




# The elements in the cosmogonic myths of the world nations



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For many sciences, such as history, archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, and for philosophy, cosmogonic beliefs of ancient peoples became a subject of detailed study. This work uses field research results with reliance on the scientific tradition. The authors used both special, or general scientific, and philosophical methods. The problem of semantic analysis of the elements in the folklore of the world nations in the contemporary context is highly relevant. One of the tasks of this article is to identify the importance of the elements in the ancient beliefs. For this purpose, the article describes the results of a comparative study of myths mentioning different types of the elements. The article reveals the characteristics of the elements' embodiment in the cosmogonic myths of the world nations and determines the reasons for worshipping the sky, earth, fire, and water in cosmogonic folklore. The authors analyse the common and the special in figurative symbolism of the elements in classical and contemporary folklore. The analysis of semantic load of archetypal images describing the elements showed that each of the elements in the world mythology is sacred. The elements act at all levels of the universe and occupy the entire cosmos in the cosmogonic myths of the world nations.

**Contribution:** The results of the article can be used in scientific research in the field of folklore and ethnology.

**Keywords:** cosmogony; myths; elements; gods or deities; image; folklore.

## Introduction

The concept of the Elements penetrates through and through mythology as one of the most important structural and system-forming elements of the worldview. With the formation of religion, the idea of the Elements is significantly transformed within the framework of theology and finds an ambiguous interpretation in the picture of the world, built on the basis of Scripture. At the same time, according to some of the most significant researchers, in an explicit expression, the concept of the elements, as some abstract fundamental principles of other types of matter, is not typical for all ancient cultures (Tokarev 2003). Anthropology practically does not record clearly distinguished traces of the concept of the system of elements in the ideas of peoples at the pre-state stage of social development. Some of the most important elements, on the coexistence with which the life of the tribe directly depends, are reflected in cosmogonic representations in abundance, such as the sea in the proto-religion of the Japanese, the inhabitants of Oceania, and some tribes of American aborigines who lived on the coast (Rudenko & Sobolevskiy 2020). However, there is no logical reason to discuss the existence of these peoples' ideas about the system of elements interacting with each other.

The most widely known and well-studied systems of cosmogonic myths, including the concept of the elements as the fundamental principles of the organisation of the Universe, are associated with the civilisations of China, India and Ancient Greece (Naden 2011; Prasad 2015; Schwartz 1975). Traditionally, the elements are associated with the fundamental principles of the universe.

Firstly, the elements were identified by the ancient Eastern cultures, as certain fundamental energies (forces) of the universe. For example, already in *Shu Ching Book of History* (Waltham & Legge 1971), one of the most important books of the ancient Chinese thought, which is a collection of legends, myths, and descriptions of historical events, the elements are mentioned as the beginnings of the world. The first beginning is water, the second beginning is fire, the third beginning is wood, the fourth beginning is metal, and the fifth beginning is earth. In the ancient Chinese philosophical text *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* ['Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals'], the elements are listed in a different order – tree-fire-earth-metal-water – which may testify to a

change in the understanding of their status (Loewe 2011). The arrangement of these principles is ordered, and their powers are revealed in their action.

In Western culture, based on the Ancient Greek thought, the system of the universe traditionally includes four elements – water, air, fire, and earth. Ancient Greek thinkers and natural philosophers, who were striving to comprehend the essence of being, believed that one of the elements could be the primary basis of the world ('arche'). For Thales it was water, for Anaximenes it was air, and for Heraclitus it was fire. Empedocles, on the other hand, identified four primary causes. In addition to the above-mentioned, he included the earth in this list. According to the mythogenic concept of the origin of philosophy, mythological ideas, or rather, the rationalisation of cosmogonic myths became both the basis and the mechanism for generating philosophical ideas (West 1971). This means the elements were important already in the ancient times.

The idea of the elements, as the fundamental principles of the material world, arises among a number of Ancient Greek philosophers in connection with the search for answers to the questions in the field of physics, the structure of matter, the origin of being and consciousness (Chondros 2017). Researchers of Hellenistic thought are often inclined to believe that Ancient Greek thinkers discussed the idea of the Elements, relying on a concept that was borrowed from the East, for example, from Ancient Egypt or the civilisations of Mesopotamia, and was not born directly on Greek soil (French & Cunningham 2016; West 1971). The most integral primary sources of ancient mythology that have come down to us, in fact, nowhere record myths about the elements, but only about gods and spirits, for which certain spheres of life (sea, forest, mountains, sky, etc.) are a habitat, a source of power and a kind of 'feud', which these gods and beings rule (Tokarev 2003; Van Rooyen 2020).

