RUSYN EASTER EGGS FROM EASTERN SLOVAKIA

Pavlo Markovyč

BRAUMÜLLER

Rusyn Easter Eggs From Eastern Slovakia

Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship
Published under the auspices of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center
Patricia A. Krafcik and Paul R. Magocsi, editors

1. Pavlo Markovyč, *Rusyn Easter Eggs From Eastern Slovakia* (1987)
2. Aleksei L. Petrov, *The Oldest Documents Concerning the History of the Carpatho-Rusyn Church and Eparchy, 1391—1498* (1988)
3. Alexander Bonkáló, *The Rusyns* (1988)

Pavlo Markovyč

RUSYN EASTER EGGS FROM EASTERN SLOVAKIA

Translated by
Marta *Skorupsky*

Photographs by
Anton *Žižka*

Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH., A-1090 Wien
1987

This volume originally appeared in Ukrainian under the title *Ukrajins'ki pysanky Schidnoji Slovaččyny,* and was published as Volume 6, part 2, in the series: *Naukovyj zbirnyk Muzeju Ukrajins'koji kul'tury v Svydnyku* (Prešov, 1972).

Publication of this translation is made possible in part through a grant from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc.

Markovyč. Pavlo:
Rusyn easter eggs from Eastern Slovakia / Pavlo Markovyč. — Wien : Braumüller, 1987.
ISBN 3-7003-0695-4.

Grafische Gestaltung: Christa Dorner
Satz: Raggl, Landeck
Repro: Reproform, Wien
Druck: Wiener Verlag, Himberg bei Wien

Printed in Austria

ISBN 3-7003-0695-4

PREFACE

The series entitled Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship is intended to make available in English translation some of the best monographs dealing with Carpatho-Rusyn culture. These monographs will deal with one or more scholarly disciplines: history, language, literature, ethnography, folklore, religion, music, and archeology.

The studies included in this series were first published for the most part during the twentieth century and were written in various languages by authors who may have had definite attitudes and preferences regarding the national and political orientations of the indigenous Carpatho-Rusyn population. Such preferences are often revealed in the terminology used to describe Rusyns — Carpatho-Ruthenians, Carpatho-Russians, Carpatho-Ukrainians, Ruthenes, Ruthenians, Rusyns, etc. In keeping with the policy of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, the inhabitants and culture which are the subject of this series will be referred to consistently as Carpatho-Rusyn or Rusyn, regardless what term or terms were used in the original work.

With the exception of this effort at terminological consistency, the translations in this series have otherwise not been altered or "improved" in relation to the original works. Whenever the English translation required the addition of a phrase or word, these are set off in brackets. Explanatory notes by the editor to aid the English reader are indicated as such. Incorrect personal or place names, and incomplete bibliographic and footnote references have been corrected or completed wherever possible.

The appearance in this series of scholarly monographs whose authors may favor a particular national (pro-Russian, pro-Rusyn, pro-Ukrainian), political (pro-Czechoslovak, pro-Hungarian, pro-Soviet), or ideological (pro-democratic, pro-Communist, pro-Christian) stance does not in any way reflect the policy or orientation of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. Rather, it is felt that the availability in English of many scholarly studies of varied ideological persuasions is the best way to improve our understanding and appreciation of Carpatho-Rusyn culture.

Unlike most of the other titles which will appear in this series, the author of this monograph, Pavlo Markovyč, was available for consultation during the editorial and publication process. As a result, it was possible to delete certain repetitious phrases from the original edition and to receive from the author data to complete certain footnote and bibliographic references. The author and editors also worked with Anton Žižka in the preparation of several new photographs to accompany this translation. Mr. Žižka was also extremely helpful in clarifying certain technical terms and uncommon dialectal words. A map has been prepared by the editors to help readers find villages referred to in the text.

As in other publications of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, placenames are rendered according to the official language used in the country where they are presently located; therefore, Slovak in the Slovak republic of Czechoslovakia and Ukrainian in the Transcarpathian oblast of the Ukrainian S.S.R. The international transliteration system has been used to render words and names in the Cyrillic alphabet.

Editors

Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship
Published under the auspices of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center
Patricia A. Krafcik and Paul R. Magocsi, editors

1. Pavlo Markovyč, *Rusyn Easter Eggs From Eastern Slovakia* (1987)
2. Aleksei L. Petrov, *The Oldest Documents Concerning the History of the Carpatho-Rusyn Church and Eparchy, 1391–1498* (1988)
3. Alexander Bonkáló, *The Rusyns* (1988)

tom of cremation persisted alongside the newer form for quite a long time. As late as the thirteenth century, there are still reports of the struggle waged by the Christian church and secular rulers against the custom of cremating bodies among both the western and eastern Slavs.

Offerings were placed in the grave regardless whether the deceased was cremated or inhumed. According to Lubor Niederle, "immediately following the cremation, or the following day, they gathered the ashes together with the charred remains of bones, weapons, and luxurious garments into a pile or into a separate recepticle, which they buried in the grave or placed on top of a stone or a stake, depending on the custom of the region. Into the recepticle containing the remains were added articles that the deceased might need in the next life, and sometimes they killed his wives, servants, and horses and buried them with him with the same purpose in mind. If the burial rite did not involve cremation, the body was lowered into the grave together with the assembled articles and a sacrificial fire was set on top, around which the funeral feast — the *tryzna* — was held. If the material and social status of the deceased was low (as in the case of slaves or servants — the so-called *otroky*), the graves were simple and without variation, the rite itself characterized by fewer ceremonial details, and the articles placed in the grave less festive and of poorer quality.

Many graves have been found on Slavic lands. They range from the simplest and poorest, which, instead of vessels with cremated remains, contain only small heaps of ashes, a few pottery fragments and traces of burning, to the rich graves of princes. It should be noted that a characteristic feature of all Slavic burials is their relative poverty when compared with those of the Normans in the north or the Scytho-Sarmatian and Turko-Tatar graves in the south."[7]

Doubtless this fact points to something that is as yet unknown about the life of the ancient Slavs. First of all, we are struck by the lack of luxury evident in the burials of the rich and mighty, even in cases where living people were sacrificed (in individual instances), not to mention animals sacrificed in accordance with the station in life of the deceased. We know that the ashes of the burned corpse were not always buried in the ground, but were sometimes "placed on top on a stone or a stake." The custom of taking food to the grave of the departed has survived in some remote localities inhabited by Slavs to this day. Even if this practice is an echo of the pre-Christian and Christian funeral feast, few remains of such offerings could have survived down to our times. All such phenomena, hidden by the mists of time, apply in equal measure to the *pysanka*.

The ritual of placing eggs or *pysankȳ* into the coffin is still occasionally observed in Eastern Slovakia. In almost every Rusyn village there still live people who remember seeing *pysankȳ* being placed in the grave. They even recall the funerals of specific individuals into whose caskets *pysankȳ* were placed. The witnesses of this custom, however, give varying interpretations of the symbolism involved.

Archaeological finds on the territory of Czechoslovakia corroborate the testimony of the older Rusyn residents that in this practice the eggs functioned as food. However the symbolic significance of eggs in the daily life of Rusyn villagers is gradually disappearing, and even though the custom of placing *pysankȳ* in coffins still persists here and there, it is now observed only when the deceased is a small child and the ornamented eggs are regarded as toys.

As late as the nineteenth and even at the outset of the twentieth century, *pysankȳ* were placed in the graves of children who died at Eastertime. Pelahija Vladyka, a 77-year-old woman from the village of Habura, recalls that before World War I she attended funerals at which *pysankȳ* were placed in the coffin. The eggs were arranged in a wreath around the body of the dead child. They were usually the most beautiful *pysankȳ*. In response to our question why

this was done, she answered: "It was the custom to place painted eggs in the grave. They were put there in order that the child should have something to eat and not go hungry. And because she died at Easter, she would have something to play with in the next world." The wreath of *pysankȳ* in the casket also served on ornamental function. When a young girl died, it was customary to place the *pysankȳ* in the shape of a wreath — the symbol of marriage.

We came across the same custom in Vydraň, Svetlice, and Uličské-Krivé. Maria Stošek, a 64-year-old resident of the village of Nová Sedlica, told us in 1964 that *pysankȳ* were placed in the caskets of children not only in her village, but in most neighboring villages as well. In this region, the ornamented eggs were tied in a kerchief and placed in the dead child's hands "so that it would have something to play with and enjoy, like children enjoy Easter."

The original significance the *pysanka* had in the pre-Christian period has disappeared. The remote echoes of this significance, reduced now to little more than the function of decoration and serving as food, are also disappearing. The placement of such food in the grave is a survival of the ancient belief that the deceased will require nourishment. A similar role is played by the *pysankȳ* placed as toys in a child's grave.

The function of the *pysankȳ* put in the coffins of young girls who die during the Easter festivities is now purely decorative. The symbolism, which reflects real situations, can be interpreted as follows: since the girl was unable to give her young man a *pysanka,* she was given a wreath of *pysankȳ* to wear in her grave in place of the marriage wreath she would never don. Some elements of this symbolism echo pagan beliefs (an afterlife), which, after modifications, became part of Christian ritual.

Since we are dealing with Rusyn and Ukrainian *pysankȳ* in general, it may be useful to quote the afterword to Erast Binjaševs'kyj's album, *Ukrainian pysankȳ:* "The origins of the Ukrainian *pysanka* are lost in the mists of prehistoric time. Its ornament echoes the ornament on the spherical surfaces of the pottery of the Trypilian culture [3500—1700 B.C.], which flourished in the Ukraine at the turn of the Neolithic and Bronze ages."[8] The earliest Ukrainian *pysanka,* which was found by archaeologists in the Kiev region, dates back to the tenth-eleventh centuries. In the introduction to his album, Binjaševs'kyj finds that "in ancient times, the art of painting *pysankȳ* was at its height in our land from the tenth to the thirteenth century. At that time, majolica craftsmen produced a great number of ceramic *pysankȳ* for the markets of Kievan Rus'. Examples of their craft can still be found in various historical museums throughout the Ukraine. It is interesting to note that despite the multitribal nature of the state of our ancestors, the artistic traditions of *pysanka*-making were confined only to those ethnic groups which in time became Ukrainians."[9]

A characteristic feature of the Rusyn *pysankȳ* in the Prešov Region is the local technique of applying the melted wax onto the surface of the egg with a "writing" instrument, known as a *pysal'ce.* It has a small head at the end, usually the head of a needle, a pin or a small nail, the sharp end of which has been inserted into a wooden holder. The primary element of the design using this technique is the wax stroke, which begins to narrow from the point of contact until it ends in a sharp tail. Depending on the nature of the ornament, this line can be either straight or curved.

All the *pysankȳ* included in Binjaševs'kyj's album under the heading "The Lemko Region" are of this type. There is no doubt that the Rusyn *pysankȳ* of the Prešov Region belong to the Lemko category. However, owing to more favorable conditions, it has attained exceptional development in Eastern Slovakia, and now differs in technical and coloristic means from the traditional Lemko *pysanka* found north of the Carpathians in historic Galicia. Therefore, it is more accurate to distinguish the *pysanka* of the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region as a separate

type. In addition to the Lemkos, Eastern Slovakia is also inhabited by the Bojkos, whose villages begin east of the Laborec River and extend into neighboring western and central Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia). The Bojkos as a whole have developed their own distinct type of *pysanka* (using a different technique and a different palette). This, however, does not apply to the Bojkos living in Eastern Slovakia, whose *pysanka* art has fallen under the complete domination of the Lemko technique of Easter egg ornamentation.

Some of the *pysankȳ* reproduced in Binjaševs'kyj's album deserve special attention. "Of particular interest," according to the author, "are such *pysankȳ* [from the Ukraine] as the 'Goddess' *(Bohynja)* from the village of Čapovyci in eastern Polissja (1966) and the 'Queen' *(Knjahynja)* from the village of Okopy in western Polissja (1967), which bear depictions of anthropomorphized figures that are completely identical to those widely used in the art of our ancestors (5th–6th centuries) to represent the mother goddess, the 'pagan' Great Goddess, or as she was also called, the Goddess Mokoš, the Goddess Berehynja, and the Goddess Živa. She always symbolized life and fertility and was worshipped as the mother of all living things.

The concept of the mother goddess was equally widespread among other peoples. She is personified among the Egyptians by Isis, among the Babylonians by Ishtar, among the Greeks by Hera, among the Thracians by Semele, and among the Scythians by Tabiti. Just as in antiquity, contemporary folk artists depict her with arms raised high. Today, this motif is widely used in embroidered and woven linens, tapestries, and carvings. Despite the fact that the depiction of the female figure by various craftsmen has been maximally stylized, the one unchanging element is her pose with arms uplifted in supplication."[10] The different figures displayed on certain *pysankȳ* from various parts of the Ukraine that are reproduced in the Binjaševs'kyj album, especially those utilizing asymmetrical composition, leave a very strong impression that these figures represent some former symbol or hieroglyph conveying an ancient, but now lost, meaning. For the study of history, this phenomenon is of great importance.

This feature is much less obvious in the Rusyn *pysankȳ* of the Prešov Region. The reason has to do with the fact that the *pysankȳ* from the Podillja, Polissja, Poltava, Kharkiv and some other Ukrainian regions use the linear technique of decoration, which is better suited to conserving the archaic design. In contrast, the Lemko and Prešov Region *pysankȳ* are characterized by short strokes. These short wax strokes, made by applying the "writing" instrument in a jerking motion, allow for an unlimited number of possibilities in reworking old motifs. The design produced by this technique is therefore always more abstract than the design made using a solid line. Designs executed in this fashion thus diverge more easily from their original symbolic significance, especially in an age when their pre-Christian magical-symbolic meanings are disappearing. Nonetheless, although the Lemko *pysanka* ornament evolved in a purely decorative direction, it has not broken completely with symbolism (see below, Chapter 9).

The Lemko technique of ornamenting *pysankȳ* spread to other Ukrainian regions. Thus Binjaševs'kyj's album shows examples of the Lemko-style *pysanka* in central Galicia, Transcarpathia, and the Przemyśl region.[11]

The perfected Lemko type of Rusyn *pysanka* found in Eastern Slovakia is able to endure in its own right. Not only is it evolving qualitatively, it is diffusing territorially as well. Its diffusion has resulted, in part, from the fact that in socialist Czechoslovakia, the Rusyn villages have become less isolated. Even Rusyn women, who for one reason or another now live in central or western Slovakia, continue to paint their *pysankȳ* in the traditional style despite having settled in different surroundings.

Although we speak of the stability of Eastern Slo-

vakia's Rusyn (Lemko) *pysanka* and, what is more, its tendency to spread to other territories, we do not mean to imply that it is completely isolated from outside influences. It does, however, transform these influences to conform with its own traditional techniques. For instance, in recent times, some *pysanka*-painters in the Laborec valley have been drawn to the Hutsul *pysanka*. "The Hutsul *pysankŷ*," as described by Binjaševs'kyj, "comprise a special category when it comes to the high level of their artistry.

The Hutsul region is deservedly called the land of folk arts, and it is therefore not surprising that in our time the Hutsul folk artists have attained the highest level of perfection in *pysanka* ornamentation."[12] This is indeed true, and the attraction of the Hutsul *pysanka* for some Rusyn artists in the Prešov Region only attests further to their artistic taste and high creative standards. Even though this interest in Hutsul *pysankŷ* has been encountered only in individual instances, we have included examples of "Hutsul *pysankŷ*" produced by Rusyn folk artists in the Prešov Region as an appendix to this publication. Nevertheless, it is our opinion that the traditional Lemko type of *pysanka* will continue to endure as a mass phenomenon in the Prešov Region.

As one of the examples of Rusyn *pysankŷ* from the Prešov Region, Binjaševs'kyj cites the "Lilies of the Valley" *pysanka*. Only the principal elements of the flower are executed in the Lemko wax technique; the remainder use a technique borrowed from the Pokuttja region in the western Ukraine. Since we also find this technique used on some *pysankŷ* from neighboring Transcarpathia ("Little Baskets"), it is likely that it was transmitted from there into Eastern Slovakia, owing to the Prešov Region's historical contacts with Transcarpathia. But this *pysanka* style is an accidental phenomenon among the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia and has not taken root to any marked extent. In the Prešov Region of Eastern Slovakia, the linear style of ornamentation is most widespread in the region surrounding the Rusyn villages of Blažov, Torysky, and Nižné Repašé. However, the traditional Lemko style is used here with equal frequency.

In order to determine the interaction of influences in *pysanka* ornamentation, we would need separate editions illustrating each type of Rusyn (and non-Rusyn) ornamented Easter eggs. This publication is meant to be one such study. We hope to present as completely as possible the Rusyn *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia. We will, of course, be unable to include all existing examples, especially since the *pysanka* in this territory is still continuing to evolve.

2. THE NAMES OF PYSANKŸ

The Rusyn inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia use a number of different local names for their ornamented Easter eggs. Even in the same village Easter eggs are known by two or three names. Among such local names are: *pysane jajce, farbanka, farblene jajce, maljuvanka, maljuvane jajce, krašanka, krašene jajce, velykodnje jajce.* Although all of these designations are used in various localities of Eastern Slovakia, some are encountered less frequently than others.

In the Laborec valley, painted Easter eggs are called *krašenÿ jajcja.* On the other hand, the name *pysanka* is used in Ladomirová, Mirol'a, Vyšná and Nižná Pisaná, Krajná Bystrá and some other surrounding villages, as well as in the Snina region — in Klenová and in nearby areas populated by Rusyns. This name is used even in the westernmost Rusyn village of Helcmanovce. The designation *farblenÿ jajcja* predominates around Stakčín and in the villages of the Bardejov region (Dubova and others). In Vyšná Jedl'ová, Kružlová, Šemetkovce, Ladomirová and other nearby villages, the painted Easter eggs are referred to as *farbankÿ.* The inhabitants of the village of Snakov call them *maljovanÿ jajcja.* The same term can be heard in the villages of the Bardejov region.

A tendency to use these various names interchangeably is especially typical of the younger generation. Older people, however, seem to differentiate between the existing terms and use them to describe distinct forms and techniques of Easter-egg preparation. For example, there exists a significant difference in meaning between the names *pysanka* and *farbanka* (village of Ladomirová) and the names *krašene jajce, farblene jajce* and *velykodnje jajce* (village of Čertižné). These terms not only distinguish between different methods of making Easter eggs, they also imply differences between the symbolic significance of *pysankÿ* and that of *farbankÿ,* which results in different practical attitudes to them. The name *farbanka* or *farblene jajce* is used in the cited villages to designate eggs that are dyed a single color and bear no ornamentation or decorative designs on their surfaces. These eggs have always been hardboiled. They could be eaten or used in games, during which they could be broken or destroyed. It was this kind of Easter egg that was formerly given to children to play with. The exact opposite to the *farbankÿ* are the *pysankÿ, krašankÿ, krašenÿ jajcja* or *pysanÿ jajcja.* The latter type were all ornamented with the help of wax and dyed a variety of colors. Such distinctions indicate that in ancient times the designs executed on the *pysanka* had more than a decorative purpose, or at least, their significance was not solely decorative. In the past only raw eggs were used to make *pysankÿ* or *krašenÿ jajcja.* They were not used in games for fear of their being broken.

The distinction between *pysankÿ* or *krašankÿ* (raw eggs) on the one hand, and *farbankÿ* (boiled eggs) on the other, was recognized for a long time among the Rusyns of Eastern Slovakia and did not become obliterated until some time in the second half of the twentieth century. The one-way presentation of the *pysanka* (the girl always gives it to the boy) is the second aspect of the *pysanka* tradition that has come down to us in its purest form from the remote past, albeit losing much of its original, very

concrete, significance along the way. Eventually, boiled eggs came to be decorated in the same fashion as raw eggs, and the distinction between the *pysanka* or *krašanka* and the *farbanka* gradually began to disappear.

