

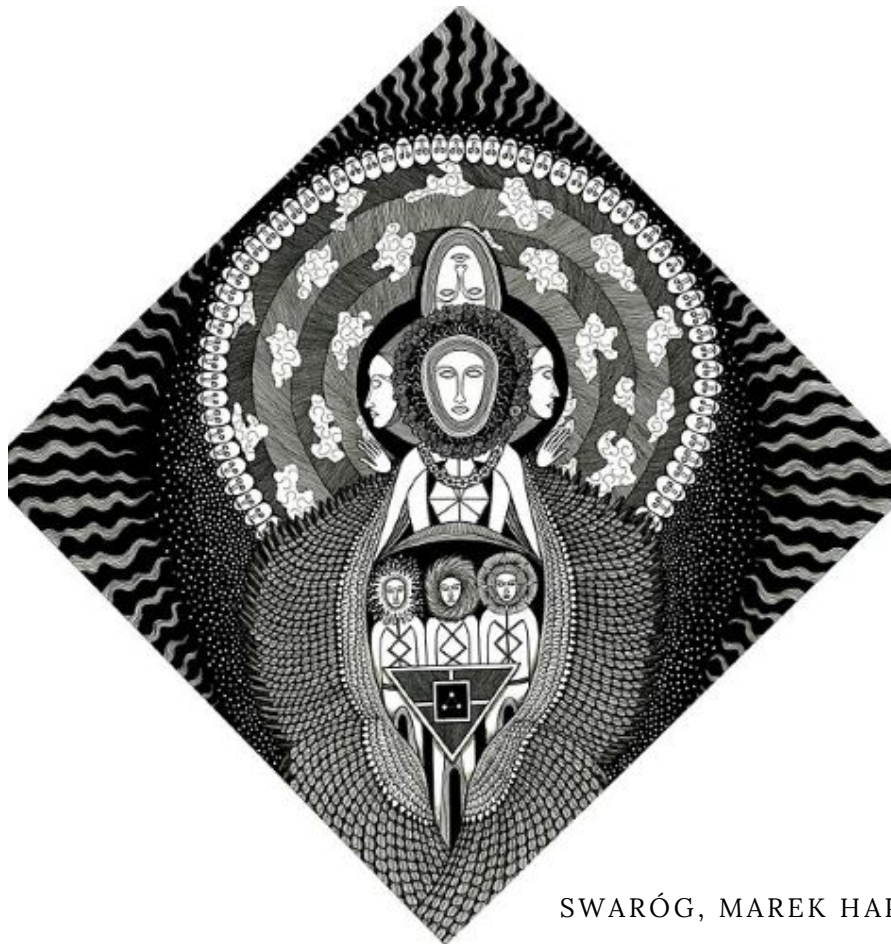
# POLISH PAGAN BELIEFS



SUBMITTED BY

STUDENTS OF MARCIN KROMER SECONDARY SCHOOL IN GORLICE  
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Before Christianity reached Poland, and all the other beliefs were recognized as heresy, Slavic population used to believe in lots of kinds of gods, ghosts, monsters etc. The foundation of Slavic beliefs was being happy, living in harmony with nature and its rhythm. The Slavs thought about nature as the source of wisdom and magic, they saw divinity in it.

As the Slavs were mainly engaged in agriculture, the worship of the life-giving sun was crucial to them. They believed that the Sun is responsible for giving them life and fruitful crops. It was found on clay vessels, and its symbol was presented in the company of stylized birds. The Sun itself was presented according to conventional signs on the base of a circle, the point of that was to show the Sun's path across the sky. The guardian of the Sun was **Swaróg**, also known as **Swarożyc**, who was the greatest Slavic god.



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Another deity associated with cultivation of land was **Rod**, who was regarded as the supreme god. As protector of the family who, together with his parents (invisible ghosts or other gods of destiny) assisted every human being from birth to death. In the old version of Slavs' language his name meant "Crops" which Mother Earth gives to us, so he was also the protector of wealth. His cult started to disappear and around the 9th/ 10th century he was replaced by Perun, mentioned before Swaróg and Świątowit, which would explain his absence in Włodzimierz's Wielki pantheon.

Among the Slavs from Połab, the faith in **Jarowit** was also cultivated – he was the god of youthful strength. In Belarusian sources they mention **Jaryło** – a youthful god dressed in white robe, sitting on a white horse with a human's head and with an ear of wheat which he held in his hands. These two divinities were responsible for fighting and protecting the agriculture work, and were subordinate to the supreme god. There are also well-known legends about old Jaryło, who gave way to the young Jaryło and it was the symbol of the end of winter and the beginning of spring.





**Mokosz** was the only one deity shown in the form of a woman. She was the goddess of fertility, the patroness of spinning and weaving, associated with fertile land and rain. She was identified as Mother Earth. Mokosz was one of the most important deities of Slavs pantheon. Her role was to be the partner of the heavenly deity.

**Siemargł** - a mysterious deity of eastern Slavs. His name was separated, for which the existence of two different deities, Siema and Rgła, was assumed. Siem, with a name derived from semja - „family”. He would be a domestic deity looking after the farmyard, while Rgiel, with a name based on the core reż - „rye” would be a deity of harvest. The evidence of Siem’s and Rgiel’s cult would be local names such as Rgielsko and Siemianowo, and names Siemowit and Siemomysł (which belonged to Polish legendary rulers)



**Marzanna** goddess – closest to the original face of Mother Earth. In many folk songs (mainly from Silesia) Marzanna reveals herself as Ruler of Life and Death. Her attributes are a wreath, bride's outfit, beads, reaped corn, apple and golden key which opens the gates to the realm of the dead and other seasons.