

EDVARD ZAIKOUSKI (Belarus)

HOW MANY RADOGOŠČES WERE THERE, OR THE MOST POPULAR TYPES OF SLAVONIC SANCTUARIES

Very few Slavonic pagan sanctuaries are mentioned in early medieval written sources. Radogošč (Rethra), which was situated in the territory of the tribal union of the Lutizens, remains one of the best-researched monuments of worship of the 11th–12th century.

Thietmar von Merseburg writes in his chronicle in about 1018:

In the land of Redars there is a triangular stronghold with three entrance gates, called Riedegost, surrounded with a great forest untrodden by the natives and worshiped as sacred. Two gates are open to all that want to enter, the third one, facing the east, is the smallest and opens onto a path leading to a nearby lake, which looks very frightful. In the stronghold there is nothing but a temple built skilfully of wood on a foundation of wild animals' horns. Its exterior is decorated with effigies of gods and goddesses carved in an amazing way, as can be noticed from a close distance. Inside there are man-made idols, wearing terrifying helmets and cuirasses, and each has a name engraved. The first of them is called Zuarasici (Svarožic) and is especially worshipped by all pagans. In the temple there are also standards, which are never taken out, unless they are needed for a war campaign, and then the infantry carries them. The natives have chosen priests to take care of the temple with due solicitude. When they gather there to make oblations or conciliate the gods, only the priests sit, while others have to stand. Murmuring secretly, they shakily dig in the ground in turns, in order to decide doubtful matters by casting lots. Having finished the divination, they cover the lots with green sod, thrust two spearheads crosswise into the ground and lead a horse over them with great reverence, as this is the supreme animal for them and is sacred. After the lot-casting, which was the first divination, they tell fate again using the divine animal. If both rituals give the same result, they act according to it,

if not, they abandon the enterprise entirely. From ancient times, when many false and erroneous stories were spread, comes a testimony that whenever a calamity of long civil war hangs over them, a big boar with foam on his tusks emerges from the above-mentioned lake and wallows in a puddle with great satisfaction in front of everybody, causing terrible tremors. The country has as many temples as districts and the same number of idols are worshipped by the pagans, but among them the mentioned stronghold has primacy. When they set out to war, they always salute it, and when they come back after a victory, they honour it with due gifts. By casting lots and by the horse, as described above, they eagerly inquire what should be offered to the gods. They appease the silent anger of the gods by sacrificing people and cattle. All of them, collectively called the Lutizens, have no single ruler. A decision on a necessary matter is considered at a general meeting. After that, everyone must give their consent to its execution (Гаврилов, 2006, 57–60; Kronika Thietmara 1953, 344–348).

In about 1066, Adam of Bremen writes about the Lutizens in his book “Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church”:

In the middle there are the Redars, who are the most powerful among them. Their town is Rethra, the famous centre of idolatry. A large temple has been built there for demons, among which Redigast is the first. His effigy is made of gold; a purple bed is prepared for him. The stronghold itself has nine gates; it is surrounded by a deep lake, over which one can pass by means of a wooden bridge, but passage is allowed only to those who bring offerings or come for divination. The temple is said to be four days travel from Hamburg (Labuda, 1999, 173).

A century later another chronicler, Helmold of Bosau, repeats the above-mentioned description of the Radogošč temple in his *Chronica Slavorum*, explaining the causes of an internecine war within the union of the Lutizens in 1057: “For the Redars and the Tollenser wished to have dominion, because they possessed the ancient town and the famous temple, with the idol of Redigast in it, and they considered that this gave them a right to priority, since all the Slavonic nations visited it for receiving answers and yearly sacrifices” (Гельмольд, 1963, 73). However, two other Lutizen tribes – the Circipani and the Kissini – refused to obey, and defeated the Redars and the Tollenser in another war. Helmond also mentions that when a pagan uprising broke out in the tribal union of the Obotrites, a Christian prince Gottschalk was killed and

Bishop John, captured by the rebels, was first tortured, then his body was desecrated, and finally he was executed: "... his hands and feet were cut off, the body being thrown onto the road, and then he was beheaded, his head being offered as a sacrifice to their god Redigast as a sign of victory. All this took place in the Slavonic capital of Rethra on the fourth of the Ides of November [i.e. on 10 November]" (*Гельмольд*, 1963, 76–77).

According to *Annales Augustiani*, in the winter in late 1068 "Burchard, the Bishop of Halberstadt, attacked, devastated and burned the territories of the Lutizens. He captured the horse worshipped in Rethra as a god, and returned to Saxony on its back." Although several historians believe that Radogošč was destroyed during the campaign, it should be observed that *Annales Augustiani*, and likewise a number of other sources, do not mention that the sacred horse worshipped in Rethra was captured at the time of such an attack. Instead, it may have been seized on a battlefield. Even if Radogošč was destroyed, the war did not result in the loss of the Lutizens' independence, and the temple must have been reconstructed. The latest plausible reference to Radogošč dates from 1128, when Lothair of Supplinburg took the field against the Lutizens, as reported by Ebbo, and a nameless 'town with a temple' was destroyed. However, it is quite possible that the chronicle refers to a different place (*Stupecki*, 1994, 56–57).