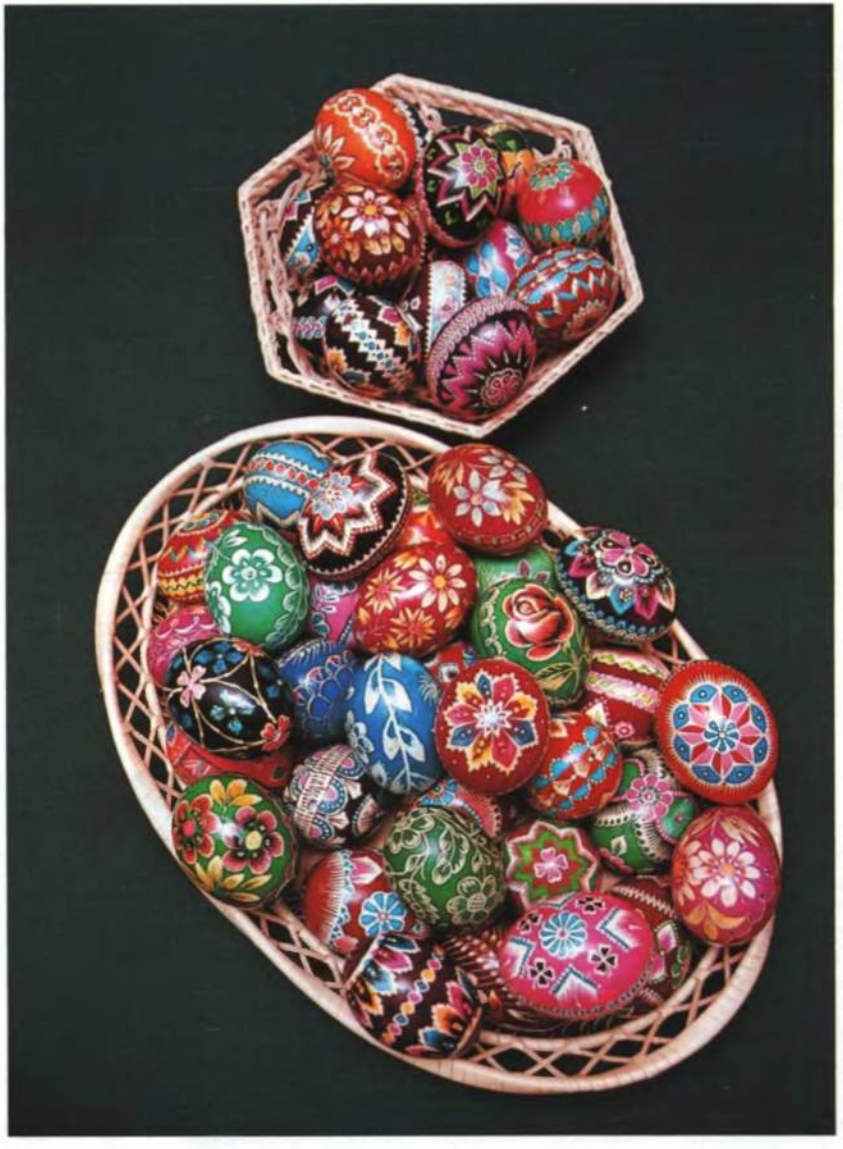
The older generation still remembers that both raw and boiled decorated eggs were placed in Easter baskets in the villages, although even by then the *pysankȳ* and *krašankȳ* could be either raw or boiled. This should be regarded as the earliest (first) stage in the change that has occurred in the significance attached to traditional "Easter eggs." Older people no longer remember a girl giving a boy a raw Easter egg, that is, the only kind of egg that could have once been used to make a *krašanka* or *pysanka.* The *pysanka* that a girl gave a boy was already a boiled egg. Linked to this is also a disregard for the former tradition of not giving children *pysankȳ* to play with. Since by our time the *pysanka* was already a boiled egg (except for the so-called "raw *pysankȳ*"), it could serve as a toy for children. This marked the second phase in the change in meaning of *pysankȳ* in folk life, and it was during this stage that the name *farbanka* began to be applied to it interchangeably. There is no doubt that one of the factors contributing to this change was the disappearance of the original pagan (magical) significance of the *pysanka* as the embodiment of the vital force of fertility. Until then the shell of the raw *pysanka* or *krašanka* was believed to contain the life principle — "the life-creating force that it was forbidden to destroy by boiling." This "life-creating force" could also be destroyed if such eggs were broken during children's games.

We have to conclude from this Easter tradition of preparing both raw and boiled *pysankȳ (krašankȳ)* and boiled *farbankȳ,* which is still remembered by older folk, that the *pysanka* (a raw egg) was once perceived as having a magical content, that it symbolized life. The obliteration of the distinction between *pysankȳ* and *krašankȳ* on the one hand and *farbankȳ* on the other led to a more practical approach to their use, as a result of which *farbankȳ* were also made of raw eggs. They were placed without ornamentation into cold dyes and later used in their raw form, for example, to make scrambled eggs.

This change in the symbolic meaning of *pysankȳ, krašankȳ,* and *farbankȳ* was accompanied by a loss of the original purpose of their ornamentation: the signs and symbols began to serve as mere decoration. In the past, *pysankȳ* were not only the symbol of birth and the fertility of nature. They were of much greater importance. They were considered sacred, and breaking them brought bad luck in personal life in the immediate future. Of course, this theory cannot be supported by tangible evidence, but such is the case with the majority of scientific assumptions that concern the earliest stages of human life.

Pysankȳ decorated with motifs that had religious significance, such as the sun, lightning, stars, crosses, double crosses, and the like, were no longer regarded as eggs. We know that in Slavic mythology the symbols of the sun and lightning were of profound importance. Great care was taken not to break *pysankȳ* that bore those symbols. Even today people show respect for objects that depict religious symbols. Take, for example, the sun or the cross portrayed on the ridge beams of old houses. When Christians find a fallen cross in the fields or the remains of one, they collect the pieces in order to ensure that neither man nor beast will step on it and thus "desecrate" it. In order to protect such religious objects from "desecration," they are usually burned.

Until quite recently, *pysankȳ* or *krašankȳ* were put away from Easter to Easter and, if the need arose, they were used to heal sickness or to avert misfortune. The tradition of collecting *pysankȳ* remains even now. But today *pysankȳ* are put away only because they are beautiful objects. As the centuries passed, the function of *pysankȳ* became much simpler. The closer to our own time, the more they moved away from their original significance, until finally they lost it altogether.



A selection of Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia prepared using the wax technique.

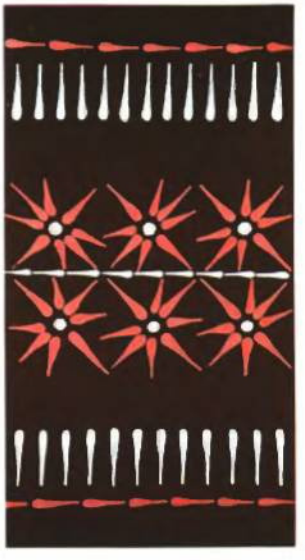
Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the scratching technique, by Štefan Čabrej and Mariana Pančákova from Ol'ka.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the scratching technique, by Stefan Čabrej and Mariana Pančakova from Ol'ka.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Irena Stimova, Anna Vasilenkova, and Marija Sitarova from the village of Ol'ka.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* with wax ornament in relief on the natural white egg surface and on eggs dyed a single color. Prepared by Anna Vasilenkova and Maria Chocholakova from Ol'ka.

Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* using pastels, by Eva Tjahlova from Čertižné.



Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the traditional wax technique, by Maria Chomčova from Medzilaborce.

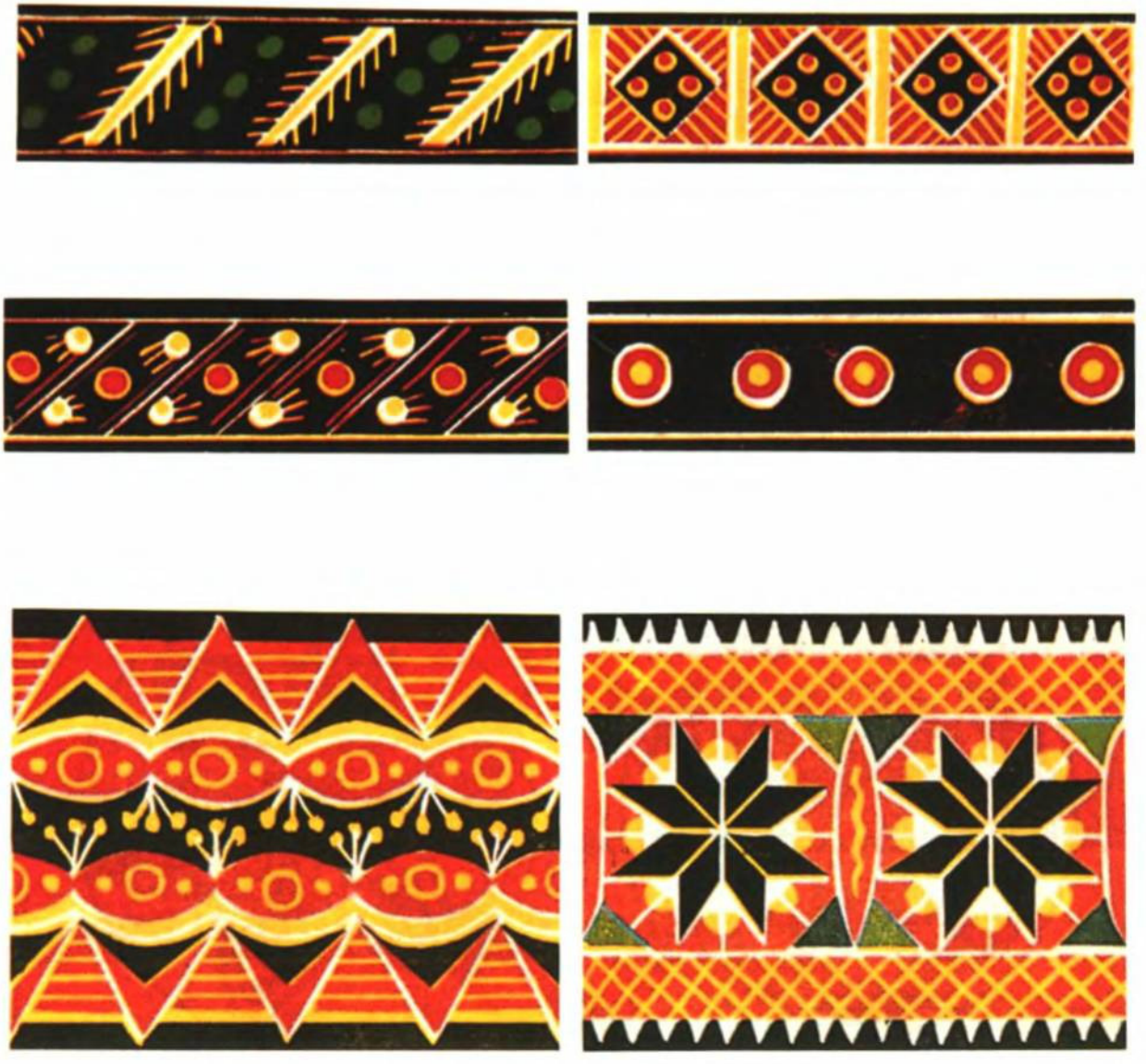
Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the traditional wax technique, by Maria Chomčova from Medzilaborce.

Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

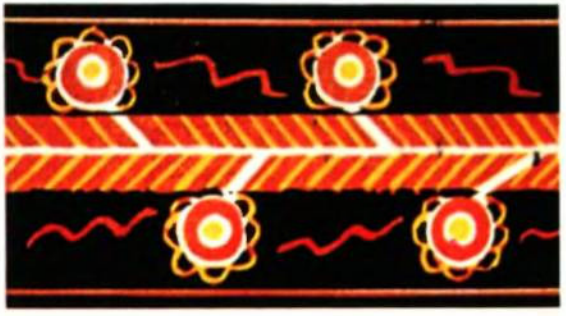
Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysanky* from Eastern Slovakia.

Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

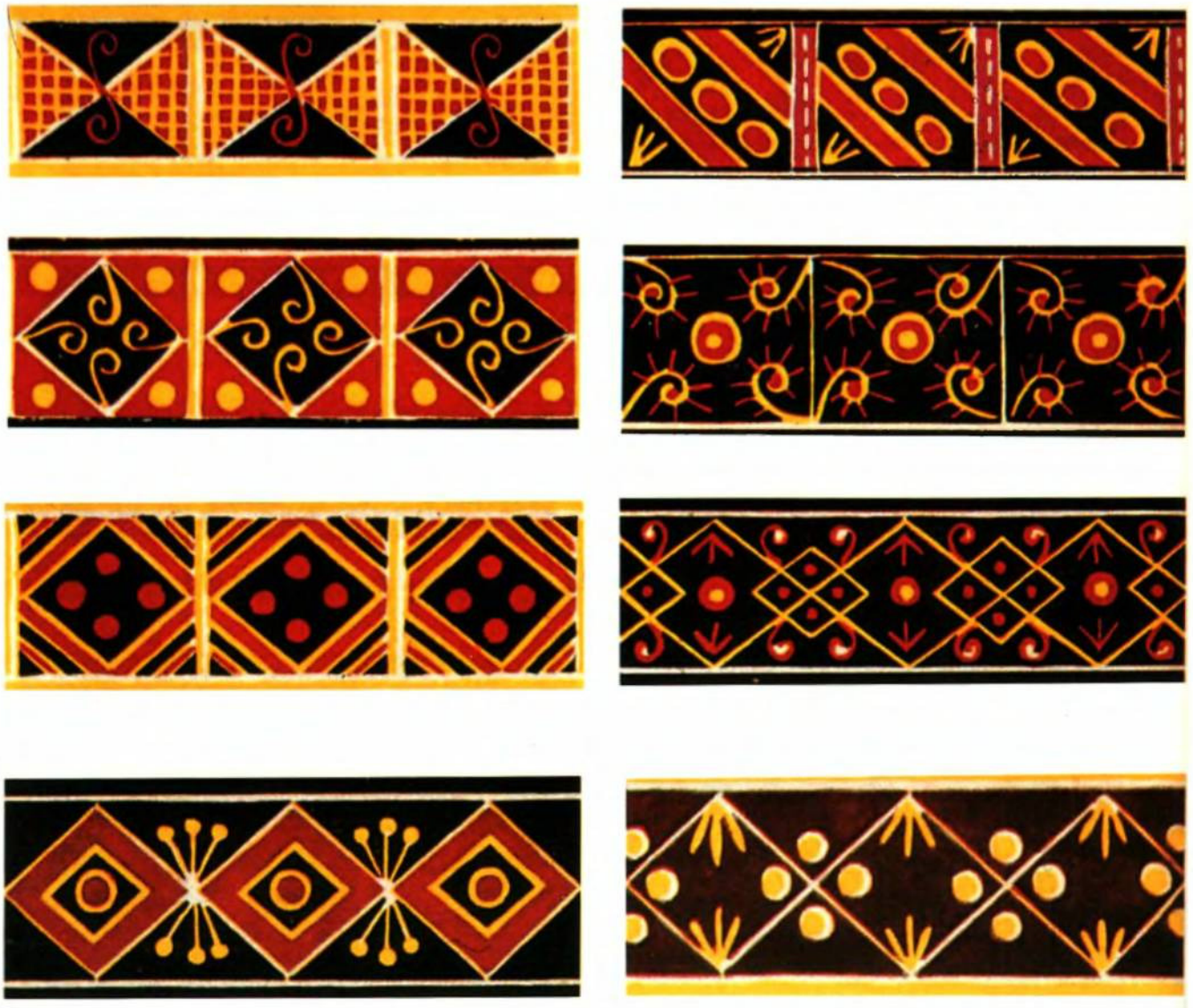
Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.



Design elements found on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.



Design elements found on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.



Design elements found on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

3. THE ORIGINS OF PYSANKA ORNAMENTATION

Ancient ornaments were not the products of individual villages. Rather society as a whole contributed to their evolution. Although it is true that decoration was always executed by individuals, these individuals merely enhanced the artistic accomplishments of their predecessors. Thus a society's ornamental devices provide a clear indication of its cultural level: the more beautiful and complex its ornamentation, the higher its level of enlightenment. Naturally, the term enlightenment is not used here in its modern sense.

Each folk artist was heir to the artistic traditions of his society and he approached ornamentation with a deep appreciation of the beauty of existing forms. Enriching them with his own creativity, he passes them on to his direct descendants and to future generations.

Ornamentation and the technical conditions of its evolution, specifically within the framework of the living conditions of the society in which it occurs, is of exceptional importance to scholars. Of equal interest, especially for the study of folk decoration, is the use of ornament and its significance on contemporary *pysankȳ*. Research in this field is therefore directed at learning the purpose of ornamentation, the time and source of its origin, and the methods used to execute it, as well as identifying its themes, elements and motifs, and the content of agrarian-pastoral culture.

Nearly all scholars agree that the ornamentation of *pysankȳ* in all its forms is unique and that its themes are peculiar to them alone. *Pysankȳ* represent a form of folk art that through their creative elements are related to folk ornamental traditions. The women who paint *pysankȳ* use motifs derived from the local flora and the large assortment of objects commonly found in the indigenous patriarchal form of society. These ornamental motifs are indeed drawn from all branches of the local economy and in some cases from mythology.

In the majority of instances, *pysanka* ornamentation makes use of its own elements, motifs, symbols, and signs, as well as designs that are not found in other forms of folk art. This is because the *pysanka* ornament is determined in large measure by the material on which it is executed — the oval shape of the egg — and the methods of decoration that it permits. The motifs found on ornamented Easter eggs recreate a world that is close to real. Here images from real life are subjected to no more than decorative generalization. In addition to representational designs, *pysanka* ornamentation includes abstract motifs, which appear at first glance to bear no relation to nature or society in a morphological or thematic sense, being the cumulative creation of many generations with origins in the beginnings of human civilization. By now, it is nearly impossible to uncover their original meanings. In the past, certain ornamental forms had a magical-religious significance. From the history of ancient peoples we know some of the *pysanka's* graphic elements were in fact symbols and signs, occasionally even of a talismanic nature. (The lotus flower was the symbol of plenty, the papyrus flower represented the Northern

Kingdom of Egypt.) Each symbol stood for a concept that was part of man's intellectual framework at a certain period. By means of this condensed form of expression, it was possible to convey ideas that were difficult to put into words even in circumstances where a developed language existed. Concepts are always much more easily communicated in simple graphic terms by means of signs and symbols than by words.

It should be kept in mind that the ancient motifs on painted Easter eggs symbolized either benevolence or malignity. Consequently, their use in *pysanka* ornamentation was not dictated by the artist's whim, but rather by necessity. In ancient times, the decoration of *pysankŷ* was part of daily life, associated with various situations and with different human needs and desires. Some symbols (the sun, lightning) could serve more than one function in *pysanka* ornamentation. Symbols were painted on the shells of eggs to convey ideas, feelings, and notions about natural forces, which were perceived as mysterious, terrible, incomprehensible, and fatal. Even then, the meanings of many symbols were veiled in abstraction, so that today, many centuries later, scholars can no longer determine their original significance.

As we know, symbols played an important positive role in the history of mankind (for example, in writing combined with pictography). Some ancient graphic symbols have come down to us as enigmatic images from which all trace of the concrete concepts they might have once represented has long since disappeared. To the contemporary eye, they are no more than abstract decorative motifs.

The large variety of forms adopted in symbolism includes zoomorphic and phitomorphic motifs and colors, as well as certain numbers such as 7, 13, 21. Quite naturally, the relationship between man and object is of primary importance in the study of the symbolism of motifs. Taking into account the above, the task of analyzing every sign in folk ornamentation in order to determine its symbolic meaning would constitute a utopian endeavor and almost certainly prove counterproductive.

Folk ornamentation, like folk art in general, is in a state of continual evolution. Although this process is occurring very slowly and almost imperceptibly, new symbols are constantly emerging, while others are disappearing. As man evolves spiritually, he continues to accumulate and develop symbols as a means of arousing associations and conveying connotations. In every country and in every age, symbols have always served a utilitarian purpose, reflecting internal and external historical changes in the fate of human societies. Symbols altered their form, assumed different meanings, often lost their significance altogether. This is probably the only explanation for the great variety of motifs and symbolic manifestations in folk ornamentation. Symbols in ornament with their laconically schematic meanings are now often incomprehensible to the great majority of people. Such symbolism poses even greater difficulties for the contemporary scholar than the ancient artistic depictions that have survived in their original form on various archaeological finds.

All branches of art created in the past require a significant amount of theoretical preparation on the part of the present-day viewer. Such preparation is even more essential in the study of the conventional signs and symbols that evolved in the context of a perception of reality long since nonexistent. Moreover, because these symbols have also undergone a process of aesthetic "improvement," their associative links with what they once represented are by now unfathomable and therefore virtually inaccessible to the contemporary investigator. Even for the researcher such signs and symbols often have no other significance or value than the aesthetic impression they leave.

There are very many signs and symbols in our life which have lost their original meaning and have undergone so many formal changes with the passage

of time that they are no longer able to communicate their original content. Deciphering them is made even more difficult by the fact that they may also have been transposed to objects on which they did not customarily appear in ancient times. Although these are precisely the motifs that are of greatest interest to scholars, it is often impossible to determine to which subject group they belong. Their value lies in their long history, and while they have retained their coded and enigmatic text, they still remain popular as favorite motifs in folk ornamentation. At the time of the emergence of these signs and symbols it is unlikely that their use and application on objects was dictated by decorative considerations, because in the remote past it is difficult to imagine man using symbols solely for embellishment.