Aristotle added another component to this list of elements – ether, the glowing layer of the atmosphere closest to the earth. In Ancient Greek mythology, ether is the upper layer of air, where the gods reside, as well as the subtlest fifth element in ancient and medieval natural philosophy, physics, and alchemy (French & Cunningham 2016). The idea of five elements of the same content and sequence from earth to ether is also contained in the sources of classical Tantra, a number of Buddhist sutras of the later period and the Muslim tradition (Burns 2019). The oldest available lists of the basic elements that make up the universe belong to a number of early Upanishads and Vedic hymns, and are also widely represented in the philosophical texts of the Mahabharata, such as Mokshadharma (Book of Liberation) and Aranyakaparva (Forest Book) (Chaitanya 2018; Debroy 2015).

A characteristic feature of the European Indo-Aryan tradition is the same list of primary elements – earth, water, fire, air, ether. This list is categorically different from the similar Chinese list given earlier. Moreover, researchers of esoteric

traditions, as well as sources devoted to the practical application of the concept of the elements in acupuncture, magic and other esoteric practices, indicate that the two lists of elements differ ontologically (Burns 2019; Chondros 2017). This means that they divide the elements on the basis of different attributes immanently belonging to them. If it can be formulated this way, the Indo-European and Chinese lists of the elements do not contradict each other, because they do not intersect ontologically and describe different orders of meanings.

According to more recent European sources of the 15th – 17th centuries, which summed up the formation of the magical worldview of the previous centuries, the formation of this tradition, the first four elements are associated with the horoscope, age periods and human temperament, as well as the four seasons and time periods of the day (morning, day, evening, night) and the like (French & Cunningham 2016).

In the 21st century, these four elements are positioned as strong, irrational, and often destructive forces of nature, sometimes hostile to humanity, which since the Renaissance began to understand its Divinity and Omnipotence. Renaissance philosophy, political myths about the possibility of elemental control, the subjugation of natural elements in the process of development and existence demonstrated not only their advantages, but also revealed significant negative aspects (Pagel & Winder 1974).

When studying the existing theories of natural elements, the problem arises that these representations are not mythological, but articulated by professional philosophers' late instrumental representations, whose task was to universalise the primary knowledge about nature. This approach clearly brings the concept of the elements beyond the limits of both the study of cosmogony within the framework of anthropology, and beyond the theological consideration of the nature of creation.

## Literature review

Potebnya (2018) provides a definition of poetry and describes the general properties of epic literature, as well as their other characteristics in his works. Kostomarov (2019) and Afanasiiev (2017) interpret the symbols of Slavic folk poetry and reconstruct the myths about natural elements, in particular water, fire, air, and earth.

Mythological views of the ancient Slavs are reconstructed through a comparative historical juxtaposition with other Indo-European mythological systems. The most thorough materials on mythological systems of different peoples are collected in the two-volume encyclopedia *Myths of the Peoples of the World* (Tokarev 2003). This collective work is a compilation of the most well-known sacred myths about the elements on the Indo-European territory, which have the longest genealogy. The mythological foundations of the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians are presented in such works as *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology* by Hard (2019),

*Ancient Gods and Goddesses of Water* by Mays and Angelakis, (2019), *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome* by Berens (2016), *Water Sources and the Sacred in Modern and Ancient Greece and Beyond* by Håland (2009).

Researchers equally note the presence of gods and specialised spirits associated with the elements and with important production processes that occur in connection with land (tillage, fertility), water (safe swimming, fishing, favourable weather), and air (rainfall sufficient for harvest, etc.). However, popular mentions of the harmonious theory of the Elements, the rules of interaction with each other and the complex theories of their mutual origin appear only in the philosophical works of a relatively late period, at the stage of a developed state and the formation of natural philosophical thought, independent of polytheistic religions (Burns 2019; Naden 2011).

A difficult problem of the research is that the main sources about the mythology of the ancient peoples are also the records of the philosophers of the most ancient periods, who recorded the beliefs and ideas of the ancients along with their own conclusions and concepts, often not dividing the first and the second (Schwartz 1975; West 1971).

