the dispatch of western cargo magically.

However, further research showed that Cargo Cults are rather a complex phenomenon. They can be defined as a revitalising social movement which emerges in societies affected by a crisis. Not only external, but also internal factors can be the cause of the crisis. The arrival of a superior cultural system is one of the possible triggering factors of external nature. Provided there is a sufficient measure of mutual similarity between both interacting systems (social norms, economic strategies, etc.), cognitive dissonance caused by "ontological shock" from the presence of a superior system arises among the members of an inferior culture. Its

society starts collapsing. Among its ruins a cluster of innovators is formed. They try to find a solution to the crisis, appropriate measures to become equal to their superior challengers. Since the imitation of successful behaviour is a basic adaptive strategy of anatomically modern humans in general, imitation of practices of a superior cultural system is often among the proposed solutions. Due to the existence of certain communication barriers as well as the association of crisis situation with the question of inferiority and superiority, imitated behaviour acquires shifted semantics, often with added status-marking and religious meaning.

As for the case of ancient PPIE Pontic-Caspian steppes, it was argued that the arrival of the advanced farming civilization probably caused a similar social crisis within the hunters' communities. At least in certain steppe areas; on the eastern borders as it was the place of direct contact and in the Dnieper Rapids, i.e., among the unique groups of socially advanced status-sensitive hunters. Here the integrity of the hunters' cultural system, naturally built around the cult of hunted animals, was weakened by the arrival of the Lords of the Animals; strangers controlling animals to even higher efficiency than hunters' shamans or supernatural agents. Moreover, the superiority of farmers was obvious in general; they had a number of unknown technologies (house building, stockbreeding, orcharding, copper metallurgy, etc.), and an abundance of food. It is then highly likely that hunters considered their new neighbours, with whom they shared the sence for ritual and hierarchy, alike and successful people worth imitating. Thus, clusters of innovators, a new elite of revitalized society, emerged among hunters, imitating farmers' technologies and behaviour with shifted (status marking, ritual, sacral) meaning. It came to the imitation of feasting pottery, sacral stockbreeding, etc. Through the practice of sacral stockbreeding hunters successfully demonstrated that they were equal to the strangers, they also would be able to become Lords of the Animals.

Nevertheless, here also ends the resemblance of this unique PPIE social development to modern Cargo Cults, as these recent examples were usually short-lived and socially unsuccessful in the end. But not so the Cargo Cult development in the PPIE steppes; due to favourable ecological conditions new Pontic-Caspian herders practiced stockbreeding to even higher efficiency than their original teachers. Because of the economic success of Cargo Cult practices, it can be assumed, and archaeological evidence seems to support this assumption, that an innovative cultural system was preserved, spread and finally gained a position of official culture throughout the entire steppe region. This process can help to explain the formation of PIE homeland as a culturally homogeneous (and more or less unique) area.

The conclusion about the Cargo Cult origin of the PIE cultural area leads to the reconsideration of the traditional PIE creation myth's interpretation. Traditionally it tells the story of three cultural heroes; twin brothers with reconstructed labels

*Manu- ('Human'), *Ịemo- ('Twin') and *(S)Th₂eựr ('bull'). *Manu- sacrifices both of them; from his brother's body the world and society are created while from the bull's body domesticated fauna and flora originate. The pair of mythical brothers was interpreted as a reflection of personal divisions of power in PIE society between priest and king.

As for the reassessment of this concept, there exist more reasons to come up with a different interpretation.

First, the twin myth is culturally universal and is typical for elementary communities. Its popularity is probably rooted in the fact that it is an ideal manifestation of binary structural patterns, through which the human mind organises the perceived universe. In documented Cargo Cults innovated traditional twin myths often explained the causes of inequality between aboriginal and western societies; because of a primordial mistake of one of the brothers, ancestor of aborigines, they are now inferior to westerners, whose ancestor, the latter of the twin brothers, did not make the mistake. Thus, the very internal structure of the PIE creation myth makes it a hot candidate for considering its Cargo Cult origin and hence interpretation.

Second, there is a need to reconsider interpretation of the IE mythological texts themselves. Reading them consistently, supposed mythological successors of *Ịemo- the King are not the typical or ideal kings at all; they are monsters, giants or unworthy wicked rulers. It refers to a rather negatively perceived entity. Also, the assumption about the division of power between the priest and king in PIE society is hardly sustainable. Archaeology, anthropology as well as linguistics suggest that the PIE ruler was rather a Big Man, an entity personally unifying religious and worldly power.

Therefore, the original semantics of IE cosmogonic myth could be reinterpreted as a relic of Cargo Cult ideology. Perhaps in one of its earlier stages it represented a certain kind of cargo myth, a narrative compensating for hunters' inferiority to farmers. It discussed the origin of superior foreigner technology, the reasons of cultural inequality as well as the possible solution to this problem. Here the negative character of Proto-*Ịemo- could emerge; a representative of farmers and/or hunters' obsolete shamanic elites, depicted as an alien monster and/or unworthy ruler. Its counterpart was realised through the positive figure of Proto-*Manu-; a representative of hunters and their innovative leaders who ostentatiously defeats (through physical, perhaps ritual elimination) the alien monster and unworthy ruler.