The oldest remains of material culture uncovered by archaeologists often bear various wavy lines, triangles, circles, and spirals, motifs that occur in many different countries. Their ubiquity is largely the result of migrations, wars, trade, and cultural contacts, which promoted greater interaction between cultures and the diffusion of new motifs. This makes the contemporary study of the origin of the designs very difficult.

Preserved in the vast treasury of folk art and folkways are a great number of things that man believed protected him from harm by invoking the "forces of good" to combat "the forces of evil." Even today, some African, Australian, and other small and isolated ethnic groups existing at a lower level of cultural evolution make use of ornamental motifs, the nature of which has little to do with mere decoration of household objects. These motifs have a magical intent of ensuring success in military or other utilitarian endeavors. (Tattooing is one example).

Purposeless aestheticism was not a consideration at lower stages of cultural development when all aspects of human activity served practical purposes. Signs and symbols became ends in themselves only much later, as part of the material advance of society. In spite of this, signs and symbols did acquire aesthetic significance, and therefore this aspect cannot be separated from the utilitarian one. Both the aesthetic and utilitarian aspect of signs and symbols are integral to the purpose and function of everyday objects. If a symbolic motif was expected to activate some supernatural force, it was unlikely that it would be carelessly executed. The degree of artistry of its execution probably expressed the degree of efficacy with which it was expected to court the mysterious force to which it was addressed.

There are many identical, similar, or closely related motifs in the ornamentation of different peoples. It is likely that at one time they were common to all human societies. This conclusion is suggested by the fact that motifs found on the *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia are also present in Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, Africa, and elsewhere. It is true, however, that these common designs exist on quite different household objects or folk architectural structures in the different regions.

For example, we frequently encounter the same elements in *pysanka* ornamentation as those used by the Indian tribes of the Americas in their folk art. The twin-form pottery of the Chimú culture of Peru featuring a modeled pelican decorated with wavy lines (the meander motif) is but one example of such similarities. Another is the geometric ornament comprised of stylized lozenge and pine-needle designs on the pottery of the Incas. The circle and sawtooth motifs displayed on Inca wooden beakers are also present in the Rusyn ornamentation of Eastern Slovakia. The Incas decorated their amphoras, the so-called "aryballus," with a geometric lozenge design. All these motifs (meander, lozenge, stylized pine needles, circle, sawtooth, and dentate lines) are also characteristic of the folk ornament of central Europe as a whole, including Eastern Slovakia.[13]

However, this is not a case of cultural interplay, even though the ornamental motifs on Inca house-

hold objects may resemble in compositional resolution those peculiar to the inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia. The difference between the Rusyn ornament of Eastern Slovakia and that of the Incas lies only in the use of patterns on different objects and different materials. This, and only this, results in a different technique of ornamentation. The meaning of the same symbols also varies. Ornamental devices that resemble in their motifs and execution those used by Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia are also found in the folk art of the Mayas of Central America (on the territory of Yucatán, Tabasco, the department of Petén with its adjacent highlands in southern Guatemala, all of British Honduras, as well as the western part of Honduras). Similarly, many elements and design motifs occurring in the ancient cultures of Mexico and neighboring countries are identical to those found in the ornamentation of Eastern Slovakia's Rusyns. These include the double broken zigzag lines and the rhomb shaded with cross lines, as well as the plait motif with all its compositional variants. Many more examples could be cited.[14]

The ornamental motifs from the American continent exemplify a highly developed culture with a long history. In citing these examples, it is not our intention to equate the artistic levels of the two cultures. We are, after all, dealing with different societies existing in different periods of time. We wish only to point out some features that are common to the ornamentation of both — shared characteristics that probably evolved because of largely similar living conditions in the Carpathians and Central America in the remote past.

In ancient ornament, stars, crosses, and the sun are associated with the calendar and they signify the same thing in different cultures: happiness, wealth, positive qualities. Some of these symbols have endured for millennia, others have disappeared over the centuries or re-emerged, identical in design, but with a different meaning. Symbols were an essential part of life in the past; we cannot live without them today; and they will remain with us in the future. Only symbolism enables us to use the simplest graphic means to compress a diversified framework of thoughts into an instantaneous expression. Nonobjective, abstract notions have always been conveyed symbolically. In modern life, we resort to symbols whenever verbal communication is perceived as too pedestrian or whenever the customary means available in painting would require a series of pictures to present the subject. Moreover, the symbol communicates a content that is understood by everyone.

The meanings of signs and symbols on ancient *pysankȳ* were also universally comprehended. Then, too, many pages of written explanation would have been needed to convey those meanings. Since in that age there was no writing as we know it today, it stands to reason that our ancestors used signs and symbols on household objects and on raw ("living") birds' eggs as the only means available to them for transmitting concepts.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF GENERAL ORNAMENTAL DEVICES ON THE PYSANKA ORNAMENT

The motifs and thematic content of *pysanka* ornamentation are drawn from everyday life, reflecting the occupations and the social and spiritual traditions of the people. *Pysanka* designs mirror the joys and sorrows of peasant life — a life made up of work in the fields, in the farmyard, and in the home.

Since ancient times, the primary occupation of the Rusyns of Eastern Slovakia, like that of other societies, has been agriculture. The life of farmers in this mountainous region has always been hard. In summer, work on a farm begins at dawn and ends long after sunset. Until quite recently, the daily life of Rusyns consisted of such activities as stockraising, sheep herding, poultry breeding, gardening, weaving, beekeeping, lumbering, smithery, stone quarrying, fodder storage, carpentry, building, manufacturing farm tools, basketry, charcoal burning, hunting, making straw binding for sheaves, carting, fishing, glassworking, and the like. Many of these jobs are performed from early spring until the onset of winter and are carried out far from the village — in the fields, woods, or on mountain slopes.

This combination of principal and subsidiary occupations, as well as the circumstances in which the Rusyn ethnic consciousness evolved on the territory of present-day Eastern Slovakia, resulted in the accumulation of a certain kind of material, spiritual, social, and artistic experience. This, in turn, influenced and determined the community's forms of folk art, including the motifs, subject matter, and composition of *pysanka* ornamentation.

Many changes occurred in the way of life of the peasants of Eastern Slovakia during their centuries-long history. It was a history rich in events affecting the nature of all folk products. Many of the external and internal factors that caused these changes in remote times will forever remain a mystery. To a greater or lesser degree, the changes themselves are mirrored in the *pysanka* traditions. Owing to them, new elements, motifs, techniques, and a new perception of reality were introduced into the art of *pysanka* ornamentation. All the components of representational art were enriched. Naturally, not every change in the peasants' way of life contributed equally to this enrichment. Nor is every change of equal importance to scholarship. Some changes, such as those for example that led to the loss of symbolic significance by some elements, leave scholars powerless in their quest for answers. On the other hand, the changes that resulted in the adoption of the socialist order are of major significance to scholarship, because they created hitherto unprecedented conditions in the history of mankind for the study of all the attainments of folk culture.

Even in prehistoric times, man strove to embellish, adorn, and beautify his living quarters, clothing, household objects, and tools. Life consisted of work — and work was regular and had its own rhythm. Certain impulses inherent in all work attract man to engage in some form of activity. We exhibit a certain attitude to work, to its purpose, and to its end product. Quality is an aspect of all work, and in folk art it produces significant cultural achievements. Expectations with regard to work are measured by its

usefulness, the practical application of its results, and the degree to which it is necessary and effective. In this list of expectations, the aesthetic value of the product has never been in last place. It is difficult to assess the value of an object that serves no useful purpose. This has always been true — as much so in the case of ancient man as in the case of his contemporary counterpart.

As man set about making tools or household objects, he began to realize that rhythmic and flowing motions required less effort and expenditure of energy than disorganized and chaotic ones. In the process of making a wicker fence or a basket, for instance, the hands repeat their motions in a highly rhythmic manner. The hand or tool falls on the twigs with regularity, establishing a certain work cadence. Such rhythm constitutes a fundamental characteristic of ornamentation.

Every person who decides to decorate something attempts to bring his own sense of order to the ornament. Artistic intent always plays an important role. The rhythm of work and the regularity of repeated motions — characteristics seen in making household articles — have also both become features of folk ornamentation. When executing his ornamental designs, the artist related emotionally to the product of his labor, thereby laying the foundations of the principles of aesthetics. In these principles, the utility of the product became organically linked with its beauty.

Like all social phenomena, ornamentation has its own laws — clarity of outline, color and tonal contrasts, harmony, rhythm, symmetry, simplicity of design, regularity, economy, expressiveness of forms, quiet composition, monumentality, and so forth. No folk artist ever wrote down these canons, but all recognized them and traditionally handed them down from generation to generation. These laws, intuitively understood by each folk ornamentalist, always gave a special character to artistic creativity that resulted in a unique style. Consequently, the art of every historical period developed its own stylistic characteristics.

Styles should be regarded as currents in the material and spiritual cultures of various peoples. Artistic styles are the aggregate of an ethnic group's most diverse characteristics. Occasionally style is the result of an individual creative manner. Individual styles developed by a few outstanding artists exerted a great influence on the entire development and the general orientation of all folk art.

Because folk art grew out of the essential needs and daily concerns of people, it has always played an important social role. It did so at the time of its origin, and it does so now. In the not so distant past, folk art also served as a vehicle for the spread of national consciousness among the working people. It encouraged and inspired people to work on behalf of the national cause and it sustained the people's strength and hope for a better future. The bourgeois strata promoted and supported folk art, because this served their purposes in the period of the decline of feudal relations. This was their way of masking their own class interests with respect to the peasants and workers in an attempt to deny the true class status of the common people and thus assume the role of their most natural representative. Members of the bourgeoisie often wore "folk dress" so as to win favor with the peasantry. On the other hand, we know that the conservative middle classes were often unable to contain their anger when village women attempted to make their style of dress resemble that of their town or city counterparts. They even forbade their servant women to wear anything other than "folk dress." The ornamental embroidery on the clothing of peasants was thus meant to separate servants from their masters. This was the rule rather than the exception during the nineteenth and even at the beginning of the twentieth century.

During the nineteenth century, folk art performed an important cultural-historical role. It cultivated ar-

tistic taste and taught the appreciation of lofty artistic values. Moreover, respect for folk art contributed to the growth of national and social consciousness among the popular masses during their struggle against social exploitation. The refinement of artistic taste that folk art fostered, in turn, improved relations among people and in no lesser degree their attitude to work. True folk artists had a highly developed sense of aesthetic discernment, and it is they who laid the foundations of progressive aesthetics. In evaluating the product of their labor, folk artists were concerned that the household objects they made conform to their own standards of excellence. A profound knowledge of folklore served as the basis for the formation of folk culture as a whole. Folk songs, tales, ballads, sayings, rituals, and customs on the one hand and embroidery on folk costumes and household items, carving and incrustation in wood, ceramics, *pysankȳ,* and folk architecture on the other constituted the foundation of what later became contemporary progressive aesthetics. Thus, folk creativity cultivated aesthetic relations among people, the ability to recognize the originality and uniqueness of the content and form of any artistic work, and the critical faculty to judge the value of each work.

It is difficult to imagine life without art. In all its diverse forms, art enriches, embellishes, and ennobles everyday life. Hundreds of creative geniuses have drawn inspiration and energy from folk art. Whom has folk art not affected? As an integral part of human history, art plays a role in man's joys and sorrows, it helps him in his work, it enhances the festiveness of his rituals, it lives with and survives him as it continues to evolve. When interest in art declines, so does interest in life. Life and art are inseparable. Any decline in the way of life is always reflected in art. The famous French sculptor Rodin once said that without art even life in the material sphere is impoverished.

Unfortunately, some forms of folk art have almost disappeared in our time. In particular, there has been a decline in folk art production. A great many beautifully embroidered articles are no longer part of peasant life. They are no longer displayed as decoration in peasant houses, but instead they are hidden away in closets or have been discarded altogether. In the process of studying ornamentation, we were struck by the fact that the place in the village house formerly reserved for traditional folk art handiwork has now been given over to trite and frequently cheap decorative items. We believe that this is a temporary phase, and reflects a certain lack of cohesive interaction between modern room furnishings and traditional folk art. We should give more assistance to our modern village dwellers in resolving this problem. On the other hand, of all the forms of folk art, the *pysanka* tradition has not declined in the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region. If anything, it is attaining even higher artistic levels under our new conditions of life.

When studying *pysanka* ornament, one must keep in mind all the circumstances and events with which this phenomenon is associated. The researcher may not concentrate on one aspect at the expense of others. *Pysankȳ* must be studied in terms of their aesthetic qualities, the full range of their significance, and their function both in the past and in the present. The practical and aesthetic role of the *pysanka* in the past reflects the two aspects of all art. On the *pysanka,* they remain harmoniously combined to this day. Unfortunately, the majority of people fail to see this unity. Today, *pysankȳ* have also become a commodity in both the domestic and foreign marketplaces. Because of this, they are now made throughout the entire year. In this regard, only the *pysanka's* aesthetic aspect is considered.

There are many ornamented household objects in peasant life. Even though their function does not require that they be decorated, they are, nevertheless, embellished. Examples of such objects are lace-frames, distaffs, yokes, rakes, scythes, rooms,

fences, draw-wells, clothing, woven fabrics, crosses, wooden spoons, plates, and so forth. The question arises whether an ornamented distaff or rake from the village of Tichý Potok should be studied only from the standpoint of its aesthetic significance, or also in conjunction with its functional purpose in the life, customs, and rituals of the peasants.

The decoration of household objects is deeply rooted in various rituals and customs. When a child is born in a peasant home, the mother and infant are given a separate bed, which is curtained off with a large, richly ornamented, embroidered sheet, called a *zaslin'*. This sheet is used only for this one purpose and is always embroidered (as in examples from Lomné, Vydraň, etc.). There is also a kind of swaddling cloth, or *pryhartka,* which is used only when the infant is carried in its mother's arms. These customs are linked with the Christian ritual called *ovydky,* observed [generally six weeks] after the birth of a child, and they are part of a long folk tradition that consists of a variety of other rituals. Other examples are the decoration of houses, especially the windows with a periwinkle leaf ornament, or of the wedding carriage and horses used to carry the bride. Each such example of decoration (embroidered sheets, swaddling cloths, carriage horses) has a significance that surely goes beyond merely attracting attention to the decorated object. The articles in question cannot be viewed separately from the function that they once performed in everyday life. Nor can the function that they fulfill today be the sole point of reference. On the contrary, one must study carefully the traditions involved and learn to recognize in them the remnants of their former meaning.

The functions of decorated objects vary, and not all of these objects are of equal importance. Generally, those that are more important are more richly ornamented and can be regarded as ceremonial objects, while articles of everyday use are more modestly decorated. However, this is not always the case. For example, distaffs are tools of a seasonal nature used in the fall, winter, and occasionally in the spring. Although used only during the work week, they are richly ornamented with designs that are inlaid, burned, or incised. The same is true of the embroidery on peasant attire. Let us examine this using the example of the woman's blouse, called the *opliččja* or opličat. A new *opliččja* was first worn only on festive occasions, and only eventually, when older, worn in the fields. Of course, a poor peasant woman owned only one such blouse, which she wore both on holidays and when working. In such cases, she boiled and washed the *opliččja* on Saturdays and then wore it to church on Sundays.

The peasant year included days of special significance: Sundays, feastdays, wedding days (a wedding traditionally lasted three days). On such occasions, the house was decorated with the finest objects and the most beautiful clothes were worn. The best tablecloths, covers, runners, and towels gave village life a festive look. But the holiday look was not identical for poor and wealthy peasants. The poor peasant lacked both the money and the time to decorate richly his house and attire. The art of the *pysanka* was the only form of decoration that did not involve large financial expenditures. It was, therefore, very popular among the poor peasants and constituted a truly mass form of art. Perhaps that is the reason that it evolved to such a high degree of artistry.

Decorative objects had a place in both the utilitarian and ceremonial aspects of peasant life. If folk art is viewed solely from the standpoint of artistic considerations, without regard for the whole range of its other aspects, it would seem that today mass folk creativity has been completely separated from its utilitarian basis. Unfortunately, there is some truth to this. The conditions under which folk art products are made today, and especially the richly ornamented *pysankŷ,* might lead some to conclude that all this creativity has always been a matter of custom ob-

served by the ordinary peasant from the beginning of history.

For the longest time during his evolutionary process, ancient man was unable to explain many natural phenomena. Circumstances forced primitive man to resort to certain means that now appear ludicrous. Still, at the time, those were the only means available, and in accordance with the level of technology and economics of the day, they were quite normal if not very effective. Ancient man spent his entire life faced by a merciless and capricious nature, which on the one hand furnished him with all the necessities of life, yet on the other hand, continually threatened his life.

Should one be surprised, then, that in Rusyn village life several ancient and questionable forms of self-help based on unrealistic factors have survived to this day? In the folk imagination, the egg was long regarded as a magical tool, and in that role, the Rusyn *pysanka* in Eastern Slovakia has survived even the advent of socialism. There were logical reasons for this.

Until very recently, the inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia's Rusyn villages were subject to very unfavorable geographic conditions. Impoverished, and helpless, and at a very low level of education, they resorted to these illusory forms of self-help as late as the twentieth century, because the same economic base on which this reality was formed long ago survived until 1945. Owing to primitive communications, some villages and even entire districts populated by Rusyns were cut off from urban centers and isolated from more civilized parts of the world. Life was very backward, allowing for various primitive and fantastic forms of self-help to survive.

Before dealing with certain survivals of the past associated with the Rusyn *pysanka* of Eastern Slovakia, let us examine a few examples of old customs that are still observed in the villages, but which at first glance seem to bear no relation to *pysankȳ*. One custom that the older residents of many villages mention is the tradition of placing various articles into an infant's first bathwater. If the infant was a girl, she was given a needle and thread (so that she would make a good embroiderer), if a boy — a pencil was put into his first bath (so that he would learn to write and count). Sometimes a goose leg was added to an infant girl's bathwater (to ensure that when she grew up, her hands would not freeze as she washed clothes in the village stream). Anna Prejsa from the village of Čertižné told us that her mother had placed a goose leg in the basin when she gave her younger sister her first bath, and as a result the latter's hands never felt the cold when she washed clothes in the river. In her own case, however, the mother had failed to do this, and she always had to take along a pail of warm water when she went to do the washing in winter. Mothers added a wolf's paw to the first bathwater of their sons, so that they would run well, be strong, and have endurance. In addition, an egg was frequently added to the water for infants of both sexes to ensure good health, that is, in the hope that the child would grow up strong and as round as an egg. Milk and honey were also added, as seen from the following folk song:

> Купала-сь ня, мамко, в солодкім молоці,
> жебы ня любили найшумніши хлопці.
>
> You bathed me, mother, in sweet milk
> to make the most handsome boys love me.

In springtime, the farmer took an egg with him when he first set out to work in the fields. With this egg he stroked the chests of his horses, oxen, or cows to prevent the yoke or collar from rubbing them raw and so that they become as smooth as eggs. Later, this same egg was ploughed under into the first furrow to ensure a good harvest (Marija Vaško, 67 years old, Makovce). In the villages of Kríže and Bogliarka, farmers took a padlock along with an egg into the fields and buried them both in the soil. This

was to prevent worms from destroying the grain, potatoes, hemp, or other crops. An egg was inserted into the first cart of manure brought to the fields. According to M. Ksenjak, in the village of Svetlice they used to place an egg under a clod of earth when beginning to plough the field. At the same time the owner of the field recited: "Seeds, be as clean as this egg." This was the peasant's way of "warding off" the infestation of the grainfield by such weeds as cockles or thistles.

On the first day in spring that livestock were driven to pasture, the egg also played a part in the proceedings. The woman of the house always gave the herdsman an egg to place under the threshold of the stables so that all the cows had to step over it. The herdsman then took the same egg with him to the pasture. As soon as the cows began to graze, the shepherd would run around the herd three times with the egg in his hands for the purpose of making certain that the cows stayed together the entire year. He then rubbed each cow with the egg in the belief that this would make her beautiful, full, and round as an egg. In the evening, when he brought the herd home from pasture, he returned the egg to its owner (village of Frička). In the village of Šapinec it was customary to put a piece of chain under the threshold along with the egg. In other villages, the herdsman was given the same number of eggs to take to the pasture as there were cows in the herd. There he had to run around the herd three times carrying the bundle of eggs and reciting: "Stay together all year like the eggs in this bag."

Whenever a new house was built, a plain egg or (if construction began right after Easter) a *pysanka* was placed in each of the four corners of the structure. The eggs were believed to protect the house from evil spirits. This custom was also observed in the village of Mirol'a in the Bardejov district.