The original culture and poetic worldviews of Africa and Native America are presented in the works of Jaja (2014) and Van Binsbergen (2008), and Pettigrew (2008), respectively. The authors prove that the tales of Native Americans and African peoples are by no means poorer than the embellished, literate ancient mythology of other nations (Rudenko & Sobolievskiy 2020).

Among contemporary scientific works investigating the meaning of water and fire in folklore, special attention should be given to the articles by Garcia and Vazquez (2018) and Frazer (2019). The authors state that the recognition of creation originating from water and fire is a fundamental myth universal for all societies. At the same time, they note the absence of clear ideas about the system of elements and the relationship between them, or the presence of a dualistic idea of dividing the world into opposing principles. The same views, concerning only the element of earth, are held by Secheşan (2013). In the paper 'Water and Inca Cosmogony', Mazadiego, Puche and Hervás (2009) describe the Inca cosmogonic worldview and points out similarities with the beliefs in medieval Europe (Habashi 2000).

Many studies also discuss the philosophical and theological explanations of cosmogonic myths and their representation as creative work of different world nations, without considering the meaning and symbolism of the elements in these myths (Gardner 2019; Van Rooyen 2020). For example, Litovka (2013), as well as Ogorodnikov and Oganyan (2020) applied critical analysis to the ancient cosmogonic myths to determine the relationship between changes in creation myths and their representations in ancient philosophy, omitting the sacred meaning of myths.

## Problem statement

Cosmogonic theories have been part of the culture and traditions of every society, no matter how ancient or primitive they are. Each age and culture have offered their own answers to the question of how the cosmos arose in terms of their specific understanding of the nature of the world and human beings. The aim of this article is to study the characteristics of elements (air, earth, fire, and water) and their interpretations in world's mythologies.

To reach this aim, the following research objectives are to be solved:

- To describe the state of scientific development of the problem using scientific and methodological framework.
- To conduct a comparative study of the world myths about the elements.
- To show the specificity and uniqueness of the elements' embodiments in the national cosmogonic myths.
- To determine the sources of worshipping the sky, earth, fire, and water in cosmogonic folklore.
- To analyse the common and the improvisational of the elements' figurative symbolism in classical and modern folklore.
- To determine the semantic load of archetypal images representing the elements.

## Materials and methods

The content and nature of the research objectives required the combined use of general scientific and special research methods. General scientific methods used in the article included system analysis, synthesis, classification, induction, and deduction. Theoretical and methodological framework of this article is based on the psychological concept of folklore by Potebnya (2018), which claims the unity of folklore, cognitive and psychological phenomena and forms, and allows one to analyse the original mysticism underlying psychological and social human activity. The framework also incorporates the ideas of French ethnographer and sociologist Strauss (1974) and the philosopher and psychologist Lévy-Bruhl (2020) concerning the characteristics of primitive thinking, as well as the archetype theory by Swiss psychologist Jung (2014).

Comparative historical method was used to determine the differences and similarities between the elements' images in the world. Comparative typological method was employed to systematise, classify, and analyse the mythological images and the elements in national folklore and primary sources containing information about these views around the world. The preference is given to sources from those regions, which are characterised by pronounced concepts of the elements and the connections between them. The study uses an extensive combination of field sources, the scientific heritage of previous researchers, as well as philological, folkloric, and ethnological methods.

Because the basis of the study is the myths of different world nations (peoples of Asia, India, Europe, Native Americans, etc.), the results depend on the information sources and their reliability. Therefore, an important aspect is the selection of verified literature.

## Results

The cosmogonic myths of the world nations describe the origin of the cosmos as well as its individual parts, which are united in a single system. These are the narratives of the transformation of Chaos into Cosmos. They reflect the cosmogonic ideas of peoples about the structure of the cosmos, which typically has three vertical levels and four horizontal levels. Therefore, the number of the masculine beginning is 'three', and the number of the feminine beginning is 'four'. It is the cosmogonic myth that describe about the disintegration of the primary Chaos into four elements, namely water, fire, air, and earth, of the separation of heaven from earth, and of the emergence of the earth from the world ocean as a stronghold.