Thus, the primary sources mention as many as three forms of the name of the sacred town of the Lutizens: *Riedegost*, *Rethra* and *Reda*, together with two names of the god: *Redigast* and *Svarožič*. According to Thietmar, the town was situated in a stronghold by the water, while Adam of Bremen says that Rethra was surrounded by water and situated on an island that could be reached only via a wooden bridge. German archaeologist J. Herrmann assumed that the difference could be explained in terms of the events that took place during the internecine war of 1057 or those pertaining to the years 1068 and 1069. After the destruction of the old temple, which was situated on a lakeshore, a new one could have been constructed on an island – a place more suitable in terms of defence. At that time, a time of wars and turmoil, restricting the number of visitors to the temple had both religious and practical objectives. The nine gates mentioned by Adam of Bremen must have been invented by the chronicler as a literary convention. He may have associated them with the nine circles of Styx, as depicted by Virgil in the 'Aeneid', which he does quote in his work. Summarizing all the available data on Rethra-Radogošč, L. P. Slu-

pecki deduces that the temple was located in a stronghold on the western shore of a big lake, and may have been reconstructed on an island at about the mid-11th century. It was built of wood and its exteriors bore a resemblance to the temples of Gross-Raden and Arcona. There were several idols in the temple, the most important of which was called *Svarožič* (*Redigast*), whose main functions (according to Thietmar and Adam of Bremen) related to warfare and divination. Although *Svarožič* is associated with the cult of fire by other sources, the descriptions of Radogošč do not mention any sacred or oblatinal fire. The temple formed part of a complex that included the sacred forest (grove) and the sacred lake, the mythical habitat of the boar that foretold internecine wars. The temple of the stronghold was the place where people and cattle were sacrificed before and after military campaigns, as well as to appease the anger of the gods. In the case of human sacrifices, the main focus of the ritual was the human head. The scope of the rites remains vague; the only thing we know is that Bishop John was killed on 10 November, a few months after he was captured. Divinations dealing with war and peace were made with the help of a horse. The authority of Radogošč as a religious centre extended far beyond the four tribes of the Lutizen Union, covering all the territories limited by the Oder in the East and the territories of the Volhynians at its mouth, the Havel in the south, and the Elbe in the west (*Šlupecki*, 1994, 64–65).

Many historians have attempted to locate Radogošč, as described by Thietmar of Merseburg and Adam of Bremen, based on various assumptions. Archaeological excavation was not undertaken until the late 19th century. In the 1920s C. Schuchhard carried out an excavation outside Feldberg at the shore of Lake Grosse-Luzin, claiming he had discovered Radogošč. However, before the outbreak of the Second World War his interpretation of the excavated remains was put in doubt. Although an excavation carried out by J. Herrmann on the same location in 1967 resulted in the discovery of a pagan temple, it was dated to the 8th–9th century, i.e. earlier than Radogošč. In the past few decades, archaeologists have focused their attention on the surroundings of Lake Tollensee, since, according to the written sources, the Tollenser, alongside the Redars, were closely connected with Radogošč. In 1969, during an excavation on Fischerinsel in Lake Tollensee, two wooden idols were found; still, there were no signs of a temple. There were other attempts to interpret the monuments discovered here as a temple, but all of them turned out to be

unconvincing. In total, there are over 30 hypothetical locations of Radogošč, most of them situated in the state of Mecklenburg (*Stupecki*, 1994, 59, fig. 16).

Apart from Radogošč, described in a number of written sources of the 11th–12th century, but not identified as yet, there are six *Radegast* toponyms (which is how it should really be spelled in German) within the former territories of the Polabian Slavs. Three of them are situated in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (the former settlement area of the Lutizens and Obotrites). In the north-western part of the state there is a river called *Radegast* (Stepenitz), 24 km long, flowing into the Baltic Sea, with a settlement of the same name. Settlements or parts of settlements bearing the same name can be found in Saxony, Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt.