One of the most characteristic motifs of the IE creation myth, the *destruction of the body* theme, is the hottest candidate to be nominated the Cargo Cult heritage. According to Mary Douglas, the concept of physical denial of the human body is typical for society in crisis, as a symbolic expression of rejection of its "social body", i.e. traditional social system and its institutions. Brutal expression of this idea in IE sociogony, butchering of the body explicitly connected with former as

well as future society, suggests that PIE social reality truly could rise from a system stricken by serious internal crisis, perhaps Cargo Cult in its nature.

Later on, when the story became the central ontological narrative of stabilised and stratified PIE Big Man System society, where all the Cargo Cult past was forgotten, its text changed accordingly. It focused on the problem of hierarchy and its legitimisation. Older Cargo Cult folklore motives, if still circulating in tradition, were detached from its original context and meaning. So, they worked only as motivic background to a different, current hierarchy theme. The story of priest-king *Manu-, human par excellence, who created a stratified society, was composed. As the matter of creation, his traditional adversary and all the associated older folklore structures were used; the twin brother, slaughtered unworthy ruler as well as semantically emptied (deprived of its original Cargo Cult crisis ideology) theme of the destruction of the body.

In the second interpretative part of the book an attempt was made to introduce the new IE mythological matter, the so-called witch-hunting myth. Again, as a prerequisite for further analysis, first the possible mezzo-contextual background of this theme was discussed.

It was argued that ancient IE elites probably adopted the dualistic worldview, dividing their world along *us and them / good and evil* principle. They considered the witch to be the representative of *evil them*, an archenemy, someone who pretends to be an insider but hides the perverted nature of the outside world. Especially foreigners, participants of different religious cults and women were the hottest candidates for a witch.

Women were seen as potential witches not only because of the traditionally masculine worldview of archaic male-centered societies. They were pushed into this role, and especially elite women, by the very principles of the Big Man System. Here women were excluded from the androcentric world of official and formal patron-client networks. To obtain at least a certain level of political influence they were forced to operate unofficially, via the non-formal shadow networks built either of other females of the elite environment or less successful men yearning for social climbing. In folklore this hidden subversive effort was stereotyped as the matter of unknown and alternative (sorcerous) powers of a witch.

Along with this sort of horizontal social dualism (us vs. witches,) the Big Man System also produced some vertical social dualism (elite vs. commoners). Its pragmatic society obsessed by success was necessarily divided into the cream of flourishing noble warriors and the masses of losing undifferentiated commoners. This dual structure was a constant source of possible social tensions. Namely, masses were often disengaged and disintegrated due to the oppression of elites, the merciless world of formality these elites built and maintained. Therefore, commoners were prone to rebellions emphasizing non-formalism; the inner experience, alternative spirituality, all-embracing unity, etc.

It can be expected that these two sorts of dualisms would easily get into mutual harmony (elite vs. commoners' witches) and, what is more, in the worldviews of both sides simultaneously. From the elite viewpoint, with their ritually and formally based identity, masses tending to rebellions and principles of witchcraft's informality deserve to become the object of a witch-cleansing crusade. Conversely, disintegrated masses felt their right to act against oppressors, to rise up and support alternative power structures and ideas of witches amongst them.

This complicated context probably formed the text of analysed witch-hunting myths. Its basic pattern was recurrently identified in ancient, medieval as well as modern folklore sources of IE traditions; masculine elite, often represented by an ideal hero, fights and defeats the witch associated with marginalized ideological (dark magic, necromancy, magical healing, paganism) and social (commoners, serves, women) entities. Particularly the motif of the witch's resurrection is the most significant realization of her alternative non-formal power and nature.

In accordance with the witch-cleansing ideology of general communal purification, the conflict is often depicted as a long, bloody and all-embracing war. Thus, even though the narrative naturally stands on the side of rulers, its significance for the entire society often leads to the conflict's conciliatory end. However, the story's "happy end" perhaps mirrors also the social reality itself; the point is in everyday cooperative life between both sides, even though in mutual tension, not the final victory of one of them.

This socially rich inference potential probably caused the folklore sustainability of the narrative, its synchronic as well as diachronic persistence and thus the frequent occurrence in IE traditions. Since the Big Man elites probably formed the backbone of IE societies from the (P)PIE beginnings, in their world the witch-hunting story on the military conflict between the priest-king and the witch-queen was always significant. Nevertheless, the dualistic *us and them* pattern of thinking is often typical also for the local reasoning of egalitarian, rather non-specialized populations. Thus, since the early PIE period there can be assumed a sufficient number of opportunities, favourable circumstances across all the strata or local types of IE communities, imposing the sufficient pressure to create and continually maintain the folklore narratives concerning the theme of the witch hunt.

It can also be concluded that the overall nature of witch-hunting myth depended on its current context. In variants circulating within the elite environment, the political aspects are emphasized; evil is associated with a foreign cult, social disorder, rebellion. The witch is the enemy of the state. In a non-specialized environment of a commoner, agricultural aspects are focused on; evil is represented as agricultural infertility and the witch as the enemy of nature. Contra-feminine content could be well preserved regardless of the specific environment due to the masculine tendencies in the worldview of conservative archaic societies in general.