Because cosmogonic myths refer to such parameters of the universe as time and space, they occupy an exceptional place in mythopoetic worldviews. Homogeneity of time and space is not immanent in mythopoetic consciousness. The time of creation (the act of creation) and the point symbolising the beginning (the centre of the world) are maximally sacred. Rituals, especially calendrical rites of summer, are also correlated with time and space as they mark the transition from the old to the new year.

The elements – water, fire, air, earth, as well as sometimes the fifth element, which nominally refers to ether – are the primary material for the creation of the cosmos. In chaos, they are mixed and inseparable. Then they are separated and purified, which is one of the elemental acts of the creation of the world in cosmogenesis.

### Father sky and mother earth in world cosmogonic myths

Written sources already record the ubiquitous association of the sky with the masculine principle (Litovka 2013; Tokarev 2003; Van Rooyen 2020). Anthropological studies record a much greater variety of ideas about the sky, which cannot be reduced to one clearly defined concept. It is associated with the air, the active principle, and manifestations of the spirit, while the earth is a manifestation of the feminine and material. The image of the sky in later scholastic interpretations and magical treatises that relied on them, for example, in the works of Cornelius Agrippa, is a sphere divided into several levels, each of which is inhabited by a deity or group of deities (Grant 1996; Van der Poel 1997).

In world mythology, the sky is an active creative force, sometimes symbolising the feminine beginning. It is embodied in such female deities as the Egyptian sky goddess Nut, who rules her children – the stars and the sun – the god

Ra. The ancient Indian Aditi is also the goddess of celestial infinity. She represents the heavenly mother of the gods. She was prayed to at sunrise, at noon, and when the sun was setting.

In Central Asia it is Tengri, whose name means 'sky'. He is a non-personified male deity, a heavenly master spirit who rules the fate of people, nations, and states. The sky and air among the peoples of Central Asia was considered a benevolent, all-knowing, and righteous divine entity.

Tian ('sky') is the most important notion in Chinese mythology and philosophy. It refers to the firmament (hence the name of the country Tianxia, which means what is under the sky, the Celestial Empire) and the supreme spirit, or ruler, who leads a host of all other spirits.

The supreme god in Ob-Ugric mythology is Numi-Torum, the supreme god of heaven and the demiurge. Numi-Torum sends daylight to the earth and sets the age of each person, as well as gives luck, fortune, shamanic gift and rules the weather (Tokarev 2003:210).

The Earth is the main female deity in many mythologies of the world. It represents the creative power of nature. Reverence of the Earth as the Mother-Goddess originates in the Late Paleolithic (statuettes of 'Venus'). Her main function in the cosmogonic model of the world is creation. As the wife of the god-creator the Mother-Goddess (Earth) participates in the creation of the universe and all living things inhabiting it. She is also the protectress of fertility.

### Water and fire as the basic constituents of the universe in world mythology

Symbolism of heaven and earth as male and female beginnings laid the foundation for the symbolism of fire and water in the world and Indo-European mythology, where fire symbolises the masculine beginning (the sphere of spirit) and water symbolises the female beginning as it is associated with the material bottom.

The idea of water's eternity, which was before the beginning of time and will exist afterwards, is inherent in the myths of many peoples. The primordial waters in mythopoetic tradition are, first of all, the World Ocean. It is the Ocean that gave birth to the Mother Earth and the entire cosmos. The Ocean is an element parallel to the sky. It is its mirror reflection.

In Indian mythology, the World Ocean separates the cosmos from chaos. Thus, it is associated with destructive forces and fertility at the same time. Indian Varuna is the god of cosmogonic waters and the god of truth and justice. He symbolises rivers, seas, streams, rain, and underground water. His counterpart and antipode is Mitra, the fire. According to Homer, in Greek mythology the rivers and streams are the children of the World Ocean (the nymphs of water sources) (Lardinois 2018), which sends rains and dew

to the earth. In the beliefs of the Indo-European tribes, clouds are barrels (vessels) filled with rain moisture. Because water is semantically associated with chaos, the myths depict it not only as a vital, but also as a hostile element. Often the element of water is identified with the monster, associated with chaos. For instance, the gods of the ancient Sumerians created heaven and earth from the body of the water monster Tiamat (Lardinois 2018). Thus, like air and earth, the element of water is also defined by the plurality and ambiguity of the deities symbolising it.