There are two similar settlements in Lower Austria: *Raabs*, not far from the Czech border (former Czech *Ratgoz*), and *Tradigist* (Slovenian *Radigost*). In the Czech Republic there are five names, including the mount of *Radhošť* in the Beskids in north-western Moravia and the settlements of *Radigošť*, *Radhošť* and *Redhošť*. There are eight similar toponyms in Poland: *Radogoszcz*, *Radgoszcz* and *Redgoszcz*, including a small river called the *Radogoszcz* in Lesser Poland, in the north-east of the country. There is a village on the river bearing the same name. In Belarus, outside the town of Navahrudak, Hrodna Voblast, there is a village named *Radahoshcha*, with the nearby remains of an ancient settlement of the 8th–10th century. There is also a village called *Rahadoshch* on the River Pina in Ivanava District, Brest Voblast, and a small river, a tributary of the Yaselda, in Brest Voblast, Belarus. In Ukraine, there are three villages (*Radohoshcha*, *Velyka Radohoschch* and *Mala Radohoshch*) in Khmelnytskyi and Zhytomyr Oblasts. In Russia, there are 13 *Radogošč* places, in the forms *Radogoshcha*, *Redogoshcha*, *Radogoshch*, *Radugoshchi*, *Radogach*, *Radugoshch* and *Radogoshcha* – both existing settlements and settlements known from written sources. They are located in Bryansk, Oryol, Tula, Kaluga, Tver, Novgorod and Leningrad Oblasts (*Васильев*, 2005; *Смолицкая*, 2006, 34; *Słownik geograficzny*, 1888, 381, 390–391). Five of them are situated in the basins of the Desna and the Volkhov, as well as in upper reaches of the Oka (Fig. 1).

Thus, it is possible to map 40 toponyms of the type under analysis. Comparing the locations of the names with the annalistic Slavonic tribal unions and the earlier archaeological cultures, the following pattern can be discerned. The *Radogošč* sites of the present East Slavonic territories are partially located in the former area of the Prague Culture and the territories of tribal unions

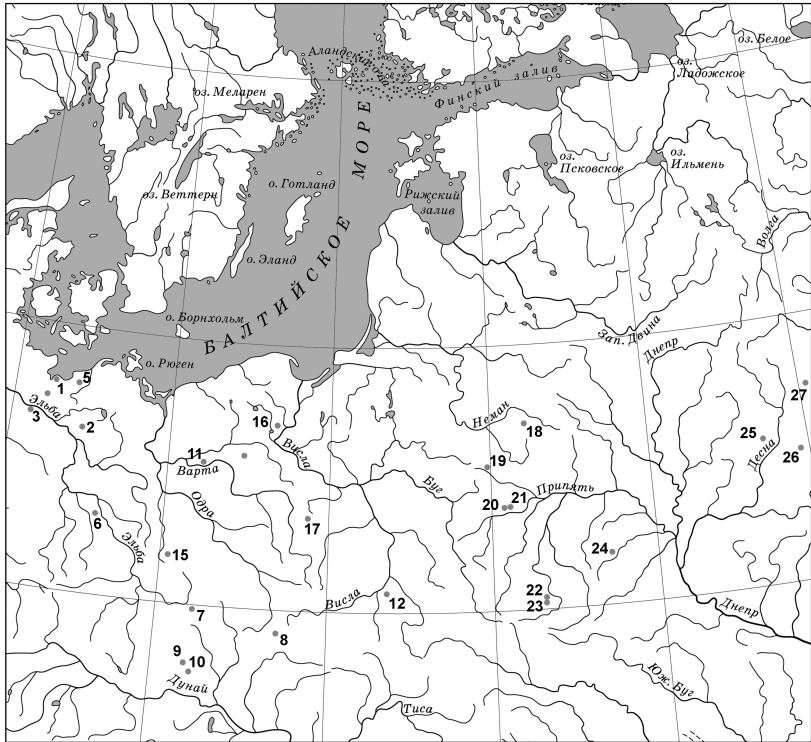


Fig. 1. Map of toponyms related to Radegast, Redhošt, Radogoszcz, Radogoszcza etc. (I – settlements, II – rivers, III – mountain).

(e.g. the Dregoviches), who were the descendants of the population of the Prague Culture. The *Radogošč* sites of Bryansk Oblast are situated within the former settlement area of the Severians, whose ethnic origins were to a great degree influenced by a culture deriving from the Prague Culture and similar to the Luka Raikovetskaia Culture (Cedov, 1982, 136–137). As for the *Radogošč* sites of the upper reaches of the Oka, archaeological data indicate that the Slavs inhabited the region in the 8th–9th century, and, according to a researcher of the period T. Nikolskaya, certain peculiarities of the material culture of the Early Slavs of the upper reaches of the Oka, including pottery

designs, house types and the traits of funeral rites, have much in common with the Prague Culture, which may be the initial territory where these features developed (*Никольская*, 1981, 12; *Русанова*, 1976; *Седов*, 1979). The *Radogošč* sites of north-western Russia lie within the territory of the Ilmen Slavs, whose material culture, legends, customs and language (as can be seen from the birch bark writings of Veliky Novgorod) exhibit numerous general features bearing close resemblance to the population of the Polish Pomorze and the Polabian territories. Judging from anthropological data, the Ilmen Slavs, as well as the Baltic Slavs, are descended from a common initial type of narrow-faced mesosubbrachycephals (*Седов*, 1995, 244–245).