Eggs also played an important role in certain rituals. When a girl was getting married, she took along an egg to the wedding ceremony. On her return home from church, she let the egg fall out from under her skirts as she whispered: "Let me give birth to my child as easily as this egg falls!" (A. Kotyk, 65 years old, Svetlice). When a mother carried her child out of the house for the first time, the midwife placed an egg under the threshold so that the woman who had given birth had to step over it. (Zuzana Kryžanska, 68 years old, Snakov). Eggs were even used in weaning a child. On Sunday, when the mother returned home from church services, she handed her child a boiled egg over the threshold. As the child began to play with it, it forgot about its mother's breast and was weaned (from the village of Snakov).

In some villages eggs are placed on graves at Eastertime. The original point of this ritual was to bring Easter food to the dead, and the custom can be traced back to ancient times. In Uličské Krivé, they used to place eggs on the grave "so that the deceased would know that it's Easter." Although Christianity opposed these customs, they were so deeply ingrained among the people that the church was unable to weed them out completely. In Ruská Poruba and Krajná Bystrá, eggs were placed at Easter only on the graves of young people who had died during the preceding year. Later, eggs were placed on the graves "year after year" so that the deceased would know that it was Easter and take pleasure in it. In Eastern Slovakia, Easter lasted three days and was the most festive and most joyful of all holidays for children, young people, and adults alike.

Dyed eggs blown empty to leave only the shell, called *vydutkȳ* (from the word *vyduvaty* — to blow out), were used to protect livestock from illness. At Eastertime, these eggs were strung on a thread and hung in a wreath on the ridge beam near the entrance to the stables.

The *pysanka* was also believed to protect the house from fire, lightning, and other misfortunes. For instance, a stranger entering a barn was expected to look first at the colored eggshells and only then of lower his gaze to the cows. This protected the cat-

tle from "the evil eye" and from illness (Makovce and neighboring villages). In Makovce, they also recited: "Just as the house does not lack the Easter bread *(paska),* so should the stables not lack cattle."

Not too long ago, one could still see fruit trees in the villages hung with empty dyed eggs *(vydutky).* These eggs, colored blue, red, green, pink, purple, or yellow, were attached to the branches of the still bare trees before Easter. The same kind of eggs were hung on a young tree near the windows of each house. These "blown eggs" were believed to assure the fertility of fruit trees. In Makovce, this ritual was accompanied by the saying: "Just as the house does not lack the Easter bread, so should the tree not lack fruit." Today this belief no longer exists, and colored eggs are hung on trees for purely decorative purposes. There is the analogous custom of burying *pysankȳ* under fruit trees. The basis for this practice was the fact that the decaying eggs acted as a fertilizer for the tree.

If a neighbor's house caught fire, the housewife (or, in her absence, the man of the house) stripped naked and ran three times around her own house. While running, she threw a *pysanka* in a direction away from the burning house in order to direct the wind away from her own building (Habura). When a lightning storm neared, fires were laid in the traditional peasant hearths and *pysanka* eggshells were thrown on the glowing embers. As the eggshells smouldered, the smoke rose through the chimney and drifted out. This was thought to protect the house from lightning and fire (M. Ksenjak, 53 years old, Svetlice). Another custom was to throw a *pysanka* over the top of the house in order to protect it from fire (Svetlice and Staré).

An abnormally small chicken egg, called a *znosok,* was believed to bring wealth and good luck. This type of egg, if carried in the armpit for nine weeks or "until it hatched into a fosterling chick," was believed to help in times of trouble.

Pysanka shells were used for medicinal purposes in the belief that they helped cure illness. In Bogliarka and Križé, *pysanka* eggshells were cast on hot coals to smoke. This smoke supposedly cured toothaches. Because *pysankȳ* were considered so efficacious, they were put away from year to year and placed in the Easterbasket to be reblessed. Sometimes such *pysankȳ* were saved for as long as seven years or more, and these were used to treat sick animals.

5. THE COMPOSITION OF THE ORNAMENT

In the study of various forms of folk art produced at different stages of society's evolution, scholars have been forced to conclude that a sense of beauty and a desire to decorate everyday objects are always manifest wherever people have had to manufacture for their own use various tools and practical articles essential to their way of life. Studying this problem, M.O. Kosven writes that a great diversity of forms and rich ornamentation were already present in Neolithic art: "Man's desire to decorate all the things that surrounded him and that he used — even the most commonplace and simple household articles, in particular clay pottery — was already widespread in that age. Such decoration was produced with ornamentation ranging from simple forms as the patterns achieved by hollowing out or incising primitively geometrical designs to extremely complex and highly artistic forms with diverse motifs and subjects executed in a variety of colors. Sometimes different but equally rich designs covered weapons, utensils, and clothing."[15]

The impulse to decorate objects has its roots in the distant beginnings of man's history. Nor has the impulse become less important in our own age, a time when ornamentation has become an even more integral part of our way of life. We build beautiful cities, plant trees around the places where we live, and make our surroundings pleasant precisely by intruding aesthetically into the environment. Each of these artistic intrusions is marked by its own distinguishing traits that issue from characteristics peculiar to each individual people and that, in effect, constitute their particular kind of art. Each people, after all, lives in conditions that are typical only to itself — it lives its own life and evolves its own culture and aesthetic criteria.

The researcher is genuinely excited when he watches a peasant woman transform with great talent something only suggested in the material into a refined work of art with highly elegant and graceful lines. Only a true artist with considerable artistic potential and the ability to create designs — an artist with established taste — can produce such works. Often the ornament on the oval surface of the egg is arranged so harmoniously that the *pysanka* can serve as a model for the entire body of folk art. The composition of patterns on the *pysanka* demonstrates great creative originality, and no less interesting is the harmonious use of color in ornamentation. Moreover, it can teach us a great deal and help us influence modern decorative art.

A comparison of a number of different *pysankȳ* — regardless of whether their ornament consists of geometrical-abstract, plant, or other motifs — will demonstrate that internal rules of design are adhered to in *pysanka* ornamentation. On some *pysankȳ* the design is arranged regularly over the entire surface. At first glance, however, it appears to be ordered freely, without concern for any compositional rules. This first impression is erroneous, however, since even in these instances the rules of rhythm, space, color, and proportion are observed. The seemingly chaotic arrangement of motifs is one of the styles of folk *pysanka* ornamentation. In the case

of other *pysankŷ,* the ornament is arranged in order of significance: the most important motifs are placed in dominant positions on the surface, giving one side of the *pysanka* a frontal aspect. A third method of placing the motifs depends on clearly defined divisions of the surface of the egg. In this style, all ornaments and motifs are of equal importance. Even the slightest divergence from the compositional structure would mar the design and beauty of the ornamentation. Consequently, every *pysanka* designer devotes great care to the arrangement of the elements and motifs of her ornament, aware that this will determine the artistic value of her *pysanka.* In Eastern Slovakia, we often find classic examples of ornamentation that testify to the artists' absolute mastery over the oval shape of the egg.

Of equal interest is the technical skill of the women and girls (and in rare instances men), who produce *pysankŷ* of high artistic caliber without a great deal of planning and measuring, or, as folk artists say, "straight out of their heads." These artists adapt their compositional skills to the oval shape of the egg surface and by contracting or elongating the form of the design elements they create a visually symmetrical ornament on a three-dimensional object.

The *pysankŷ* of each village or district are quite distinct. Moreover, even within the same village, each woman has her own style, which distinguishes her *pysankŷ* from those of other women with respect to the combinations of colors, the execution of motifs, and occasionally even the manner in which the design of the entire surface is resolved and additional elements introduced. Every *pysanka* that a woman decorates is different from all the others she produces.

One is impressed by the skill and simplicity with which the peasant woman artist manages to fill the empty surface of the egg, using the head of the "writing instrument" or *pysal'ce,* to draw circles, lines, commas, or dots that result in exquisite designs. Something new is always added to a known ornament. Often, as she makes the next *pysanka,* the artist leaves out something from her previous design, simplifying it, diluting any saturation by omitting the extraneous, thus achieving a greater sense of spaciousness in the ornament and thereby greater conceptual clarity.

Folk artists compose each ornamental element on the *pysanka* so as to unify the diverse motifs in their designs. The rhythm, balance, and proportion achieved result in one single whole. The composition of the graphic design of the *pysanka* almost always corresponds in the greatest possible degree to the various technical and technological requirements of the material involved — the egg.

Nevertheless, not every village woman is capable of achieving a high degree of artistry in this form of folk art, be it in the resolution of the ornament, color balance, technical execution. Even though nearly every village woman decorates Easter eggs, more than half of these are no better than average. Among the more talented group, there are as a rule 2 or 3 or even as many as 5 or 7 (depending on the size of the population) women folk artists whose *pysankŷ* attain the highest levels of artistry.

There is no direct link between the ornamentation in household objects such as distaffs or embroideries and homewoven textiles on the one hand and the ornamentation of *pysankŷ* on the other. Such links do occasionally exist between other forms of folk art, which have common characteristics, share common means of aesthetic expression and, most important, possess a utilitarian function. Because they are made from various materials with different characteristics, the decoration of household objects requires the use of techniques suited to the specific material. Each material possesses its own set of properties that, in turn, prescribe the possible methods of its decoration and dictate a distinct form of artistic expression based on the use to which the object will be put.

For example, when making a distaff, a butter

container *(točanka)*, or a salt shaker *(soljanka)*, the craftsman needs to take into account how the object will be held in the hands, how it will be carried, how it will be placed on the table — in other words, how it will be used. Thus, it is a matter of selecting the right material and fashioning it into the required form. The form decorated is, in essence, always determined by the function the object is designed to serve.

The *pysanka* artist, on the other hand, has no influence over the form of the object she decorates. Her ornament has to conform to the egg's natural oval shape. This factor distinguishes *pysankȳ* from all other folk art. Unlike ornamentation in other folk art categories, the decoration of *pysankȳ* is not subject to limitations such as those imposed by a variety of materials or the need to take into account the various functions of objects.

Despite everything that has been said, the elements, motifs, and composition of the *pysanka* ornament cannot be examined in complete isolation from the other forms of folk art. This is because the structure of *pysanka* motifs and the influence of designs used on other household objects play an important role in the study of *pysanka* ornamentation. The compositional devices of ornamentation include factors such as the repetition of individual motifs or ornamental bands, symmetry, balance, proportion, color, harmony, contrast, and the organic unity of the design elements.

Pysanka ornamentation can be classified into the following groups on the basis of the motifs used, as well as the character of the entire design:

(1) geometric-abstact motifs — a;
(2) phytomorphic (plant) motifs — b;
(3) zoomorphic, anthropomorphic motifs — c;
(4) cosmic motifs — d;
(5) motifs from everyday household objects — e;
(6) decorative designs — f;
(7) calligraphic elements — g;
(8) genre scenes — h.

These groups of motifs appear in *pysanka* ornamentation either independently or in combination with one another. In combinations, one group always dominates, while the second supplements it. Individual groups can occur in the following combinations:

Group 1: a+b, a+c, a+e, a+g;
Group 2: b+c, b+e, b+g;
Group 3: c+a, c+b, c+g;
Group 4: d+b, d+c, d+e, d+f (the sun can also appear independently);
Group 5: e+a, e+g,
Group 6: do not appear in combination with other groups;
Group 7: appear only in the role of an insignificant supplement to all other groups. In the rare instances when these elements are dominant in the designs, they are supplemented by the first two groups: g+a, g+b;
Group 8: in the majority of cases appear independently, more rarely, in combination with groups 3 and 7: h+c, h+g.

(1) Geometric-abstract ornament is the conventional term used to describe the group of motifs such as dots, commas, circles, triangles, stars, squares, diamonds, lines, zig-zags, crosses, double crosses, and other figures that create the impression of a geometric and abstract design. The folk artist does not herself create the geometric forms; she merely simulates them as ornamental elements, which cannot, therefore, be viewed as something purely geometric.

Geometric-abstract ornament is always arranged in a band, circle, ellipse, or similar forms of composition. When the band ornament appears in a parallel arrangement, it fills a significant portion of the surface. Geometric-abstract motifs occur together with plant motifs in almost all forms of folk art: on *pysankȳ*, embroideries, handwoven textiles, and wooden objects (distaffs, furniture, and other household articles). They do not imply any associa-

tion with the surrounding environment (nature, society) in either the morphological or the thematic sense.

It has been established that many geometric-abstract figures belong to the category of archaic motifs. Through centuries, these archaic motifs grew increasingly abstract and were perfected in the geometric sense. The geometric-abstract ornament has attained a high degree of development on *pysankŷ*. It is, however, impossible to examine the genesis and development of geometric-abstract motifs from their original forms, because all traces of the specific inspiration for each have disappeared. A thick veil of time conceals the secrets of the past, among which are the abstract designs of a geometric nature.

In this group, it is necessary to distinguish motifs which derive from the early stages of human culture from those that were transformed as a result of a lengthy process of development from realistic representation to completely abstract elements. Geometric-abstract ornament occurs in the *pysankŷ* of all Rusyn villages of Eastern Slovakia, as well as in the *pysanka* ornamentation of all Slavic peoples.

(2) Phytomorphic (plant) ornament is known by a number of different names: phytomorphic, transformed, stylized, naturalistic, and representational. This group of motifs derives from attempts by folk artists to imitate the local flora in the midst of which they lived. Plant forms in folk art do not appear as realistic representations of specific regional plants; rather, the vegetation known to the artists served as a source of inspiration for developing motifs in a lengthy process of creative adaptation. Details of plants were omitted and the plants were conventionalized. Their graphic depiction was simplified and schematized until they took on an abstract character. Gradually, there emerged a convention of rendering plant motifs. Thus folk artists subject natural forms to stylization, choose colors arbitrarily, and order the composition of the patterns to suit themselves. In folk art, the ornament that was inspired by the local flora disregards the natural relationship between a stem and a branch, a bud or a flower. There are numerous examples in which a single stem bears several different leaves or flowers with no resemblance to the botanical structure of any known plant.

This combination of plant elements in ornament pleases the eye with its variety of forms and the manner in which they are modified and alternated. It is this great diversity of motifs and the myriad of resulting compositional possibilities that has had a very positive effect on the development of plant patterns. The garlands of flowers that are found on *pysankŷ* often grow out of vases, hearts, baskets, or roses. In the majority of cases, the design is asymmetrical. The symmetrical axis in plant ornament is usually a straight, wavy, broken, or spiral line. Both the elements and motifs of phytomorphic ornament are borrowed from wild flowers and plants, especially those used for fiber in handwoven textiles. Crops grown for fodder also serve as models for ornamental forms. In the distant past, such plants played an exceptionally important role in peasant life. They were essential to rural existence and their adaptation in *pysanka* ornamentation is thus quite understandable. The depiction of fruits and vegetables also falls into this category. These, too, are represented in largely abstract form. Plant ornament is part of that ancient ornamental culture which traditionally assumes new forms and which continues to circulate and to evolve.

(3) Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs are the simplest ornamental forms derived from the animal and human worlds. The creation of zoomorphic or anthropomorphic ornament is a much more complex process than that involved in the develop-

ment of plant or geometric elements. Nevertheless, these forms appear frequently on *pysankȳ*.

Before an anthropomorphic motif is developed, the figure represented is simplified, altered and, so to speak, recomposed. The folk artist rejects realistic details and simplifies his subject matter to its absolute essentials. The realistic depiction of the human figure has thus been reduced to a precise but stylized form. On the *pysanka,* human beings are represented by only the most essential features of the human form. When simplification results from schematization, in the process of which the faithful reproduction of nature is abandoned, the figure that emerges does no more than hint at the logical structure of its form. This schematized motif thus becomes suitable for use in *pysanka* ornamentation.

Among the animal motifs that appear regularly in folk ornamentation, and especially in *pysanka* ornament, are the rabbit, cat, horse, fish, and mouse. Birds are an especially favorite motif and they occur in almost all forms of folk decorative art. Since time immemorial, birds have figured as an artistic device in both folklore and folk ornamentation, which together have had a common origin and, as a result, have influenced one another. Typical bird motifs are roosters, hens, chicks, and doves.

From the insect world, folk ornament has incorporated bees, spiders, ants, and butterflies. It even makes use of reptiles, such as snakes and lizards. Sometimes these motifs are applied with such a high degree of abstraction that it is difficult to determine what exactly is being depicted.

(4) Cosmic motifs are patterns used in *pysanka* ornament derived from the extraterrestrial world. The sun, moon, and stars have always fascinated man. At an early stage of human evolution, these heavenly bodies were perceived as mysterious forces ruling the earth, its inhabitants, and its nature — both animate and inanimate. For primitive man, the sun, moon, and stars were mysterious and incomprehensible phenomena. As such, they were incorporated into man's system of primitive beliefs and made the favorite subject of folk oral literature. Even today, they appear as characters in fairy tales. According to popular belief, when a child is born, its star appears in the heavens; when the individual dies, his star dies with him. Superstition has it that man's fate can be read in the stars. Need one mention the role of stars in astrology — that false science based on the fantastic belief that it is possible to foretell the fate of individuals and the progress of events from the position of planets at the time of a person's birth or of the beginning of some social occurrence (for example, the outbreak of war)? Horoscopes are cast even in our own time. It is therefore quite understandable that cosmic motifs found their way into primitive man's system of signs and symbols and began to appear on the shells of "living" birds' eggs. With their help, man entreated, beseeched, and invoked the mysterious forces of nature around him. Thus, cosmic motifs belong to the oldest group of design elements in *pysanka* ornamentation and are still one of the favorite ornaments in the representational folk art repertory. On the *pysanka* they have undergone a lengthy process of artistic stylization. In the traditional Lemko *pysanka* ornament, which is characterized by short wax strokes, it is difficult to distinguish cosmic motifs from round plant motifs. In other types of folk ornamentation, their form is more easily distinguished from that of phytomorphic figures. The tools and means with which they were executed on other materials helped much more to conserve their natural resemblance to cosmic phenomena.

(5) Motifs from everyday household objects reflect how *pysanka* ornament systematically incorporated new pictorial elements, motifs, representational devices, and compositional arrangements. To a greater or lesser degree, this enlarged design rep-

ertory began to reflect the material aspects of the development of peasant life. Forms taken from objects found in everyday life became part of folk ornament. They afforded additional opportunities for developing fresh design solutions on the *pysanka.*

Originally, the object depicted on the *pysanka* had its own utilitarian function. To separate the ornament from the object from which it is derived is tantamount to dissociating the phenomenon of the *pysanka* from life itself.

Earlier folk artists enriched the ornament repertory with motifs based on such everyday objects as pitchforks, screens, ladders, weaving utensils, saws, prongs, rakes, wheels, chains, sickles, and the like. These motifs are rooted in peasant work, as well as in the role that each implement played in real life. It is on such tools, when they are decorated, that the development of ornament can best be traced. It serves as a kind of document of the events that transpired in the material and spiritual life of the people.

Motifs taken from household objects have much in common with geometric-abstract ornament. However, they comprise a thematically different ornamental manifestation, in terms of both their pictorial expression and their content. These motifs in *pysanka* ornamentation must therefore be viewed within the framework of broad thematic range.

The majority of the motifs in this group are of a social nature and are fundamentally linked with the type of work performed by farmers in a given ethnic region. Motifs derived from household objects are always associated with a society's way of life. They represent production, family life, social organization, and individual creative expression. All these forms of human activity are organically bound: reciprocity of influence and mutual exchanges of experiences are a principal feature of this unity. When studying this phenomenon in *pysanka* ornamentation, we need only to determine the factors which in the past contributed to the development of the way of life and those which hampered this process, and, as a result, were rejected. But this question goes beyond the scope of our investigation.

(6) Decorative designs as a means of embellishing *pysankȳ* consist of freely applying spots of various colors to the egg surface. Most often these patches appear against a dark, usually black, background. This method is a purely decorative device dictated by individual design considerations. It stems from the practice of using contrasting spots of color in painting and is also found in other forms of applied art. This method of decorating *pysankȳ* is purely abstract in character. The aim of the folk artist is not to depict an object, action, or phenomenon, but only to achieve an optical illusion of color harmony.

Decorating *pysankȳ* by means of applying the negative imprints of the leaves of local plants also belongs to this category of ornament. In our opinion, the use of small and juicy plant leaves to embellish *pysankȳ* is one of the earliest decorative devices in folk art.

(7) Calligraphic elements refer to the use of script as a decorative graphic ornament. Later in origin than the aforementioned motifs, it has now become traditional in *pysanka* ornamentation. Writing and numbers are found on early Christianized *pysankȳ.* The significance of script and numerals on *pysankȳ* has to be studied from a number of standpoints. Sometimes the writing merely defines or duplicates the subject matter and symbolism of the ornamental design, whether it consists of flowers, birds, or heavenly bodies. Still, it has its own aesthetic qualities, suitable for wide application in *pysanka* ornament.