The Indo-Europeans considered fire to be an integral component of the world's origin. The sacred fire god in Vedic and Hindu mythology is Agni. He protects both the domestic hearth and the sacrificial fire (Prasad 2015). In Iranian mythology the god and personification of fire is Atar, who created all matter and life in the universe. Native peoples of the North America revered fire as a manifestation of the Great Spirit (Rudenko & Sobolievskiy 2020). The hearth was the symbol of happiness and prosperity and the Sun was the 'Great Fire'. One of the symbols of Buddha is the pillar of fire. Its light is a metaphor for wisdom in the Christian God (Yahweh, or fire begotten) (Tokarev 2003).

In myths, fire can appear in anthropomorphic images as a warrior, or a protector. For example, a snake, which is endowed with a dark nature, and is a personification of the forces of darkness. Fire has a dark side in eschatological myths, in which it burns the world. For instance, the Scandinavian fire giant Surtr. In the myths of the native peoples of Central America, the god of fire Shiutekutli was also the god of volcanoes.

World mythology presents the element of fire as two-faced and central in the fight against the forces of evil. Thus, the Scandinavians in their myths describe the fiery land of Muspelheim, which existed before creation. The Edda says that the warriors of this country took part in the final eschatological battle with the gods of evil. The Archangel Michael in Judaic, Christian, and Muslim mythology has a positive fiery nature as the leader (archistratigus) of the heavenly army in the final eschatological battle against the forces of evil. A universal motif of celestial fire's confrontation with the forces of darkness is carried by the thunderous myth of the war of the Thunder god with the serpent, associated with the liberation of heavenly and earthly waters (Balu and Yammu in Semitic mythology, Zeus and Typhon in Greek mythology, Indra and Vritra in Vedic mythology, Perun and Veles in Slavic mythology) (Gardner 2019; Litovka 2013; Van Rooyen 2020).

On the basis of a wide illustrative material, we observe, at the level of early mythology, the allocation of significant elements of their gods or spirits, as well as a two-sided opposition of the elements: fire – water or earth – sky. In the early stages of mythology itself, the formation and isolation of ideas about large groups of four or more elements is not observed. Such representations are accompanied by the construction of further

complex hierarchies of spirits of each of the elements or the gods who control them (Grant 1996; Van der Poel 1997).

The theology of one Deity, viewed as the Creator, moves away from considering the theme of the elements as the most important concept of cosmology. Scholastic and subsequent esoteric and philosophical sources of the Renaissance and later time are based on the concept of the elements, characteristic of ancient thinkers. Thus, the concept of the elements, as one of the defining cosmogonic components of the worldview, is not characteristic either for the early mythology of most peoples, or for the developed theology of monotheism. The concept of the elements and their hierarchy should be considered to a greater extent as an instrumental representation of natural philosophy and as an important stage in the formation of philosophical thought.

## Discussion

The essential part of the mythologised cosmos is the sky, which represents the top, the roof of the world. The cosmogonic pair 'heaven and earth' marks the vertical parameters of the universe, top and bottom. They see everything, and between them all living things are located; they are the home for the world.

In many mythologies the sky is portrayed as divided into several spheres or levels rather than unified, which can imply the symbolism of both air and ether. Archaic myths specifically worship the sky, as well as various celestial and air phenomena, particularly in the forms of several deities. Moreover, the god of the sky could reincarnate as a Thunder god, an anthropomorphic god, a demiurge, or become a 'celebratory god' that has long since withdrawn.

Secheşan (2013) in his work *Mythology of the Earth* suggests that the main female deity is often juxtaposed with the Earth, but the image of the Mother-Goddess was not unified originally. The roles of the Mother-Goddess were shared between many mythological characters. Secheşan identifies feminine creativity in nature as the primary function of the Earth in mythology, but there is also a second important function of patronising cities and culture in general. A third, contradictory characteristic, also found in many mythologies, is the Earth's association with war and savagery. Bellona (goddess of war in Rome) was identified with the Thracian Ma. Later the violent and orgiastic cults of Ma/Bellona and Cybele merged. At the same time Ishtar and Cybele are all depicted with crowns in the form of city walls because they are associated with urban culture.

Creation myths often feature a plot involving the deified Earth paired with Heaven. It was their union that gave rise to life in the universe as well as gave birth to the other gods. The cosmogonic myths describe the creation of the world as the separation of Father Sky and Mother Earth after sexual intercourse. The formation of the cosmos is associated with their sacred marriage. Therefore, it is not always possible to

consider the meaning of the earth element in isolation from the element of air.