Within the territory of modern-day Poland, the Czech Republic and eastern Germany, the toponyms studied here can be found in the areas occupied by the population of the Prague, Sukovo-Dzedzin and Feldberg Cultures in the Early Middle Ages. At the same time, the names are absolutely uncharacteristic of the Penkovka Culture area (which is identified with the Antes of the Byzantine writers) and the tribal unions that were the descendants of this population (e.g. the White Croats), as well as the Smolensk-Polatsk and Pskov Krivichi. Neither are they typical of the Balkan Slavs.

A number of settlements named *Radogošč* are mentioned in early medieval written sources. For example, the town of *Radogoshcha* (now Pogar, Bryansk Oblast, Russia) is mentioned for the first time in a chronicle in 1155; the village of *Radogoszcz* (now Redogoszcz) near Wągrowiec, Greater Poland is first mentioned in 1216; *Radogoszcz* (now part of Lodz) is first recorded in 1242. Kostszewski discovered important remains outside the village of *Radogoszcz* on the right bank of the Warta in Greater Poland, including 10th century potsherds. (The village is mentioned for the first time in 1378). In Bryansk Oblast, excavation outside the village of *Radogoshch* has produced Romny-style pottery (i.e. 8th–9th century), although a cultural stratum could not be identified. The ancient settlement is surrounded on three sides by a synchronous circular settlement, with signs of the Romny Culture, as well as some material of the 11th–13th century (*Даркевич, Пудовин*, 1960, 88).

Over a period of six field seasons, beginning in 1989, we have carried out excavation at an ancient settlement outside the village of *Radahoshcha*, Navahrudak District, Hrodna Voblast. A total area of 512 m² has been excavated. The monument is situated on a promontory of the main bank of the River Neuda (in the basin of the Niemen), 200 m east of the village, which is

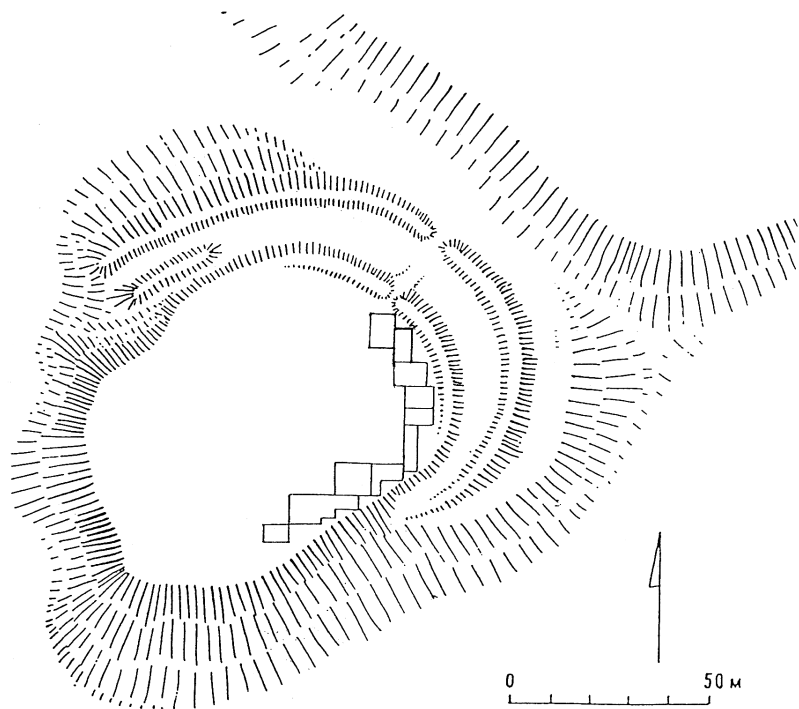


Fig. 2. Plan of the Radahoshcha settlement in Navahrudak District, showing the excavated area.

situated on the opposite bank of the river. The steepest slopes of the settlement are on its southern and western sides, their height reaching 17–18 m. In the east and the north, a 0.5 m high bank can be seen, delimiting the site. Outside the settlement there is a moat and another bank. The entrance to the settlement was situated on its north-eastern side. The oval settlement is 80 m long and 55 m wide (Fig. 2). No cultural stratum could be identified on most of the site, and occurred only along its edges, observed in strips, 8–10 m wide. The thickness of the stratum ranges between 0.60 and 1.00 m. By the eastern edge of the site, beneath the cultural stratum, there is an area of higher ground resembling a bank, 0.45–0.75 m above the subsoil, consisting of sand, albeit