Script is used in various combinations with other decorative elements. As a rule, ornamental writing serves a supplementary function on the *pysanka. Pysankȳ* on which writing appears alone as an independent motif are very rare. This is particularly true

of the *pysankȳ* of Eastern Slovakia. However, the writing or numbers that appear may not be regarded solely in terms of their semantic meaning, because in *pysanka* ornamentation, script and numerals serve a distinct artistic function. They are a form of design that depends on a specific geometric arrangement executed with the aid of certain ornamental devices. Writing and numbers, too, have their distinct forms, rhythm, proportions, and symmetry.

The numbers and texts found on *pysankȳ* usually convey a religious message (*Chrystos voskres* — Christ Is Risen; *Velykden'* — Easter). Occasionally, *pysankȳ* bear the name of a village or the name of a girl or a boy, while a date indicates the day, month, and year when the *pysanka* was made. There are also *pysankȳ* without any ornamentation other than text. Such *pysankȳ* usually display a short phrase about love, a wish, or similar idea.

(8) Genre scenes refer to scenes from everyday life depicted on *pysankȳ*. The subject is usually associated with spring or Easter with scenes taken from agrarian-pastoral life. Thus, a *pysanka* from the village of Zbudská Belá shows a herdsman driving cattle to pasture. Other subjects occur, for example, sparrows welcoming spring or a hen hatching her chicks. There are also many *pysankȳ* that portray a church among trees to symbolize Easter.

The diversity of *pysanka* motifs in a somewhat different context will be disussed in Chapter 9.

6. THE STRUCTURE OF PYSANKA MOTIFS

The structure of *pysanka* motifs is determined by the technique used to execute the ornament. Each technical process of decorating *pysankȳ* adheres to its own compositional principles and offers different possibilities. However, the technique of ornamenting *pysankȳ* should not affect the work of the peasant woman artist to the extent that it destroys her artistic individuality and the distinguishing traits that characterize the *pysankȳ* of each village or district.

The *pysankȳ* owned by folk artists, private individuals, and museums provide the researcher with much essential information. It is not difficult to ascertain the overall number of motifs that occur on the *pysankȳ* produced in Rusyn villages of Eastern Slovakia. The thematic content of the ornamented Easter eggs of this region is common to the individual artists and to all villages and districts. However, the motifs differ in details, as well as in their graphic execution and palette. Sometimes, even when a single artist repeats the same motif, it varies (albeit very slightly) from its earlier representations. In fact, deviations from the model have become the rule. Such deviations are caused by differences in hand movement, the artist's mood, and the conditions in which she happens to be working at the time.

It is an established fact that all *pysanka* artists conform to certain basic principles of decoration: symmetry, alternation, rhythm, repetition, color harmony. These norms assure the aesthetic qualitiy of the *pysanka* as a work of art. What is even more noteworthy is that these standards are observed by simple peasant women who have had no artistic training, but who exhibit a high degree of inborn aesthetic taste.

Pysanka ornament, which is executed in wax, usually makes use of figures with sharply defined outlines. The composition consists of such elements as the comma, short stroke, dot, circle, triangle, rectangle, and similar forms. For the most part, these elements are peculiar to the geometric style, but some of them also occur in plant ornament. Nor are they exclusive to *pysanka* ornamentation, for they appear in all forms of folk art: on household objects made of wood, embroidery, handwoven textiles, and on articles made of stone or bone.[16]

The great compositional variety of geometric-abstract, zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and phytomorphic motifs is usually achieved along a continuous line (the symmetrical axis), which in *pysanka* ornament can be straight, sinuous, dotted, or spiral. Sometimes two axis lines are used, thereby assuring a larger number of identical areas to be filled with figures. Symmetry is important to the aesthetic aspect of a design. However, *pysankȳ* with asymmetrically arranged elements or asymmetrical motifs also occur. Although new methods of arranging motifs in the composition of *pysanka* ornament can be found, these arrangements, too, are based on centuries-long traditions and the great formal diversity present in *pysanka* ornamentation. The vast number of possible variations in the interpretation of nature is truly astounding.

The ancient traditions of ornamenting *pysankȳ*

by village women and girls (occasionally also men) have been handed down from generation to generation. The virtuosity that has developed in the process of this historical transmittal assures the great artistic value and aesthetic effect of the *pysanka.* The history of the major creative attainments in folk art is the history of the collective creativity of the ethnic group as a whole.

A characteristic feature of Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia is the conscious rejection of naturalism. To say, however, that Rusyn *pysankȳ* are wholly free of naturalistic patterns would be false. Still, the occurrence of naturalistic elements is not significant enough to warrant our attention.

Pysanka ornamentation offers an inexhaustible variety of compositional solutions. On some *pysankȳ,* motifs are arranged over the entire surface, making it possible to view the design from all sides. Other types make use of a single motif placed on the oval face of the egg — for example, the "Easter dance." Many *pysankȳ* display two primary motifs. Occasionally, the same motif is repeated on the obverse side of the *pysanka.* Some *pysankȳ* are divided into two, four, or eight areas, allowing for a different arrangement of elements in each section. Still another approach is evident in the so-called "bald *pysankȳ,*" the design of which has to take into account the fact that the tops and bottoms of these eggs are left undyed and undecorated (hence the name).

Quite often, the composition of the design calls for a division of the egg surface by intersecting lines in the shape of an *x.* Known as the cross division, it usually occurs when such motifs as rakes, pitchforks, axes, ploughshares, and other elongated figures are used. Certain principles of arrangement are observed to assure symmetry. Thus, if applied in the upper portion of the *pysanka,* a pitchfork motif points upward; if in the lower portion, it points downward. Motifs derived from utilitarian objects, as well as plant motifs, appear in this form of arrangement. To avoid stereotype, the best *pysanka* artists dye the upper portion of the egg one color and the lower portion another color.

When dyeing the egg several colors, folk artists rely on a highly developed tradition, which allows the viewer to perceive the *pysanka's* ornament with greater clarity. This compositional device also takes into account the fact that the eggs are dyed in a progression from light to dark hues. A great deal of attention is devoted to the combinations of colors used on *pysankȳ.* The older the *pysankȳ,* the less color dissonance they display. The best examples of this form of folk art strike the eye with a marvelous color harmony. In the past, the women artists used only vegetable dyes, which they made themselves. Such dyes as those extracted from onion skins, winter rye, or alder bark produced a chromatic combination of hues. Today, most of the dyes used to color *pysankȳ* are of the industrial chemical variety. They produce a different color scale, marked by greater brilliance and harsher contrasts. This represents a departure from the ancient chromatic color scheme developed over many centuries.

The women artists take great care in applying the principal color of the *pysanka* in the knowledge that a beautiful, clear, and unspotted background is essential to set off the inherent elegance and grace of the ornament. Precise drawing, executed by rapid and sure movements of the hand, also contributes to the elegant look of a *pysanka.*

7. THE CIRCULATION OF MOTIFS

There is infinite variety in *pysanka* motifs. In no other kind of folk art does ornament attain the same degree of diversity. As the most widespread form of folk art, *pysankȳ* even take precedence over embroidery with respect to ornamental diversity. Because they permit such freedom in the use of all decorative means and possibilities, *pysankȳ* are assured supremacy in the sphere of folk ornament. By comparison, the cross-stitch method of embroidery (the one in widest use in Eastern Slovakia) is subject to greater restraints in ornamentation, bound as it is by its horizontal, vertical, and diagonal directions.

For centuries, *pysankȳ* have been ornamented with a great number of traditional motifs. Derived in equal measure from customs and from the work and various other activities performed by people, *pysanka* ornament reflects all aspects of life. Like *pysankȳ,* embroidery also has a long history. Both these arts, as well as other forms of folk art, influenced one another and contributed to the development of ornamentation in general by introducing new motifs, subjects, and compositional possibilities. This transference of motifs from one form of folk art to another is known as the circulation of motifs.

The study of decorative *pysanka* elements and motifs found in other branches of folk art has led ethnographers to the conclusion that the transference is usually bilateral or even trilateral. Most frequently, motifs move from one thematic group to another. However, this modification of the concept changes neither the meaning nor the name of the motif. Thus, for example, cosmic motifs turn into agrarian or pastoral ones, while, in their turn, pastoral motifs become cosmic and then reappear again in their original category. Such pastoral motifs as the circle, wheel, or ploughwheel occur in the cosmic group, where the circle symbolizes the sun. The same motif can represent a rose or a plant motif in general. As an agrarian motif, the snake portrays a guardian of the home who wards off fire, flood, and other natural catastrophes. Elsewhere it appears as an abstract figure in the form of a spiral.

Many of the motifs found on *pysankȳ* are also present in embroidery and textiles. Some of these motifs have been transmitted from *pysankȳ* to embroidery, while with others the reverse has occurred. This circulation of motifs occurs because the same women that paint *pysankȳ* also embroider. In most cases, a good *pysanka* artist is also an excellent embroiderer. The saw motif borrowed from *pysanka* ornament is called "teeth" *(zubkȳ)* in embroidery. The water motif, which is peculiar to *pysanka* ornamentation, occurs in embroidery as zig-zag lines *(kryvulkȳ).* The doves and birds that serve as dominant motifs on the embroidered towels carried by the groom's attendants (Kolonica, Ruské), have also been incorporated into *pysanka* ornament.

Such motifs as the sheaf, butterfly, and bow appear in various forms of folk art under different names. The same motif in one form of art is known as the *mašlyčka* (bow) and in another as the *snopok* (sheaf) or *lotajik* (butterfly). The sheaf is a traditional and frequently used motif and its occurrence in

other folk art forms indicates transmittal from *pysanka* ornament. This is further corroborated by the fact that there is a traditional name for a *pysanka* style known as the "sheaf *pysanka*" *(pysanka na snopok).* Finally, the swallow is also a motif that appears in other forms of folk art, but it too derives from *pysanka* ornament, which includes the "swallow *pysanka*" style *(pysanka na lastivku).*

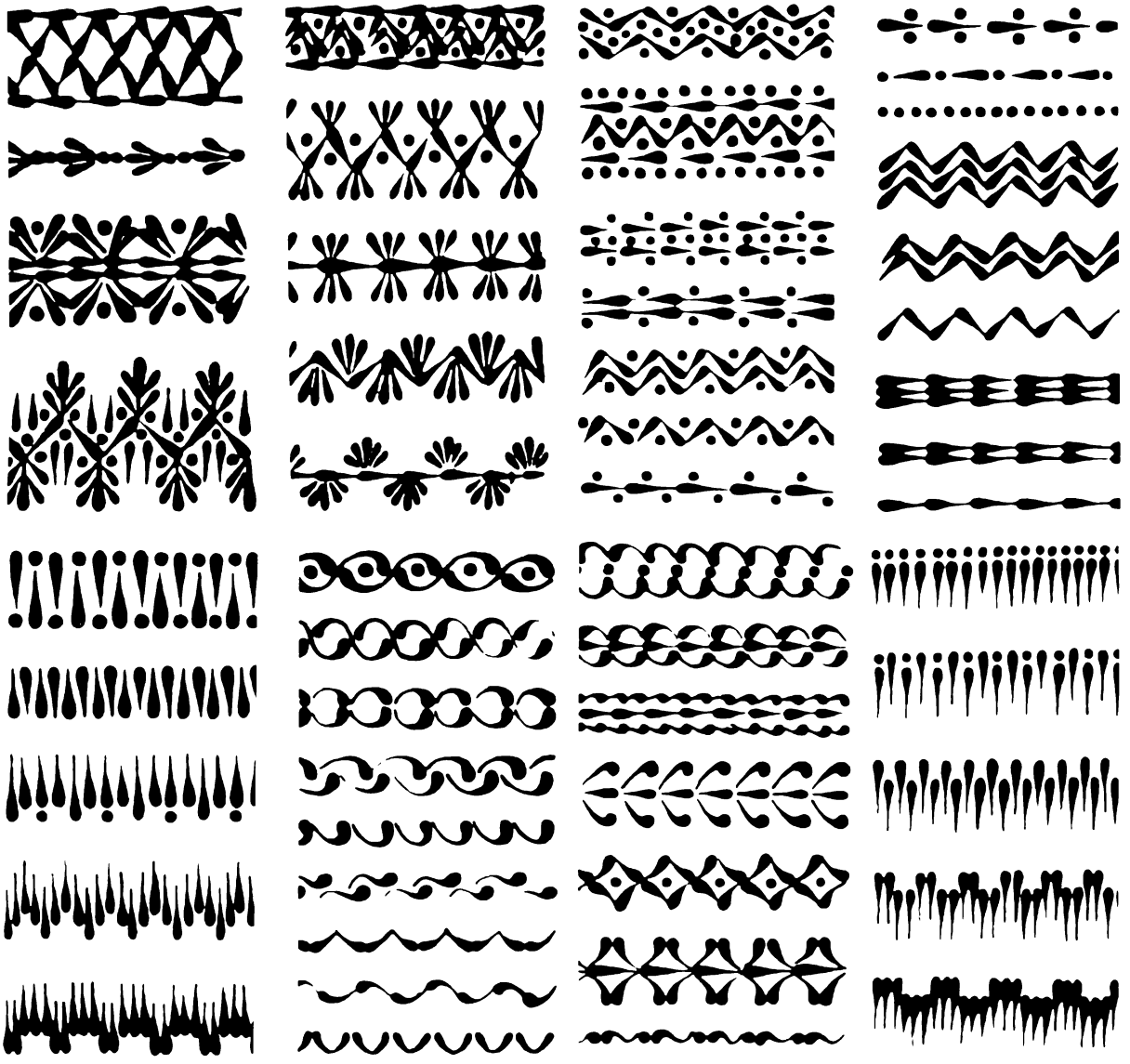
8. THE STYLIZATION OF MOTIFS

The number of *pysanka* motifs is vast. The artistic diversity of motifs, color combinations, stylization, and the high level of design organization are all part of the style that typifies *pysanka* ornamentation. Stylization is one of the principal features of the designs created by women folk artists on the surface of an egg. Each good *pysanka* artist is a master of stylization, the results of which enrich all folk ornamentation. These artists decorate the eggshell with representations of various flowers, leaves, objects, trees, tools, plants, birds and insects, all of which are artistically transformed or stylized.

In folk art, and especially in *pysanka* ornamentation, stylization is not an accidental phenomenon. Although it occurs in almost all branches of folk art, *pysanka* ornament rejects naturalistic figures altogether and therefore cannot do without stylization. This is particularly true of ancient, traditional methods of *pysanka* ornamentation, since there does exist one process of decorating *pysankȳ,* executed by "scratching out" the pattern *(vyškrabuvannja),* which produces a naturalistic drawing. The naturalism in this case issues from the technique itself and the freedom of design that this manner of decoration offers. This technique, however, is not very widespread.

Naturalism is more characteristic of such forms of folk art as wood carving, where the material itself dictates naturalistic execution adapted to the ornament's faceted forms. However, this technique is poorly suited to the *pysanka* and, therefore, not much liked by *pysanka* artists. The design drawn on the *pysanka* using the traditional wax technique is always simplified. Owing to this simplification, it is often difficult to discover the origin of motifs. This very simplification, however, works to the advantage of the *pysanka* art. It is this quality of the *pysanka* that attracts us and surprises us with the originality of its artistic expression, ingeniousness of form, and skill of execution. Thus, the peasant artist, unaffected by outside influences, demonstrates her capacity for creating unique works of art exhibiting a high level of organization. Her art is characterized by simplicity, candor, sincerity, naturalness, and poetic originality.

We believe that a more detailed examination of the motifs most frequently encountered on Eastern Slovakia's Rusyn *pysankȳ,* particularly within the context of Ukrainian folklore as a whole, will prove useful.



Types of ornamental bands found on the traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysanký* from Eastern Slovakia.

Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia. The first three *pysankŷ* (left to right) in the bottom row were made using the scratching technique.

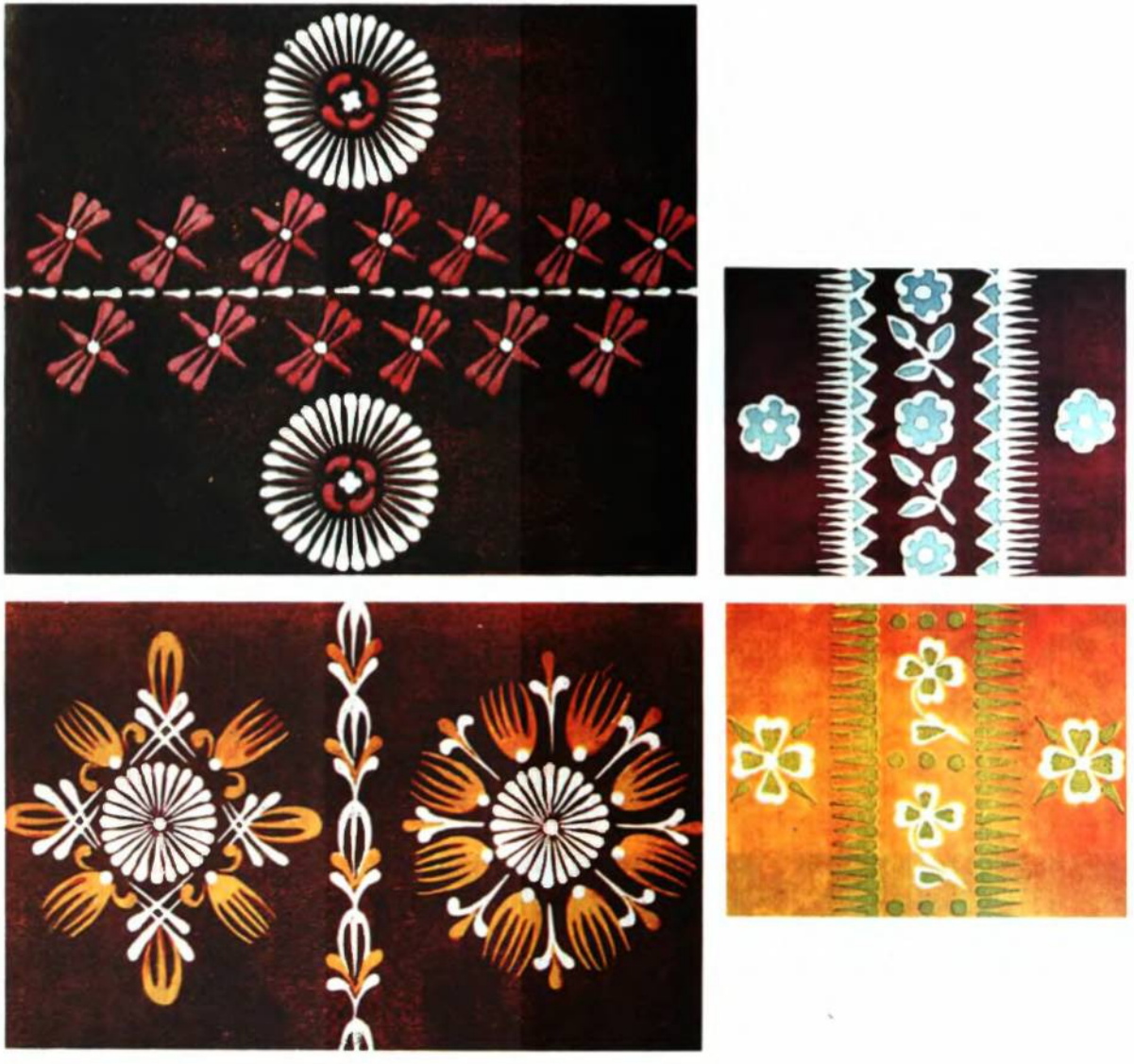
Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysanky* from Eastern Slovakia.

Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysanký* from Eastern Slovakia.

Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

Traditional designs on Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.



Traditional designs for Lemko-type Růsyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia shown in the form of a flat design.