The marriage of Heaven and Earth is the main marriage myth. It was this marriage that initiated the creation of the world. In many mythologies, this marriage is described as the primary existence of a single two-gendered being who remains in eternal copulation. In the mythical stories of the ancient Egypt, India and China, the beginning of creation is the result of children coming out of the womb of this being (Litovka 2013; Mays & Angelakis 2019). Sometimes Earth and Heaven are not a single personified pair, but their separation by the creator generates a kind of marriage associations. When they are separated by the demiurge, space is filled with landscape, people, and so on, while Heaven and Earth are simultaneously separated and united by the world vertical. The sacred marriage in this case is constantly repeated in the form of rain and lightning, generating various goods rather than the entire World.

In the works of Garcia and Vazquez (2018) and Frazer (2019) fire and water are described as the fundamental elements of the universe serving as the primary material for cosmogenesis. These elements symbolise divine energy, purification, revelation, transfiguration, rebirth, and passion. However, fire and water, can be both creative and destructive elements. In eschatological myths, fire becomes the cause of the universe's destruction (Secheşan, 2013). Therefore, fire worshipping rituals can be based on the motives of appreciation and fear. In the beginning, fire was worshipped as a god, but in later rituals it served as a symbol of divine power. In ancient times fire was perceived as living. It ate, then grew and died, and afterwards it was born again as the earthly embodiment of the heavenly fire, the Sun (Jung 2014; Lévy-Bruhl 2020).

In ancient times, fire was the test of honesty and integrity. In Christianity, fire is the ultimate test of virtue and faith. The emblem of St. Anthony and St. Augustine, for example, was a flaming heart (Falcasantos 2018; Stemp 2016). The fires of the Inquisition during the Middle Ages led to the belief that fire can cleanse evil. This characteristic of fire is similarly depicted in the flaming swords of angels who protect the lost paradise.

Water, as an element hostile to humanity, in world mythology and folklore also has a rather ramified symbolism. The depths of water in culture are a symbol of the unknown and danger, and the arriving water also symbolises danger. The sea and river are symbols of obstacles, a metaphor for initiation, transition, or death. Acheron transports the souls of the dead across the Styx. A creek or a stream is associated with the relentless flow of time, which cannot be returned because one cannot enter the same river twice (Lardinois 2018; West 1971). Lethe as a river of oblivion is a common image of world mythology.

## Conclusions

The study is devoted to the study of the place and role of the concept of the elements in the cosmogonic concepts of various peoples and tries to determine whether this concept is really folkloric or of a later origin. The elements – earth, air, fire, water, and ether – are the basic constituents and components of the universe, as well as the basic principles of world structure. For the first time, the constituent parts of the world's structure were distinguished in ancient Eastern culture. The Chinese teachings of the 2nd millennium BC named the five structural elements as water, fire, earth, wood, and metal. The ancient Greek philosophers name five structural elements, four of which have roots in ancient mythology. Ether, the layer of atmosphere closest to the earth, luminous in mythological texts, is described in passing as several spheres of the heavens. Heaven in mythology is an active creating force, containing fire and ether. It is described as the masculine beginning of the universe. The sky is generally represented by the main male deities, signifying the life-giving spirit of air, the omnipresent energy, and the seed capable of impregnating the flesh. In mythology, it is the Father Sky who creates the world by thought (ether), fire, word, or deeds allowing all living things to develop.

The theology of one Deity moves away from considering the theme of the Elements as the most important concept of cosmology. Scholastic and subsequent esoteric and philosophers of the Renaissance and later time are based on the concept of the elements, characteristic of ancient thinkers. The concept of the elements, as one of the defining cosmogonic components, is not a significant characteristic of the early mythology of most civilisations, or for the developed theology of monotheism. The concept of the elements in their hierarchy should be considered to a greater extent as an instrumental representation of natural philosophy and as an important stage in the formation of philosophical thought.

The results of the article can be used in scientific research in the field of theological studies, folklore and ethnology.

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### Authors' contributions

All authors of this manuscript have made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study; the acquisition of data; the analysis and interpretation of data; drafting the article and revising it critically for important intellectual content; and the final approval of the version to be submitted.

## Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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## Disclaimer

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