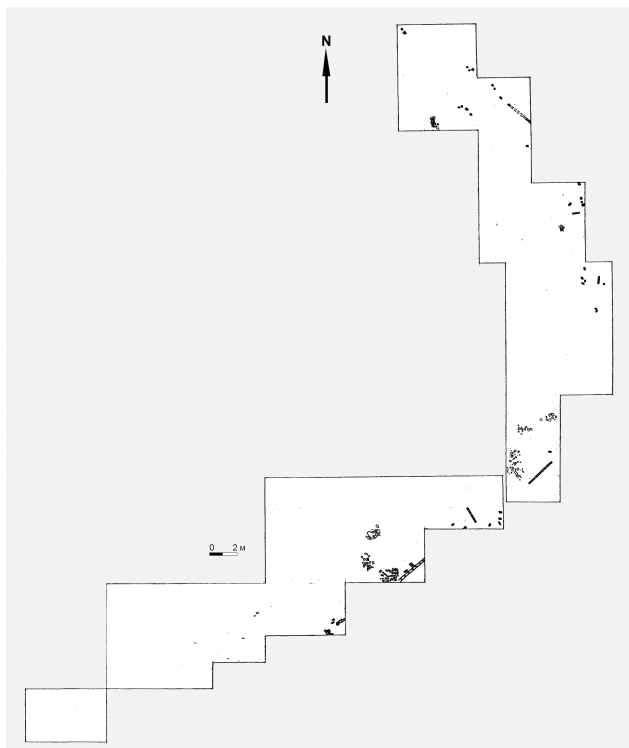


Fig. 3. Plan of the excavation at the Radahoshcha settlement, with the remains of burnt wooden houses and stone hearths.

somewhat compacted and impregnated with clay. The rise looks like a narrow bank, with an almost vertical scarp on its inner, western side, although a little rounded, while its eastern edge merges with the slope of the site. The rise is 7.45 m long. Along the south-eastern and southern sides of the site there are remains of burnt wood logs, forming a line at least 21 m long. However, the other, parallel line of logs could not be found, with only a cross-log in one place (Fig. 3). The line of logs must be the remains of a long-house wall, which had no other wall on the side facing the site, most probably having vertical supports under the roof.

Uninhabitable elongated houses of the same pattern are typical of the settlements of the Tushemlya Culture in Smolensk Oblast. However, many of these settlements are considered to be sanctuaries.

The ceramics of the Radahoshch settlement can be subdivided into three major groups, with the exception of a few pottery fragments dating back to the late Stone Age and the Bronze Age. In the stratum overlying the natural sub-soil striated ceramics of the 1st–3rd century AD were found, among them also pottery with several kinds of ribbed patterns. Fragments of plastered pottery are very scarce. The bulk of the material comprises fragments of hand-formed, smooth-walled pottery with sand and gravel temper. The majority of the pieces are undecorated, some fragments being ornamented with three striae that form a wavy or a broken-line pattern. The designs indicate an archaeological culture similar to the Luka Raikovetskaia culture, associated with the Slavs and dated to the 8th–10th century. Other finds include biconical spindle whorls. Early medieval ceramics are greatly outnumbered by pottery of the latter type and therefore cannot represent a separate horizon.

During the first field season, a hoard was found at a depth of 0.60 m. It consisted of seven intact bronze bracelets and fragments of three more. The bracelets are ribbon-like with widened terminals. On the surface, normally at the ends, they have an ornament of cross-notches, as well as patterns of short axial arrows or rhombuses and triangles. There are also bracelets with axial parallel dents on the outer surface. These bracelets are analogous to finds in the East Lithuanian burial mounds of the 8th–10th century, for example Grigiškės (Neravai), Sausiai and Pamusis.

Other metal objects found at the settlement include socketed split arrowheads, an iron adze, an axe with the remains of a burnt handle and several adornments.

Summarizing the results of the excavations at the Radahoshcha settlement, one cannot but stress a number of peculiarities (apart from the name of the neighbouring village) indicative of the religious function of the monument. These are traits specified by B. Timoshchuk (Тимошук, 1989, 74–83) and typical of Slavonic sanctuary settlements, including a moat between the inner and outer banks, or between the bank and the site, instead of an outside moat, and long houses with a social function (similar to the famous *kontina*'s of the Polish Pomorze). The bracelets may have had a sacred function, too. It should also be observed that 1 km east of the settlement there is a hill called *Babina Horka* –

'Hill of the Lady' (a name possibly connected with the existence of the sanctuary of a goddess), while the lowland between Babina Horka and the River Neuda is called *Khyshchanitsa* ('baptistery') – a place probably used for christening pagans. Some 4–5 km south-east of these sites is Lake Svitsyaz, honoured as a sacred lake since the late 19th century (Янчук, 1889).