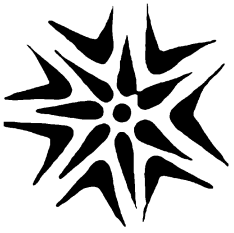
Traditional designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysanky* from Eastern Slovakia shown in the form of a flat design.

moving star

moving star

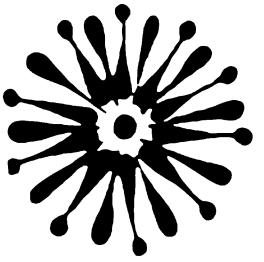
sun

moving star

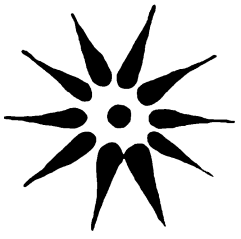


star

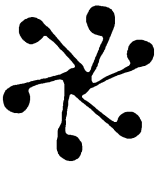
spider



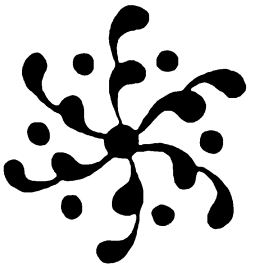
sun



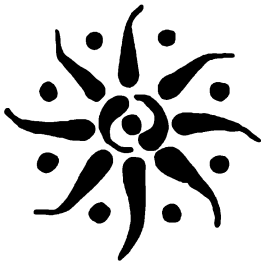
star



curved line

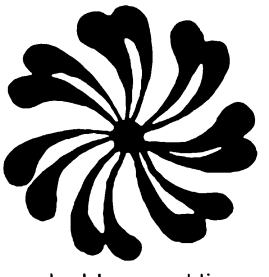


repeated curved line



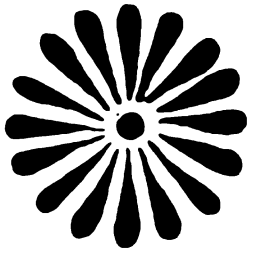
star with little stars
in the Milkey Way

half moon

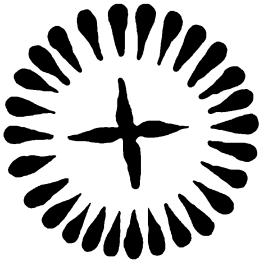


double curved line

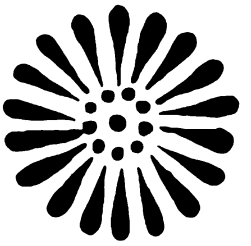
Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.



sun

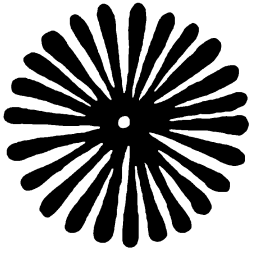


sun

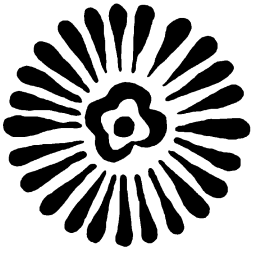


sun

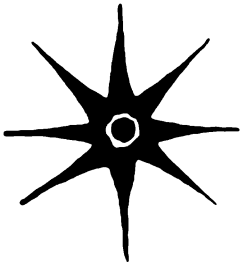
sun



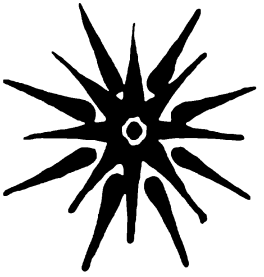
sun



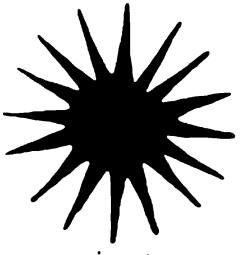
sun



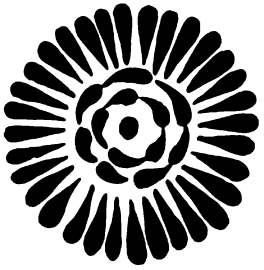
northern star



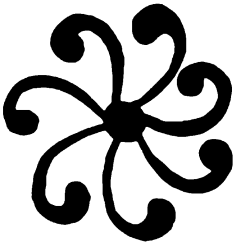
double star



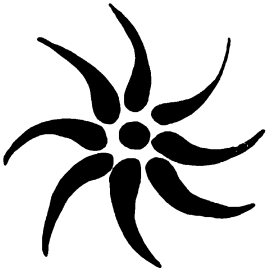
evening star



rose



rotating sun

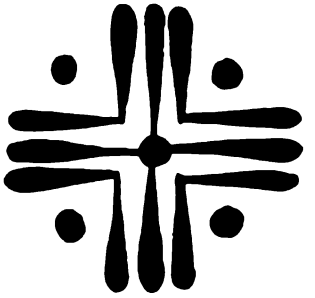


moving sun

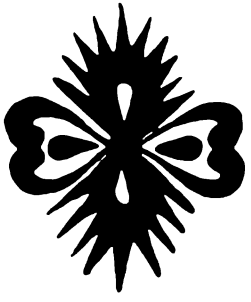
Typical designs for Rusyn *pysanký* from Eastern Slovakia.

pitchforks

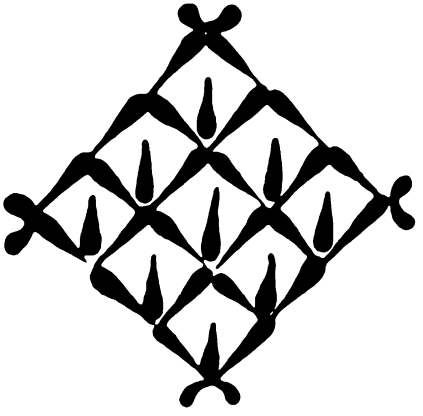
flower



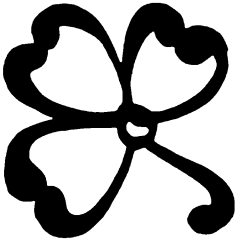
corsage



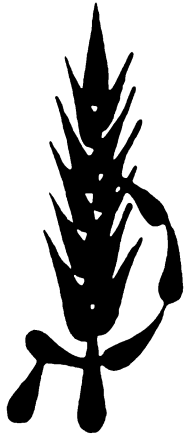
heart



harrow

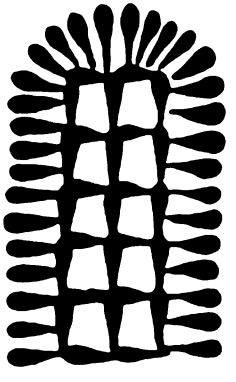


clover



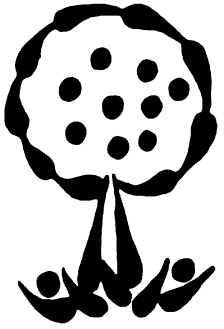
sickle and ear of grain

hammer and sickle in star

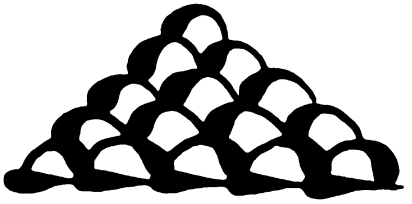


window

Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

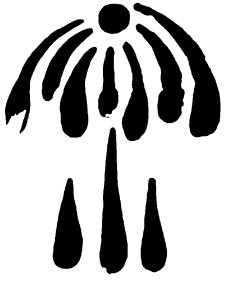


tree



mole hill

grape vine

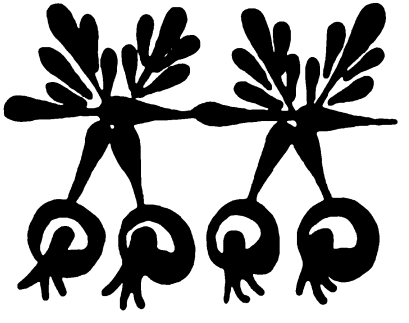


hemp

fir tree

hackle

bird



bluebell

Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia.

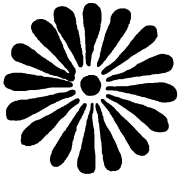
9. PYSANKA MOTIFS IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND CUSTOMS

Folklore is the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, and traditional oral literature of the "common" people. The basis of ethnography — the branch of history that studies the life style, ethnic origins, settlement, and cultural interrelationships of the world's peoples — is the firsthand examination of the material and spiritual life of the people and its way of life as a society. By studying the ornamented Easter eggs of the Rusyn inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia, it is possible to identify the motifs in *pysanka* ornament that appear most frequently and in the greatest variety of combinations.

Our first task is to determine the order in which these motifs should be examined. As will become clear later, the motifs in question are not exclusive to *pysanka* ornament, but occur in the entire body of folk creativity — in the material culture as well as in the oral traditions of the people. Their role in the life of ancient man was very important. This is attested by their enduring presence in all forms of folk artistic expression, especially in folk songs, tales, and sayings.

In our opinion, this material is best examined in the order of importance of an individual motif's symbolic significance in the life of ancient man: from concrete concept, through symbolic significance, to the most abstract motifs. In other words, in the following order: cosmic motifs (sun, star); environment (water, tree); the coming of spring perceived by man as the beginning of new life (swallow, bee, sun, flowers as the heralds of spring); products essential to life (sheaf — symbol of bread and harvest, fish); creatures that protect property from calamities (snake, spider); symbols of personal sorrow and destiny (heart, wreath); abstract symbols and design forms (circle, rhomb shaded with cross lines, ladder).

It would obviously be impossible to catalogue all existing motifs. This applies particularly to work tools, the assortment of which is so extensive that a complete listing would pose great difficulty. Moreover, these motifs have undergone numerous changes and they continue to change as the material base of our life evolves. This is not to say that these motifs are of secondary importance. On the contrary, their rightful place is immediately after those derived from the environment in which man lives, in the group of motifs that reflect man's conscious relationship to his surroundings. This group includes motifs such as pitchforks, sickles, axes, saws, carts, and so forth, many of which are no longer in use in peasant life and consequently have also disappeared from *pysanka* ornament.



(1) Sun. The sun is one of the oldest cosmic motifs in *pysanka* ornament. It is the most widespread figure in all ornamentation with a seemingly infinite

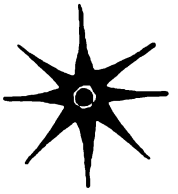
number of forms of representation. It is sometimes depicted as a circle, a rose, or a spiral; it can be represented as stationary, in motion, or emitting rays.

The sun is the source of light and the symbol of life. Although it sometimes destroys the harvest by causing drought, which brings with it poverty and illness, this aspect of the sun's effects is not reflected in folk ornament, where it always symbolizes light and is the antithesis to darkness. Since earliest times, it has figured in various beliefs as a deity. In this capacity, the sun inflicted punishment on humans, but this action was justified as its divine right in retribution for the commission of some sin.

The belief in the mysterious power of the sun and a fear and respect for it survived until the Middle Ages. Until quite recently, cosmic phenomena involving the sun (for example, solar eclipses) portended calamities (cf. *The Song of Prince Igor's Campaign*). Different societies interpreted the various phenomena associated with the sun in different ways. However, in almost all cases, they were perceived as omens of catastrophe.

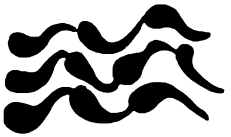
Man has attempted to propitiate the sun since remote antiquity. It was toward this end that the sun was depicted on various household objects or as an independent image. As the sun became the subject of scientific study, it lost most of its mystery, so that the most important celestial motif — once regarded as a deity — was gradually reduced to the status of a mere heavenly body. Although it has lost its divine significance, it remains a very widespread and popular motif in contemporary ornament. Its representation now scarcely differs from that of a star. When it does differ, it does so only in size. Since there are several "suns" in *pysanka* ornament, the original sun motif now resembles all other circle shaped figures.

The sun also has a place in folk sayings: "The sun shines on everyone!"; "The sun shines on the good and evil alike!"; "Before the sun rises, the dew will burn your eyes out!"; "Let the sun shine on our house!", etc.



(2) Star (double star, Greek star). The star is a popular and widely used motif in all forms of folk art. An ancient figure, it occurs frequently in *pysanka* ornament, where it is usually applied on the "tops" and "bottoms" of eggs and only occasionally on the oval egg surface. On *pysanka,* the star motif has five points, but the more usual practice is to provide it with an even number of rays, attributable to the method of executing this shape in *pysanka* ornament. Moreover, even numbers are believed to bring good fortune.

The star motif dates back to the period of pastoral culture, when ancient man consulted the stars before beginning work in the fields. The star also occurs in various customs. In folk tales it frequently assumes the role of the younger sister or the child of the sun. Among solar motifs, the star is second only to the sun. Ancient man believed that each individual had his own star, which rose at his birth and sank at his death. There is even a saying to this effect: "There are as many stars as there are people!" Other popular sayings are: "His star has expired!" or "He was born under a lucky star!" A star that shines more brightly than others in the heavens is believed to signify long life for someone. Superstition held that one should not point a finger at a star so as not to interfere in someone's life. For some reason, stars could be counted only on major holidays (Bogliarka, Kríže).



(3) Water. Water belongs to a group of motifs that denote both a realistic and abstract concept. In folk ornament, water is represented by two or three parallel wavy strokes, applied rhythmically and symmetrically. Such wavy strokes occur in almost all forms of folk art, including ancient pottery excavated by archaeologists in various parts of Czechoslovakia.

Water is essential to human life and man has always settled along rivers and streams. Water can spell disaster in the form of floods, but its absence is the cause of even greater calamities, such as drought, which destroys the harvest and deprives man of nourishment. Hence, water symbolizes material wealth in the popular imagination, as in a folk saying: "Let there be as much milk as there is water in the stream!"

Water played an important role in various customs. While her attendants made a wreath for the bride *(na vincjach),* she was made to sit on a pail filled with water until the wreath was completed. The water used to give an infant its first bath was poured out under a tree stump ("Let the child be as strong as this trunk!") or under a "sweet apple tree" or a "sweet pear tree" ("Let the child be as perfect as sweet apples and pears!").

When no rain fell for a long time, water was brought in from another village. Thus, the villagers from Čertižné brought such water from a gorge in [the nearby village of] Driečna. A young girl, aged from 14 to 15 years, was sent to fetch water from a well or stream in Driečna. She carried the water in her mouth and then spit it out directly into the local village stream. Rain was expected to follow shortly. The woman who told us of this custom was herself sent for water in this fashion as a child. Another way of invoking rain was to catch crabs in the water and bury them on their backs in the ground.

All work in the fields was begun with the application of water. Water was used for sprinkling and for curing illness. A house was sprinkled with stream water when a wedding took place inside. This was always holy water. Part of the New Year ritual was to take water from the stream. This water was stored and used throughout the year to treat various illnesses. When exposed to the "evil eye," a person washed with this water.

In folklore, and especially in songs, water is a favorite motif symbolizing purity and freedom. It helps young people make their dreams come true and sometimes it warns them of dangers lying ahead. But water also serves to symbolize parting, misfortune, and death. It appears to have assumed this symbolic role in connection with the large, economically necessitated emigration of Rusyns under Austro-Hungarian rule to the New World at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. In connection with this emigration, the peasants sang:

Ей, виховали сте ня як білу ягоду,
А сте ня послали за широку воду.

You've brought me up to be like a white berry,
And then you sent me off across the wide water.

Water is the symbol of health and the source of life in popular belief. But it is also a sign of a mysterious world, inhabited by water nymphs and water goblins *(vodnykpan),* who lie in wait for young men and women. In songs, water is usually portrayed as the source of happiness for young people:

Рада я, рада я
Ей, по водичку ходжу,
По водичку ходжу,

Бо я при водиці
Ей, бо я при водиці,
Бо я при водиці,
Ей, милого находжу.

Happy am I, happy am I,
As I go to fetch water
I go to fetch water,
Because near the water
I find my love.

Water also plays a role in love:

Милий лучку косит,
мила йому воду носит.

The lover mows the meadow,
His love brings him water

Any river or stream across which lay the village fields was called water:

За водом, за водом капусточку шіют,
Іші я маленька, уж ша на мі біют.
За водом, за водом капусточку садят,
Іші я маленька, уж ша на мі вадят.
За водом, за водом капусту рубают,
Іші я маленька, уж ня видавают.
За водом за водом капусточку їдят,
Іші я маленька, уж ня ненавидят.

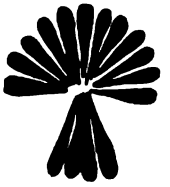
Across the water, across the water, they're sowing cabbage,
Though I'm very young, they're fighting over me already.
Across the water, across the water, they're planting cabbage,
Though I'm very young they're wooing me already.
Across the water, across the water, they're reaping cabbage,
Though I'm very young, they're marrying me already.
Across the water, across the water, they're eating cabbage,
Though I'm very young, they hate me already.

In the past, hardships drove young people to despair and suicide. In this connection, water assumed other connotations in folk songs:

Тече вода, тече на тихім Дунаю,
Піду, утоплюся, бо поля не маю.

The water flows in the quiet Danube,
I'll go and drown myself because I have no land.

The water motif maintained its original significance of happiness. But it took on other meanings as well. When it appears on *pysankŷ,* this motif does not possess the same concrete denotation as in folklore, where it usually conveys the specific circumstances in which a person finds himself.



(4) Tree. This motif occurs very frequently in folk and especially *pysanka* ornament. In earlier times, the forests of Eastern Slovakia were even denser than today. Hence, in folk ornament the abstract representation of the tree also symbolizes the forest as a whole. Folk beliefs are replete with imaginary relationships between humans and trees. The sap *(mjaža)* that runs from an injured tree is likened to

human tears. When a tree trunk is cut, it is believed to bleed like a wounded man. Bark is thought to be like human skin protecting the tree from injury.

Certain ancient customs that echo the primitive Slavic belief that trees "have souls" have survived to our time, albeit not in their original form. This veneration of trees required that they be treated almost as if they were human. On the other hand, since wood was essential to peasant life as material for a variety of products, this attitude of respect was confined primarily to fruit trees, that is, trees not used as building material or for making tools. Custom dictated that seven young trees had to be planted whenever a single mature fruit tree was felled. Tradition also forbade clearing fruit trees to create a site for a house. According to one informant, after a house was built in the village of Habura over a place where a pear tree had been chopped down, the tree's roots continued to send shoots through the floor, forcing the owner to undertake the major job of uprooting the tree's remnants inside the house. Only after he had planted seven new fruit trees in his orchard, did the farmer's troubles end. In peasant lore, the spirit of the felled pear tree thus found peace by continuing to live in the young trees.

Such customs as wrapping a braided straw band *(povereslo)* around a tree at Christmas or inviting trees to take part in the Christmas Eve supper are examples of regarding trees as nearly human by nature. Anna Prejsa from the village of Čertižné told us of an incident in which her neighbor, Mykhajlo P., accompanied by his wife, went into his orchard armed with an axe. There he approached an apple tree that bore very little fruit, raised the axe over its trunk, and asked it three times: "Are you going to bear fruit or not?" His wife, who stood behind the apple tree, answered each time: "Yes, now I'll bear fruit!" Following this, the farmer tied a braided straw band around the tree and returned with his wife into the house to eat supper. In addition to being widespread among the Rusyns of Eastern Slovakia, this ancient Slavic custom existed among Poles, Serbs, and throughout the Ukraine. It was dictated by necessity: fruit trees had to be forced to yield fruit. People believed that such rituals would help them achieve this end.

Folklore contains numerous examples of trees being invested with souls. Traces of this are evident even in the following saying: "He sleeps like a tree." In the Rusyn folk song from Eastern Slovakia, "Mala maty syna" (The Mother Had A Son), the woman in the song is likened to a poplar:

> Не рубай ня, муже, не рубай ня дуже,
> Бо я не тополя, але жена твоя.
>
> Do not fell me, husband, do not cut me deep,
> For I'm not a poplar, I am your wife.

There is also frequent mention in folk songs of the transmigration of a human soul into a tree and of conversations that those close to the deceased hold with the tree.

It was customary to plant a sapling when a child was born or someone got married. Here the tree symbolized health, longevity, and fertility, and its worship was intended to invest the individual in question with these qualities. Sometimes newlyweds planted a tree together. But trees were also planted by individuals, as the following song indicates:

> Засадила-м черешеньку надворі,
> Де-м ходила із миленьким поволі.
>
> I've planted a cherry tree in the yard,
> Where I used to walk slowly with my love.

In another local song, a girl plants an apple tree in the hope that its fruit will bring her marital happiness:

> Откиль сонечко сходило,
> Там дівча яблінь садило.

Росний, яблінко, високо,
А попри земли широко.
Вродь мі, яблінко, ябка дві
Єдно милому, друге мі.

From that place where the sun rose,
The girl planted an apple tree.
Grow you tall, apple tree,
But wide near the ground.
Bear me two apples, apple tree:
One for my love and one for me.

Saplings play an important role in various folk customs and traditions. Thus, members of the wedding procession take along a sapling when they go to fetch the bride; similarly a sapling is placed on the cart used to drive the bride to the groom's house. In May, a young tree is planted in the yard of the house where a young girl lives. When the rafters of a house are up, a decorated sapling is set on the ridge. It was once customary to plant trees on graves, and there are numerous mentions of this widespread practice in folk poetry and in folk songs. A song from the village of Podhorod' contains the following lines:

А на горі два явори, оба зелененькі,
А там лежить, умирає вояк молоденький.
Поховайте мене, мамко, пуд тоту долину,
Тай засадьте, тай засадьте червену
калину.
Будуть пташки прилітати, калину
дзьобати,
Будуть за мнов молоденькі дівчата
плакати.

Two green sycamores grow on a hill,
'Neath them a young soldier lies dying.
Bury me, mother dear, under that valley
And plant a red guelder-rose over me.
Birds will come to nibble the guelder-rose
drupes
And young girls will weep over me.