Another geographical feature that could be of interest is Mount Radhošť (1129 m high) in the Beskids in north-eastern Moravia. This is a place where people have been celebrating the summer solstice since the 18th century, and where cattle-farmers have come from the highlands of Slovakia and Moravia to conclude marriage contracts (Грацианская, 1978, 187; Токарев, 1983, 95).

The mapping of such names as *Radegast*, *Radhošť* and *Radogoszcz*, proves that they can be found across a vast territory occupied by certain Slavonic groups in the Early Middle Ages, and must have emerged before the end of the 1st millennium AD. In the dating of these names, linguistic hypotheses are in many cases supported by archaeological data.

Thietmar of Merseburg mentions the sacred town Riedegost. At the same time, there are numerous *Radegast* toponyms in the formerly Germanic territories of the Slavs. Therefore, we should analyze the peculiarities of Slavonic toponymical name-building. As W. Zagorovsky has written, toponyms including the root *-goshch-* are, by their nature, possessive adjectives, derived from Slavonic two-stem personal names, with the stem *-gost-* as the second part (Загоровский, 1975, 43). Therefore, toponyms derived from the names *Radegast* and *Radogost*, will have the form *Radogoshcha*.

Despite the seeming transparency of the name *Radegast*, its etymology is not yet firmly established. In the Early Middle Ages, including the 7th–9th century, the Slavs had names with the second stem *-gast-* or *-gost-*: *Arbagast*, *Kelagast*, *Dobrogast* etc. However, it was the ancient Germans who first used personal names with the second stem *-gast-*. Written sources record such names as *Arbagast* (4th century AD); another *Arbagast* lived in the late 5th century; *Hartigast* (8th century); *Kunigast* (6th century); and *Hleagast*, whose grave was found in the marshes of Schleswig. Some researchers also consider that Slavonic names ending in *-gast-* were directly borrowed from the Germans (Пассадин, 2003, 253–254).

Belarusian émigré historian P. Urban explained the name of the god Radogast as 'welcome visitor', and believed that this meaning served to identify him with the Eastern Slavonic god of the sun *Dazhbog* ('Good God') (Урбан,

2001, 148). There is another explanation of the name *Radogost*, namely as 'willingly visiting, fond of visits' (i.e. abroad, with a sword), and the name is considered a military one, a reverse form of another famous name, *Gostirad* (*Radogost*, 2008). Another version derives the second part of the name from a stem related to the old Germanic root *-geist-* ('ghost'). Strangely enough, a certain phonetic resemblance to the name of the god can be found in the epithet *-rathetha-* ('standing on two chariots') used to describe the Hindu god Indra; the Lithuanian god Perkunas is believed to ride a two- or four-wheeled chariot – *ratai* (Иванов, Топоров, 1974, 82, 84).

Iggeld (D. Gavrilov) believed that the name *Radegast* was made up of the word *-rad-* ('sunny') and *-gast-* ('ghost'). The word *-gast-*, in its turn, was derived from the Sanskrit and probably Old Slavonic stem *-go-shtkha-*, meaning 'place of assemblies and meetings'. The derivation proposed by G. Labuda (from the words *-redny-* 'damp', and *-gozd-* 'forest') does not sound convincing, since in the Early Middle Ages the territory of Europe to the east of the Elbe was densely covered with damp forests, which would surely have made the name *Radogošč* a widespread phenomenon.

The god Svarozic, described by Thietmar of Merseburg, is first mentioned in 1008 in a letter sent by bishop Bruno of Querfurt to Emperor Henry II, where he condemns a temporary military coalition between the Germans and the Lutizens: "Is it acceptable – to be a Christian and live in amity with pagans? What is this alliance of Christ with Belial? How can we equal light with darkness? How can the devil Svarozic agree with the leader, yours and ours, Maurice?" (*Stupecki*, 1994, 54). As the letter states, Svarozic is contrasted to the Christian patron of warriors – Saint Mauritius, which says much for the military function of the god.

Both Adam of Bremen and Thietmar of Merseburg believed that Radegast-Svarozic was the head of the pantheon whose idols were stored in the temple of Radogosc-Rethra, the exceptional position of Radegast being manifested by the fact that his statue was made of gold and his bed was made of purple.

The *Galli Anonymi Chronicae* mention in the entry for the year 808 that the Veleti (the ancestors of the Lutizens) were in a long-lasting feud with the Obotrites. However, according to the description provided by Helmold, who spoke of the 'first and major' gods of various tribes of the Obotrite confederacy, the main god of the Obotrites proper was Riedegast (*Helmold*, 1963, 129). The name of the god is later mentioned in *Chronicken der Sassen* by K. Bothe

(1492): "In Mecklenburg, the Obotrites worshipped a god called *Ridegost*, who had a shield on his chest, the latter having the picture of a black bull's head; he also had an axe in his hand and a bird on his head." Similar information about the image of a bull's head on Riedegast's chest is given in the work *Annales Herulorum ac Vandalorum* by Nikolaus Marschalk (15th century) (*Богу северо-западных славян*, 2008, 15). Although both of the quoted works were not written by witnesses of historic events, but are based on indirect renderings, the mention of the image of a bull's head on Riedegast's chest may be dated back to earlier events, unless it was meant to explain the origin of a bull's head on the coat of arms of Mecklenburg.