In folk poetry men are often represented as oaks, sycamores, beeches, or blackthorn; women appear as poplars, birches, or linden trees. Such trees as the oak, linden, sycamore, poplar, willow, and birch are often treated as separate beings in peasant customs and traditions. The linden tree, whose veneration dates back to the remote past, has always been highly regarded medicinally.

In the popular imagination, the oak symbolized youth, health, and strength. Its frequent occurrence in folk poetry is not accidental:

Не стинай, не рубай зеленого дуба
Не берь парадницю, кидь є ті не люба.

Don't cut down, don't fell the green oak tree,
Don't take the stylish girl, if you don't love her.

Oak bark and acorns were used to cure disease. A sickly child was bathed in an oak solution, called *dubynnja*, so that "it would grow as strong as an oak." People sing this folk song verse:

В нашім новім саді дуб пукат, дуб пукат,
Повідают люде, же люблю гайдука.
А я люблю Янка, а я люблю Янка,
Такий, як фіялка.

In our new orchard the oak's bark is bursting,
People say I love a guardsman,
But it's Janko I love, only Janko,
And he's like a violet.

In another song we hear:

Ой на горі два дуби
Схилилися до купи.

The two oaks on the hill
Lean to each other.

The oak symbolizes a strong and resolute individual. A powerful youth is often said to be "as strong as an oak." The oak figures as well in the following folk song:

Та ішли дівочки та по ягодочки,
Червоная калинонька — зелени дубочки,
Червоная калинонька — то дівочки,
Зелені дубочки — то парубочки.

The girls went picking berries.
Red guelder-rose — green oak trees.
The girls are the red guelder-rose,
The green oak trees are young lads.

Another folk song describes a girl who lost her way in the forest while picking mushrooms and spoke to an oak:

Дівчинонька по гриби ходила
Та в зеленім гаю заблудила,
В гаю заблудила.
Пришла она к зеленому дубу,
А ци я ту ночувати буду,
Ночувати буду.

A young girl went to pick mushrooms
And lost her way in the green glade,
In the green glade.
She came upon a green oak tree.
Will I spend the night here,
Spend the night here?

It seems appropriate to add a few short remarks about orchard cultivation among the Eastern Slavs in antiquity. The word *sad* (orchard) is derived from the older term *sadyty* (to plant). Thus, even in olden times the orchard was a special plot of land on which men planted fruit trees with their own hands. This ancient word attests to the great love that our ancestors had for fruit trees even in the remote past.

The examples cited above prove that the motif of the tree in folk ornament is not an accidental phenomenon, but often reflects the entire structure of folk ornament accumulated over many centuries. Both deciduous and coniferous trees occur in *pysanka* ornament, where they are usually depicted in the form of branches. Because of its dimensions, the whole tree is not easily represented and has been much stylized. The tree or forest motif as it appears in *pysanka* ornament is one of the most beautiful and most developed in comparison with certain other motifs in folk ornament.

(5) Flower. The flower is one of a great number of phytomorphic motifs that include representations of grasses, hollyhocks, clover, branches, spikes, guelder-rose, rosemary, gentian, berries, flax, hemp, grapes, violet, red rose, and so forth. The flower, like every other plant form, has its own significance in ornament. Sometimes these motifs are very similar in their graphic design. In *pysanka* ornament, the flower figure is one of the most widely occurring motifs. At times, however, its representation makes it difficult to distinguish it from solar motifs. In folk poetry, children, girls, and young people are likened to flowers. Flowers enhance life, and it is in this function that they appear in folk ornament.

(6) Swallow. The swallow motif is very popular in *pysanka* ornament. In Eastern Slovakia, it occurs most frequently in the Laborec valley. In terms of frequency of use and diversity of compositional solutions, only the sun, moon, and star motifs take precedence over that of the swallow. This motif appears both independently — in the form of an ornamental band — and in combination with other motifs.

The swallow is an ancient motif in folk ornament. From earliest times, the swallow has been regarded as the harbinger of spring and like *pysanka* itself, it has always been associated with the coming of that season. In this respect, the swallow motif in *pysanka* ornament is like those representing the sun and the flower.

The popular perception of the swallow is that of a gentle, fragile, much loved, and useful bird. By custom, it is a sin to kill a swallow, and its nest may not be removed from under the eaves. A house without a swallow's nest is regarded as unlucky. The swallow symbolizes the spring, an abundant harvest, and happiness. Not surprisingly, folk poetry holds the swallow in high esteem. In the folk song, "Tam za jarkom, tam za luhom" (Beyond the Valley, Beyond the Meadow), we hear:

Кебы я мав шумну дівку,
Любив бы'м ю, як ластівку.

If I had a pretty lass,
I'd love her like a swallow.

An interesting folk tale has survived about the origin of the "swallow cult."

There was once a woman, and she had a daughter. The daughter went to bathe with other children. The little girl undressed, placed her clothes on a rock, and went into the water. A large snake appeared from somewhere and lay on the little girl's clothing. When the girl came out of the water, she wanted to dress and said to the snake:

'Why are you lying on my clothes?'

And the snake replied:

'I'll give you back your clothes, if you promise to marry me.'

So the little girl promised and the snake gave her back her clothes, saying:

'When you turn sixteen, I'll come for you and take you.' So the snake told her when he would come, the [exact] day and the hour.

The child came home and told her mother the story.

When the girl turned sixteen, on that [exact] day and hour her mother locked the door and the windows and hid the girl behind the stove and told her:

'Stay there, they won't come into the house.'

But at that moment the wedding carriages drove into the yard. The groom's party broke the window, came into the house, and took away the girl. After they took her, she was gone for three years. When three years had gone by, the mother looked up and saw her daughter walking toward her. She was carrying a little girl in her arms and leading a little boy by the hand. The mother ran out to meet her, brought her back to the house, kissed her and was overcome with joy at seeing her.

'Daughter, whose children are those?'

'Mine.'

'Daughter, where do you live?'

'In the water kingdom with my husband.'

'Are you happy in the water kingdom?'

'More than here,' replied the girl.

So the mother said to her:

'That's good, daughter, but sit down a bit . . .'

The mother gave her food, chatted with her and then said:

'Daughter, why don't you lie down and sleep a while?'

'I can't sleep, mother, because my husband told me that when it's three o'clock I must return because he'll be waiting for me.'

'Where will he wait for you? How will you know where to find him?'

'I'll stand on the river bank and shout': Osyf, Osyf, come out and take me. 'And he'll come out and take me.'

'Well, you lie down and when it's three o'clock I'll wake you and you'll go.'

The girl lay down and fell asleep. Her mother took an axe and went to the river bank and began shouting:

'Osyf, Osyf, come out of the water and take me.'

The water king came out of the river, the mother took her axe and chopped off his head, and his blood spilled over the water. She threw the head into the water and returned home. There she woke up her daughter and her children. The daughter took her children, thanked her mother, and left. When she came to the river bank, she began to shout:

'Osyf, Osyf, come out and take me.'

But no one came out of the water. She shouted again and again, but the water king did not come. And then she looked and saw the head floating on the water and the red blood. Then she kissed her son and said to him:

'You, my little boy,
Will be a nightingale.
You'll fly and sing
Through hill and vale,
Remembering your father.
You, my little girl,
Will be a swallow.
You'll fly low over the water,
Over hill and vale,
Remembering your father.
And I'll be a cuckoo.
I'll cry like a cuckoo
Over hill and vale,
Remembering my husband.
Since you children have no father,
You won't have a mother.'

And so they separated and went their own ways. The swallow flies low over water as if looking for her father. And swallows, nightingales, and cuckoos are never eaten.[17]

(7) Bee. People believe that bees must not be killed or stepped upon. If a bee should fall into a stream or a puddle, it must be saved and placed in the sun to dry and to warm up. In folk medicine, bees (as well as their honey) are used to heal various illnesses. They symbolize industriousness, a characteristic reflected in the saying: "As busy as a bee." In this regard, the bee leaves its nest or hive when the first flowers bloom.

The word used to describe the death of all animals, insects included — *zdȳchaty* — is never used when speaking of bees; in their case, the same word is used as for humans, that is *vmyraty* or *zahybaty.* This is proof of the high esteem in which the bee is held by peasants. A popular saying expresses this attitude in the following manner: "The bee comes from a man's forehead." In contrast, "a wasp comes from the devil's nose." As an occupation, beekeeping by Slavs dates back to ancient times. An interesting folk tale about the origin of the bee was told to me on August 8, 1965, by Kataryna Tjahla, an 83 year-old peasant woman from Čertižné:

My old grandmother told me when I was still a little girl that once, long ago, a village woman was baking bread for a christening. She had just begun to prepare to place the bread in the oven *(chlibivčate),* when an old, grey, poor beggar came into her house. The poor old man asked the woman for some bread. She told him that since she was just getting bread ready for the oven, she would bake him a loaf too. The woman scratched the bottom of the trough in which she had kneaded the dough, made a loaf from the scratchings *(poškrebanča)* for the beggar and put it into the oven together with the last of the regular loaves. When the bread was done, the woman saw that the loaf made of the scratchings had turned out to be the finest of all. The woman decided that the finest loaf of bread should be given to the guests at the christening and not to the beggar. She did not want to give the beggar her best bread. But the beggar kept asking her to give him only the loaf that she had baked for him from the scratchings. So the woman fell into a rage and hit the beggar over the head with her poker. A wound opened in the beggar's head, and in it appeared some worms, and out of these worms emerged 'bees'. That is how a bee grew out of a man's forehead, which is why the word used to describe the death of a bee is the same as the one used for humans and not the one that is used for animals. My grandmother told me this so that I should not kill bees and so that I should tell others not to do so.

Such human affection for bees resulted in the incorporation of this insect's representation as a motif in folk ornament. In folk art, and especially in *pysanka* ornament, this motif deserves our attention, because beekeeping is one of the principal occupations of the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia. Moreover, since beekeeping dates back to ancient times, the bee motif like the folk tale cited above is very old.

(8) Sheaf. The motif of the sheaf — called a *snip, snopkȳ, snopȳ, snipkȳ, or snopykȳ* — appears frequently in folk ornament. Its design has a number of variations. In *pysanka* ornament, it is regarded as a motif derived from agrarian culture. In our opinion, although it also occurs in such forms of folk art as embroidery, it was first applied on *pysankȳ* and only then transmitted to other forms, where it is quite rare. Its small dimensions, brought to a high degree of abstraction in *pysanka* ornament, made its transposal into forms of folk art with other techniques of executing ornamentation difficult.

The sheaf occurs as a motif on *pysankȳ* originating from many Prešov Region Rusyn villages (Vyšná Jedl'ová, Miková, Čertižné, Kožany, and others). Usually, the sheaf is used as the central motif, but it also appears independently in a free arrangement. The sheaf figure is often applied in an ornamental band running either vertically or horizontally. In some examples, an equal number of spikes points upward and downward, thereby achieving a dynamic composition. Even though this motif is difficult to execute, it is a great favorite with folk *pysanka* artists.

The sheaf's former cultic significance in folk rituals is especially evident in New Year's festivities. In peasant homes, all family gatherings — dinners and suppers to celebrate weddings, anniversaries, christenings — were traditionally held around the table at which the finest and most abundant sheaf was given a place of honor. It symbolized fertility, a plentiful harvest, and the hope for a large and good supply of bread in the coming year.

(9) Fish. This is not an accidental motif in *pysanka* ornament. Although it also occurs in other forms of folk art, we believe it to have originated in *pysanka* ornament, where it has the longest tradition. Notwithstanding its Christian symbolic significance, the fish motif appears in ornament well before the coming of Christianity. It therefore cannot be argued that this figure in *pysanka* ornament signifies an exclusively Christian religious symbol. Rather, the Christian church adopted it for its own symbolic purposes (the apostles were fishermen),* after which it became most closely associated with Christianity.[18]

However, as a means of obtaining food, fishing was pursued by the Slavs well before the Christian era, and therefore fish are frequent in folklore. They appear in folk tales and help the hero in his struggle against evil. They also occur in literature (Hulak-Artemovs'kyj, Puškin, and others). In lyrical songs, fish often help young people to extricate themselves from complex situations. There are many references to fish in oral folk literature. A mother calls her child "my little fish!" An older person can also address a younger one in this fashion. A young man uses the same appelation for his sweetheart.

In folk songs, fish sometimes symbolize freedom:

По тихім Дунаю рибочки плавают,
А што же мі, што же з моєй молодості,
Кедь зволі не маю.
А зволичко моя, де ся сь мі поділа,
Ци-сь мі отенула, ци-сь мі отенула,
Ци-сь позаросила?

Fish swim in the quiet Danube,
But what good is my youth to me,
When I am not free?

Oh, my freedom, where have you gone?
Have you been cut off from me, cut off from me.
Have you been covered up?

In folk art, fish also symbolize silence resulting from despondency or unspoken faithfulness. Generally, however, the fish motif represents a positive quality in folk creativity. In the folk song, "Na labirs'kim mosti" (On the Bridge Across the Laborec), a fish acts as an intermediary in love:

На високій горі травка ся колише,
Стародавній фраїр до ня листи пише.
А я му послала на риблячим хвості,
Жеби він ня чекав на лабірськім мості.
Не одна рибочка попід міст перешла,
Жадну я не видів, жеби письмо несла.
А лем тота єдна, што понад край ішла,
Тота повідала, же го вода несла.

On the high hill the grass ripples,
An old boyfriend writes me letters,
I sent him [a letter] on a fish tail
To wait for me on the bridge across the Laborec.
Many a fish passed under the bridge,
But not one did I see carrying your letter.
Only the one that swam near the bank
Told me that the water carried it away.

The fish motif is an integral component of folk ornament with origins that date back to the beginnings of human history. Every good artist depicts the fish in *pysanka* ornament in her own fashion, but in each instance this figure is stripped of all superfluous details and is highly stylized.

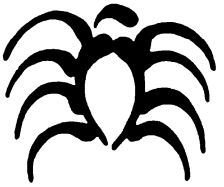
*The fish is a Christian symbol reflected in the acronym formed from the first letters of the Greek phrase: IXØS (fish — Jesus Christ *S*on of *G*od *S*aviour).

(10) Snake. The representation found in folk ornament is always that of a snake, never that of a serpent. Snakes never sting. The motif belongs to the agrarian-pastoral culture and is taken from the harmless snakes found near every peasant house. They were believed to guard the home, and every farmer was pleased to have a snake live in his yard. It was common in the past to regard people who lived in a house without a snake in its yard as in some way bad. Such snakes were never killed, because the farmers thought that killing a garden snake would cause all the livestock to die. And a household without cattle could not have survived the year.

The snake was usually gray in color and was believed to protect the home from fire, flood, and illness. It hissed to warn of approaching calamities. It was considered a good omen to see a live snake in the fields in the spring. Anyone who saw a dead snake was expected to be lazy throughout the entire year (recorded in Bogliarka and Kríže).

In many of Eastern Slovakia's border villages snakes were believed to suck the milk of cows and sheep. Cattle could even die for want of a snake. It was common practice in the past to prescribe snake oil, which was sold by the older shepherds for various internal ailments. The skin shed by the snake *(linovys'ko)* was used to treat toothache and birthmarks *(ruža)* on the face (recorded in the villages of Kríže and Bogliarka). A pregnant woman was warned not to look at the skin shed by a snake for fear that her child would be born with blemishes on its face — *pehate* (Kríže). It was customary not to pick hazelnuts until after the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6). If a person went to pick them earlier, some calamity was expected, giving rise to the saying: "He grazed and grazed the goats, and then he went to pick nuts and a snake wound itself around his leg."

The snake motif dates back to remote antiquity and occurs in many countries among many peoples. For example, this motif is also found in the ornament of African tribes, by whom snakes were embroidered with colored thread next to turtles on pillows made of soft leather. Along with other motifs arranged in a checkerboard fashion, the snake is regarded by the Africans as having symbolic significance.[19] In essence, there is no great difference between the snake represented on a pillow from Dahomey and that depicted on a *pysanka* from the Rusyn village of Čertižné. Any difference that does exist derives from the different techniques of execution necessitated by the materials used in each case.



(11) Spider. The motif of the spider in folk ornament, and especially in *pysanka* ornament, is an old one. It is associated with various beliefs and customs and also with folk medicine. In the past, this insect had great cultic significance. It was regarded as very useful, endowed with positive qualities, and was respected and protected.

Children were once warned by their elders not to kill spiders, because their death was believed to bring misfortune on the household. "A spider in the house means good fortune," we were told by the 83-year-old peasant woman Kataryna Tjahla from the village of Čertižné. Special care was to be taken not to kill spiders that bore the mark of a cross. A spider could be killed only with the back of the left hand *(od-*

livruky, dzupakruky, spakruky, naspakruky). A spider killed in this fashion could be used in folk medicine.

Any place where a spider had spun its web was regarded as lucky. Farmers protected cobwebs in their stables year round, because they were believed to assure the health of livestock. Removing cobwebs from the walls in a stable was thought to affect he quality of the cream. "If there are no cobwebs, there is no cream," was the saying. Not so long ago there existed a custom of placing a vessel containing cream and a spider on the plot of land designated as the site for a new house. If the spider had spun a web over the cream after a few days, the location was deemed lucky and a house could be built there. Village girls killed spiders with the backs of their left hands and ate them in the belief that this would bring them happiness and marriage within the year. Another custom was to place a spider in a cup on New Year's Eve; if by morning the spider had spun a web in the cup, the girl would be engaged before the year was out.

Farmers forecast the weather with the help of spiders' webs. A large number of cobwebs in the fields heralded a long warm spell and good weather. In the villages of Bogliarka and Kríže in the Bardejov region, the woman or man of the house killed a spider with the back of the left hand and used that part of the hand to rub down a sick animal to make it get well faster. Cobwebs were applied to various infections on the hands and feet (Križé, Habura, Čertižné, Medzilaborce). Cobwebs were also used to stem the flow of blood from a cut as indicated in almost all the villages where we collected our data.

The spider first appeared as a motif in *pysanka* ornament very long ago. The same holds true for its occurrence in folklore, songs, tales, and sayings. One folk song describes:

Падали павуки
З осени на луки,
Камаратко Марько,
Дайме собі руки.

Spiders fell
Onto the meadow in the fall.
My good friend Marija
Let's hold hands.

In another local humorous song we hear:

Пила я палінку
Із зеленой фляшки,
Випилам павука
Та ня болить днука.

I drank whiskey
From a green bottle.
I swallowed a spider,
And now I hurt inside.

M. Kotyk, a peasant woman from the village of Svetlice, gave us the following reason why spiders were held in high esteem and were not to be killed: "When the Virgin Mary was fleeing with Christ, a spider spun up their tracks behind them. For this the Blessed Virgin marked him with a cross. That is why spiders are not to be killed." This explanation is of a later date, since its origins are in the Christian era, although it could have been adapted as well from pagan times.

(12) Heart. This is a favorite motif in both folk ornament and folklore. It is sometimes difficult to determine in which form of folk art the heart motif appears most frequently. We find it less often on *py-*

sankȳ than in embroidery, where it often symbolizes the soul in the ordinary human sense of the word.

The heart is synonymous with the human "ego." Even today, the expression "my heart hurts" means the same as "I'm unhappy," and obviously does not describe a physical ailment. On their letters lovers still draw hearts, which in folk art have always stood for love and continue to do so to this day. Hearts occur in literature in this same guise. How could this symbol not appear in *pysanka* ornament considering the ancient, but still observed, tradition of the one-way presentation of the *pysanka* by a girl to a boy? This motif in folk art, and especially in *pysanka* ornamentation, thus symbolizes the personal attitude of a girl toward a boy.

In this type of composition, the heart always appears as the central motif, while any other elements that surround it, which are usually of a material or abstract nature, serve only as background. An egg ornamented with a heart always carries a rather specific meaning, since its design usually manifests the inner feelings of the girl who decorated the *pysanka* and, in some instances, even indicates the specific person for whom it is meant. Abstract motifs and those derived from material objects that appear on a *pysanka* decorated with a heart are usually executed with a high degree of artistry.

The concept of the soul is always abstract. Its representation in the image of a heart endows it with a concrete form. It is difficult to determine whether the motif of the heart originated in *pysanka* ornament, whether it was transmitted into embroidery, or the other way around. To establish this, one would need to know which came first — *pysankȳ* or embroidery. One would also need to know which played a more important role in the relationship between a girl and a boy: embroidery (towels, head coverings, shirts) or the *pysanka*. Everything we have said about *pysankȳ* up to this point suggests that they played the more important role.

Ancient philosophy regarded the heart as the seat of the soul (or even thought of the two as identical). As folk art developed, the heart became more closely associated with love. However, the concept of love is so old that this progression cannot be of any significance to the origin and semantic meaning of the heart as an ornamental motif in folk creativity. In the village of Čertižné, they sing:

Таке во мі серце, таке розжалене,
Як сиве желізо, в огні розпечене.
Сивому желізу ковале споможут,
Мойому серденьку дохторе не можут.
Сивому желізу водичка поможе,
Мойому серденьку нихто уж не може!