Apart from the toponym *Radegast*, the medieval Slavs had an analogous personal name. For example, a *Redigost* lived in 1226 in the Czech lands (*Морошкин*, 1867, 167). We should not be misled by the retention of the names of former gods in anthroponomy. For example, one of the diplomas found in the territory of present-day Ukraine mentions *Danilo Dazhbogovich*, and several Polish documents mention such names as *Dazhbog*.

While trying to identify the functions of Radegast-Svarozic, there arises the problem of the correlation with Svarog. On the one hand, the patronymic suffix *-ic* in Svarozic's name must indicate that Svarozic is a descendant of Svarog. On the other hand, that Svarozic was the son (or a son) of Svarog to a certain degree contradicts his status as head of the pantheon. A. Brückner believed that Svarozic was actually Svarog himself, a hypocoristic form of the theonym (*Brückner*, 1985, 338–339).

The Hypatian Codex names Dazhbog (the god of the sun) as the son of Svarog. According to S. Rosik, who has analyzed Radegast-Svarozic in the context of the peculiarities of the political system of the Lutizens, since Radogošč (Rethra) was the centre for keeping theocratic and popular assembly standards, this god was being contrasted with the princely and military god Perun. The contrast can easily be seen from the example of the Island of Rügen, where the priestly capital of Arcona was the centre of the cult of Sventovit, while the princely Gardziec worshiped Rugiewit, Porenut and Porewit. S. Rosik arrived at the conclusion that Radogošč and Arcona were the centres of a theocracy whose divine patrons were connected with the sun (*Rosik*, 2000, 49–50). Supposing this is true, we could easily explain why Svarog or Radegast-Svarozic is not mentioned among the 'gods of Prince Vladimir', since for the princely Kiev of the late 10th century, these deities were too archaic. However, before

this, Radegast-Svarozic must have been worshipped by both the Polabian Slavs and the population of Eastern Europe, as is proven by the numerous toponyms relating to Radogošč. That the deity was related to the cult of the sun can be seen from the surviving tradition of celebrating the summer solstice on Mount Radhošť. Apart from this, Radegast was also connected to the cult of the water, which is proven by the existence of a number of related hydronyms. Radegast's attributes were the sacred horse and the crossed spears. Besides his solar function, Radegast-Svarozic played a magical and a military role. Archaeological excavation at the Radahoshch settlement in Belarus indicates that places bearing similar names are promising indicators in the search for the remains of pagan sanctuaries.

Summary

Radogošč (Rethra), situated in the territory of the Lutizen tribal union and described in a number of early medieval written sources (Thietmar of Merseburg, Adam of Bremen, Helmold), is one of the most famous Slavonic pagan sanctuaries. According to the descriptions, the sanctuary, devoted to the god Radegast-Svarozic, was situated at the shore of a lake and surrounded by a sacred forest. The location of Radogošč is not yet established, although there are over 30 hypotheses as to its location.

A total of 40 toponyms related to Radogošč can be found within the settlement area of the Slavs – *Radegast*, *Radigošť*, *Radogošč*, *Radogošča* – from the Elbe and the eastern border of Austria to the upper reaches of the Oka, and from the Baltic Sea to the Middle Danube. There is a group of hydronyms among them, while the Czechs have an ancient tradition of celebrating the summer solstice on Mount Radigošť in Moravia.

Excavation of the Radahoshcha settlement outside Navahrudak, Belarus, indicates that it belonged to a Slavonic population with a culture similar to that of the Luka Raikovetskaia Culture (8th–10th century) and must have been used as a sanctuary (distinctive exterior features, long houses, the location of a cultural stratum in a narrow belt along the edge of the site). Finds of the late 1st millennium have also been made at other monuments with analogous names. The geographical position of such toponyms coincides with the area of the Prague Culture and the descendants of this population, as well as with that of the Sukovo-Dzedzin and Feldberg Cultures.

In spite of the fact that written sources fail to specify the functions of the god Radegast-Svarozic, they can be reconstructed on the basis of a comprehensive analysis. He was the head of the pantheon in societies with theocratic and popular assembly systems, connected with the cults of the sun and water. Apart from this, he had magic and military functions. The excavations at the Radahoshcha settlement in Belarus indicate that places bearing similar names are promising indicators in the search for the remains of pagan sanctuaries.

Bibliography

Боги северо-западных славян, 2008. Боги северо-западных славян, 2008. http://rujan.jino-net.ru/article.php?i=1_1 - 11.02.2008.

Васильев, 2005. Васильев В. Л. *Архаическая топонимия Новгородской земли (Древнеславянские деантропонимные образования)*. Великий Новгород, 2005.

Гаврилов, 2006. Гаврилов Д. А. *НордХейм. Курс сравнительной мифологии древних германцев и славян*. Москва, 2006.

Гельмольд, 1963. Гельмольд. *Славянская хроника*. Москва, 1963.

Грацианская, 1978. Грацианская Н. Н. Чехи и словаки. *Календарные обычаи и обряды в странах зарубежной Европы. Конец XIX – начало XX в. Летне-осенние праздники*. Москва, 1978. 185–196.

Даркевич, Пудовин, 1960. Даркевич В. П., Пудовин В. К. Раскопки на Севском городище. *Краткие сообщения о докладах и полевых исследованиях Института истории материальной культуры*, 1960, вып. 79. 83–88.

Загоровский, 1975. Загоровский В. П. Происхождение географических названий на -гост. *Теория и практика топонимических исследований. Материалы Топонимической комиссии 1973/74 гг.* Москва, 1975. 40–44.

Зайкоўскі, 2002. Зайкоўскі Э. Даследаванні славянскага гарадзішча Радагошча каля Навагрудка. *Vadania archeologiczne w Polsce północnowschodniej i na zachodniej Białorusi w latach 2000–2001. Materiały z konferencji, Białystok 6–7 grudnia 2001 roku*. Białystok, 2002. 283–291.

Иванов, Топоров, 1974. Иванов В. В., Топоров В. Н. *Исследования в области славянских древностей*. Москва, 1974.

Морошкин, 1867. Морошкин М. *Славянский именовослов или собрание славянских личных имен в алфавитном порядке*. Москва, 1867.

Никольская, 1981. Никольская Т. Н. *Земля вятичей. К истории населения бассейна верхней и средней Оки в IX–XIII вв.* Москва, 1981.

Рассадин, 2003. Рассадин С. Е. Древнегерманские элементы в именовослове раннего славянства IV–VI столетий после Рождества Христова. *Ранние славяне Белорусского Поднепровья и Подвинья. Материалы по археологии Беларуси*. № 8. Минск, 2003. 249–258.

- Русанова, 1976. Русанова И. П. *Славянские древности VI–VII вв.* Москва, 1976.
- Седов, 1979. Седов В. В. *Происхождение и ранняя история славян.* Москва, 1979.
- Седов, 1982. Седов В. В. *Восточные славяне в VI–XIII вв.* Москва, 1982. (Археология СССР)
- Седов, 1995. Седов В. В. *Славяне в раннем средневековье.* Москва, 1995.
- Смолицкая, 1976. Смолицкая Г. П. *Гидронимия бассейна Оки (список рек и озер).* Москва, 1976.
- Тимошук, 1989. Тимошук Б. А. (1989). Об археологических признаках восточно-славянских городищ-святилищ. *Древние славяне и Киевская Русь. Сборник трудов.* Киев, 1989. 74–83.
- Токарев, 1983. Токарев С. А. Обычаи, обряды и поверья, связанные с животноводством. *Календарные обычаи и обряды в странах зарубежной Европы. Исторические корни и развитие обычаев.* Москва, 1983. 90–97.
- Урбан, 2001. Урбан П. *Старажытныя ліцьвіны: Мова, паходжаньне, этнічная прыналежнасьць.* Мінск, 2001.
- Янчук, 1889. Янчук Н. *По Минской губернии: (заметки из поездки в 1886 году).* Москва, 1889.
- Brückner, 1985. Brückner A. *Mitologia słowiańska i polska.* Warszawa, 1985.
- Kronika Thietmara, 1953. *Kronika Thietmara. Biblioteka tekstów historycznych.* Tom III. Poznań, 1953.
- Labuda, 1999. Labuda G. *Słowiańszczyzna starożytna i wczesnośredniowieczna. Antologia tekstów źródłowych.* Poznań, 1999.
- Radagost, 2008. Radagost (имię) [http://dagestani.vabariiik.et.dark-legion.org/pl/Radagost % 20 \(imie\) – 07.01.2008.](http://dagestani.vabariiik.et.dark-legion.org/pl/Radagost%20(imie)-07.01.2008)
- Rosik, 2000. Rosik S. Awans Słońca w mitologii przedchrześcijańskich Słowian na tle przemian społeczno-politycznych. *Człowiek, sacrum, środowisko. Miejsca kultu we wczesnym średniowieczu. Spotkania Bymomskie IV.* Wrocław, 2000. 49–59.
- Słownik geograficzny, 1888. *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich.* Tom IX. Warszawa, 1888.
- Stupecki, 1994. Stupecki L. *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries.* Warsaw, 1994.