My heart is as inflamed with pain,
As grey iron heated red-hot by flames.
Smiths will help the grey iron,
But even doctors cannot help my heart.
Water will help the grey iron,
But no one can help my poor heart.

In another local folk song, a girl speaks to her heart:

Іду горі, дому, не виджу никого,
Плаче моє серце з жалю великого.
Плач, лем серце, плач, так ти добре знаш,
Же ти у валалі веселості не маш.

As I go home uphill, I see no one,
My heart cries from great sorrow.
Cry, my heart, cry because you well know
That there's no happiness for you in this village.

In another song, the heart symbolizes the soul. The girl is despondent and contemplates death; her heart and soul become one:

Возьму ножик і ведерце,
Згублю душу, проб'ю серце,
Серце проб'ю, душу згублю,
То про тебе, бо тя люблю.

I'll take a knife and a pail,
Drown my soul and pierce my heart,
Pierce my heart and drown my soul,
Over you, because I love you.

The extent to which the heart is part of folklore is also evident from the following song:

Ей не виджу милого, ни коника його,
Ей крає мі ся серце з жалю великого.

I don't see my love, I don't see his horse,
How my heart breaks from this great sorrow.

As we have stated earlier, the heart usually appears as an independent motif in *pysanka* ornament. It appears as the primary ornamental element and determines the composition of the entire design. In another type of composition, identical heart forms are arranged in a wreath to produce a band ornament. However, here, too, the heart motif is dominant in the resultant design.

(13) Wreath or garland. This motif is widely used in the folk art of almost all peoples. It occurs with equal frequency in embroidery and on *pysankŷ,* not only because these two forms of folk art are the most widespread, but also because they are the forms most closely associated with folk customs and rituals. Wreaths made of flowers, leaves, and other greenery were worn by the celebrants during such ancient pagan festivals as that of *Kupalo,* today associated with the feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24, Old Style). There is little doubt that the bridal wreath dates back to the pre-Christian era. In folk poetry, it is a symbol of a girl's freedom and is worn at almost every festive occasion. Wreaths accompany man from birth to death. One of the forms of the wreath is the garland. In ritual wedding songs, the wreath has profound traditional meaning:

Віночок починати,
Щастічко закладати,
Щастічко—барвіночок,
То Гані на віночок.
Горі, соненько, горі
Вийся, віночку, скорі
На гладку головоньку,
В щасливу годиноньку.

Let's begin plaiting a wreath
To lay the foundations of happiness.
Happiness — periwinkle,
To make Hanka a wreath.
Rise high, sun, rise high.
Weave the wreath quickly,
For a bare head
In this happy hour.

Or in another folk song:

Мате вы ня, мамцьо, за нелюба дати,
Волите вы мене, моя люба мамцьо, г
віночку поховати.

Rather than give me to an unloved
husband,
Bury me in a wreath, my beloved mother.

The ritual significance of the wreath is also evident in the following song:

Віночку зелений, як найкрашша пава,
Не жаль тя стратити, кедь шя зийде пара.
Віночку зелений, як найкрашша ружа,
Не жаль тя стратити за доброго мужа.

Oh, green wreath, like the most beautiful peacock,
I'm not sorry to lose you, if you find a pair.
Oh, green wreath, like the most beautiful rose,
I'm not sorry to lose you for a good husband.

Spring ploughing is followed by the work of tending the planted crops. This is the season when the first flowers bloom. Shepherds weave wreaths of marigold *(žovtyj lotaj)* on the feast of St. George (May 6) and adorn the horns of the cattle with them. The tradition of plaiting wreaths on St. George's day is very old, and the sight of cattle returning from pasture crowned with wreaths of yellow flowers is truly breathtaking. Wreaths are also plaited on St. John's day (*Jana,* June 24), when the first summer fruits ripen: cherries, apples, pears. A wreath made of ground ivy *(rozchidnyk)* on St. John's day takes on a cultic significance and is saved from year to year. It has a long history of use in folk medicine, especially in the treatment of shooting pains in the ear.

The scope of this study does not allow us to cite all the instances in which wreaths are part of folk rituals. The fact remains that the wreath is one of the most important elements in folk ornament. In embroidery, the wreath motif occurs most frequently on the towels carried by the groom's attendants and on blouses worn by unmarried girls. Embroidering "in a wreath" *(na vinčyk)* is widespread in this form of folk art.[20]

The wreath is a favorite *pysanka* motif in almost every Rusyn village in Eastern Slovakia. Decorated eggs from the villages of Ol'ka and Čertižné, on which this figure appears as the principal motif, are good examples of the application of this element in *pysanka* ornament. In the villages of Miková, Čertižné, and Palota, the arrangement of the wreath motif in *pysanka* ornament is called *pysannja jajec' na vinčyk* — decorating eggs in a wreath (Anna Kulyk, Čertižné). The wreath occurs so frequently on *pysankŷ* that this style of embellishment now serves a purely decorative function, marked strongly by rhythm and symmetry. This method of ornamenting eggs relies on the principle of linear design, and it would be difficult to imagine *pysanka* without the traditional wreath motif with its endless variety of compositional possibilities.

(14) Circle ("magic circle"). The circle is a traditional motif in *pysanka* ornament. It occurs on *pysankŷ* from Vojtovce, Ruský Kručov, Fijaš, and other Prešov Region Rusyn villages. The circle belongs to the category of simple ancient symbolic ornamental figures that once had cultic significance. It appears on *pysankŷ* independently in a free arrangement or as a band.

In remote antiquity, the circle had magical meaning. This symbolic connotation has now been lost, so that the circle motif serves a purely ornamental function. Still, until quite recently, the faint echo of its ancient significance was very much a part of peasant life. Peasants used to make a circle of twigs plaited to resemble a chain. Circles were drawn with ashes or sand, marked with water, and painted with whitewash, charcoal, or chalk on stable doors. Poles or stakes were planted into the ground in a circle. In all these practices, the purpose of the circle was to protect man and his property from evil.

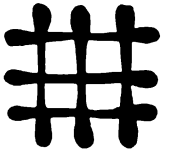
The circle was most frequently used in the fields where the livestock grazed and harvests were reaped. When a storm approached, peasant beliefs about lightning required that a spot be cleared of leaves, weeds, and dry grass and that a circle be drawn around the cleared area. The person then stepped inside the circle and waited out the storm. If caught by a storm unawares, a person would step into a clear spot and lay a circle of small twigs around himself. Enclosed in this fashion, the person inside the circle believed himself protected from sudden danger such as lightning.

Such "magic" circles were known in many Rusyn villages of Eastern Slovakia as late as the 1930s and 1940s. The people believed in the age-old notion of the circle's extraordinary power. The circle kept out evil forces, which were believed unable to break through something that had "neither a beginning nor an end." The very form of the circle was perceived as wondrous by ancient man.

Belief, too, in vampires was widespread throughout most Rusyn villages. Shepherds grazing livestock far from the village were probably most afraid of these imaginary creatures. Old shepherds, known as *bačove,* were therefore masters at warding off vampires. Until quite recently, people believed that their neighbors or fellow villagers could turn into vampires after death. According to this belief, the vampire woke after death, left his grave, and went in search of a victim whose blood he then drank. To prevent such incidents, an old shepherd would go to the cemetery at night and find the grave of the newly deceased. There he would draw a circle around himself with chalk blessed by a priest. This prevented any spirits beyond the circle from reaching him. The *bača* then sat inside the circle holding a clay figure on his head, which represented "the priest who read the Gospels when blessing the grain on the feast of St. George." In this manner, the *bača* (shepherd) removed the spell from the vampire.

The circle once played an important role in various rituals and New Year's customs. Traces of the circle's original significance are also found in language as, for example, in the expression "charmed circle." Although the circle has lost its original meaning in contemporary ornament, it remains a favorite motif in almost all forms of folk art.

The motif of the circle in ornament and in customs is particularly valuable in that it continues to cast a ray of light on the ancient life of peasants, their beliefs and their perceptions of natural phenomena. No less interesting is the actual graphic representation of the circle. The circle is an interesting motif, which has assumed one of the principal positions in the history of ornament. It occurs in almost all forms of folk art and its ubiquity makes it difficult to determine the branch of folk art in which it occurs most frequently.

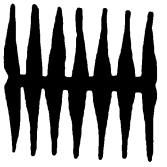


(15) Basket, or square, or rhomb shaded with cross lines *(klitka).* This motif appears in all forms of folk art in Eastern Slovakia: on *pysanka,* in embroidery and handwoven textiles, in wood carving, and in other folk artifacts.

The basket motif, sometimes also called the cage, is one of the simplest ornamental graphic designs. It can be represented as a square shaded with horizontal and vertical cross lines, or as a rhomb or diamond with similar crossline shading. This motif is frequently found in folk architecture — on the facades of wooden houses, long-constructed drawwells, fences, farm gates, and sleighs. In *pysanka* ornament, the basket motif has a long tradition. It appears on *pysankȳ* made by Marija Chomča from Medzilaborce, as well as on *pysankȳ* from the village of Ruský Kručov.

Some scholars regard the square or rhomb shaded with cross lines to be one of the oldest ornamental motifs in existence. It occurs on ancient bronze pieces, pottery, and objects dating to the prehistoric era, and it appears in the art of nearly every people in nearly every country and on every continent, both in the past and in the present. The Mayas of Central America frequently used this motif in their architecture.

The execution of this figure presents little difficulty. Moreover, it is elegant and by its very nature produces graphic and color contrasts. It has appeared in *pysanka* ornament since the very beginning and has never waned in popularity.



(16) Ladder. This motif occurs in both embroidery and *pysanka* ornament. In embroidery, it constitutes one of the techniques of executing stitches *(na drabynku)*. If one compares the representation of the ladder on *pysankŷ* with its design in embroidery, and if consideration is given to the compositional structure of both forms of folk art, it becomes obvious that this motif was introduced to the *pysanka* from embroidery. The ladder motif belongs to the category of social motifs which originated in the agrarian-pastoral culture of the Rusyn peasants of Eastern Slovakia.

Both embroidery and *pysankŷ* will allow for greater variety in the representation of the ladder motif. The *pysankŷ* of Eva Tjahla and Marija Myrman from Čertižné can serve as examples of the successful development of this motif on ornamented Easter eggs. The simplicity and precision with which this element is depicted indicates a very high artistic level. Yet, its application never reaches beyond the realm of traditional *pysanka* ornament.

The best results in applying this motif have been obtained with the use of the wax technique. The clarity of the form is enhanced twofold if the *pysanka* artist chooses the most suitable instruments for her task. The design she then produces achieves great harmony.

The above remarks hardly exhaust the range of *pysanka* motifs used by the Rusyn inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia. The following table provides a more comprehensive list of motifs. They are arrayed according to ten groups, and for each motif its cultural origin and significance in everyday life is specified.

This table does not attempt to provide a complete list of motifs. Rather, its purpose is to indicate approximately the various meanings that individual motifs had in the past as well as the culture in which they originated. The table shows the degree to which a society's way of life at different stages of its cultural evolution was reflected on ornamented eggs. There is even evidence of this in some designs and symbols that reflect the socialist era.

10. TECHNIQUES USED IN THE PAINTING AND ORNAMENTATION OF PYSANKY

Although several methods of ornamenting eggs are used in the villages inhabited by Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia, the predominant technique is one that relies on an application of wax to the egg surface. This is also the oldest and the most traditional method.

Through the centuries, a number of other methods of ornamenting eggs emerged alongside the traditional wax technique. They were inspired by the appearance of various new materials, for example — oil pastels. In addition, the folk artists themselves sought new ways of decorating *pysanky*. That is how the technique of ornamenting eggs by using natural plant leaves was developed. For the most part, however, the new methods of ornamentation that were devised during the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries were based on the traditional wax technique, being further refinements of the earlier and much more ancient way of decorating eggs.

Folk creativity continues to evolve. It is an unending process, because the sources of folk creativity are inexhaustible. Nonetheless, some of the methods of ornamenting *pysanky* that have emerged are undesirable. For instance, various new technical possibilities became available after World War II. Such materials as varnish and oils were introduced. Attempts were even made to paste pictures onto the surface of the egg. But all these techniques lack aesthetic value and are detrimental to this art form. Eventually recognized as such, they failed to take hold. Consequently, we see no purpose in discussing them in this study. They are harmful not because they make use of new and entirely different techniques, but because they usher in naturalism into *pysanka* ornament, introduce false values, and produce nothing more than superficial effects and philistine affectation. Essentially, these techniques destroy folk creativity.

In order to systematize all the known techniques of *pysanka* decoration used by the Rusyn inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia, we must first define a *pysanka* in the physical sense. It is a bird's egg painted a certain color or colors and covered with ornamentation. This gives rise to the first question: how is a *pysanka* colored (with one or several hues) and how are these colors made (the technology of making dyes)? The second question concerns the application of ornamental motifs on the *pysanka* — in other words, what tools are used to execute the design and the fluid that cools on the surface of the egg?

In the realm of coloration, it should be pointed out that it evolved from the natural color of the eggshell to the application of one or more colors to the egg surface. With respect to the technical aspects of executing designs on the *pysanka* surface, it can be said that between the simple act of dyeing the egg one color and covering the egg's dyed surface with a variety of ornaments, there exist numerous forms of *pysanka* artistry which are based primarily on various combinations of dyeing and ornamentation of eggs as well as on the use of various materials to execute the ornament. At the opposite extremes of this broad range of possibilities there are the two

simplest "Easter eggs": the *farbanka,* or an egg dyed a single color and bearing no ornamentation whatsoever, and the so-called undyed *pysanka,* or undyed white egg ornamented with burnt wax. Between these two forms of decorated eggs fall all the *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia as well as all other *pysankŷ.*

I. **In terms of coloring,** contemporary Rusyn *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia can be classified as follows:

A. dyed one color without ornamentation:
(1) with homemade vegetable dyes;
(2) with modern synthetic dyes.

B. dyed more than one color without ornamentation:
(1) with modern synthetic dyes.

II. **In terms of ornamentation,** contemporary Rusyn *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia can be classified into the following categories:

A. Decorated with **flat ornament:**
(1) by producing a *negative ornament in the natural color of the eggshell:* a. by scratching out the ornament on a dyed egg; b. by removing the wax with which the design was executed after dyeing the egg;
(2) by producing a *negative ornament on the dyed surface of the egg:* a. by removing the wax with which the design was executed from the dyed egg surface after applying a new color;
(3) by applying *natural plant leaves:* a. by removing the plant leaves that had been applied to the undyed surface of the egg after the dyeing. The imprint of the leaves remains on the egg surface as a negative ornament in the natural color of the eggshell;
(4) by employing the *Hutsul and other techniques of ornamentation,* which will not be discussed here, because we believe that they will be analyzed in detail in another publication similar to this one.

B. Decorated with **ornament in relief:**
(1) by using *wax to execute the ornamental elements:* a. using burnt wax to apply ornament to the natural white egg surface; b. using clear wax to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed a single color; c. using colored wax to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed a single color; d. using clear wax to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed several colors; e. using colored wax to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed several colors;
(2) by using *pastels:* a. to apply ornament to the natural white surface of the egg; b. to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed a single color; c. to apply ornament to an egg surface dyed several colors;
(3) ornament executed with *oil paints.* This, like certain other methods, is a completely incidental development in this form of folk art and has had no significant influence on the art of *pysanka* making among Eastern Slovakia's Rusyns. As such, it merits no further discussion.

The above classification of the methods used to decorate *pysankŷ* by Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia is based on the two aspects of ornamentation in this form of folk art — dyeing and the application of ornament onto the egg surface. This scheme is quite comprehensive with regard to color. What remains to be discussed in greater detail is the application of ornamentation.

The methods of ornamentation used in Prešov Region *pysankŷ* fall into two groups: (1) execution of ornament without the use of wax; and (2) execution of ornament using the wax technique — the technique of executing ornamentation with pastels is identical. Insofar as the wax technique (including the pastel technique) is the most characteristic of the Rusyn *pysankŷ* made in Eastern Slovakia and is, moreover, responsible for their high artistic value, it deserves special attention. However, before proceeding to this subject, it is necessary to deal with those methods of ornamenting eggs that do not rely on wax.

In those *pysankŷ* ornamented without the use of wax: (1) the egg is dyed one or more colors (I-A/

1—2, I-B/1); (2) the ornament is scratched out on the dyed egg surface (II-A/1a); (3) the ornament is produced by applying natural plant leaves (II-A/3a); or (4) the ornament is executed with oils which, as we pointed out above, is an incidental phenomenon and merits no discussion in this study (II-B/3). Those *pysankŷ* ornamented using the wax technique include all the other methods listed in the above scheme, which, regardless of the color of the egg or the wax (or pastels), fall into two groups depending on how the ornament is executed: (1) the technique of applying wax to achieve a flat ornament (all the methods cited in the preceding scheme in section II-A); or (2) the technique of applying the wax to achieve an ornament in relief (all the methods cited in the preceding scheme in section II-B, with the exception of B-3).

The author is aware that the above classification does not reflect the consecutive order in which the various techniques emerged, with the exception of the modern ones (based on the development of the chemical industry) whose origin is quite clear. It should be pointed out that the emergence of the older techniques of making *pysankŷ* is still subject to differing views, assumptions, and hypotheses in scholarship. Although the wax technique is one of the original methods developed, it has passed through a modern stage of very interesting and diverse elaboration.

Non-wax techniques

(1) *Simple dyeing.* The technique of dyeing the egg one color is the simplest method of ornamentation. It produces a monochromatic egg called a *farbanka* or *farblene jajce,* and represents one of the oldest methods of decorating eggs. *Farbankŷ* were usually boiled eggs.

The *farbanka* was cooked in the dye. If the egg was cooked in ordinary water, it was later placed into a dye for an additional 15 to 20 minutes. The method of dyeing was determined by the properties of the dyes, some of which could affect the egg's edibility. A wooden spoon was always used to remove the egg from the dye, since a metal utensil could damage the color. After the egg had been allowed to dry thoroughly, it was warmed and rubbed with cured bacon rind. This gave it a gloss and brilliancy and prevented the dye from rubbing off. Only clean dyes were used, and each dye was held in a separate container.

Great care was taken to ensure that the dyed eggs had no flaws, because only perfectly colored eggs were placed in the Easter baskets. The primary requirement in the art of making *farbankŷ* was that the color be clear and pleasing to the eye. It was understood by everyone that the "Easter eggs" displayed in the baskets outside the church were, as it were, on exhibit — to be judged silently by all who viewed them.

(2) *Scratching.* The technique of scratching the ornament on the egg surface is of a much later date, known to have been used only since the beginning of the twentieth century. Anything with a hard sharp point can be used to scratch the ornament: a razor, knife, needle, awl, file, or even a sharpened nail.

In the process of developing this method of ornamentation, the peasant women found that most white eggs have a softer shell that is unsuitable for scratching. Therefore, the scratching method is most suited to raw or boiled brown eggs. If raw eggs are used, the contents of the egg are blown out after the ornament has been executed (the contents are needed while the ornament is being applied, since the weight of the full egg makes it easier to handle). The ornament is applied in the following manner: while the egg is held in the left hand, a sharp implement held in the right hand is used to scratch lines and dots lightly on the egg surface that has previously been dyed. Only natural, homemade dyes, most frequently made of onion skins, can be used in

this method of ornamentation. The motifs most commonly found on *pysankȳ* decorated with the scratching technique are plant forms, flowers, roses, berries, clover, leaves, branches, and flora in general.

This technique has completely broken with the traditional wax technique. However, it has its own traditions and has developed its own motifs. As opposed to the wax technique, the method of executing ornamentation by scratching the egg surface constitutes a decline in the art on *pysanka* making. Nevertheless, it has given rise to a great variety of decorative motifs and compositional possibilities for interpreting various realistic phenomena. Although geometric ornament is used, it does not reach the same degree of formal diversity as when the wax technique is used and appears quite different. This method of applying ornament is best suited to plant ornament.

Scratching out ornaments on an egg surface allows the artist to recreate the minutest details and nuances of various flowers, something that is impossible to do when working with wax. On the other hand, the range of colors that can be achieved with the wax technique is impossible when this method is used.

(3) *Applying natural leaves.* This method of executing ornament differs from all other techniques in that the design it achieves is determined by the use of natural leaves. Its only link with the other techniques is a reliance on traditional dyeing. The *pysankȳ* that are made in this manner are colored in homemade dyes produced from onion skins. Thus, the entire process involves only natural ingredients. This is a purely decorative method of decorating eggs based on the free arrangement of impressions made by the various shapes of plant leaves.

Two, three, even four leaves are applied to the egg surface (formerly these were whole eggs, but today only the empty shell is used). The method itself consists of attaching young green leaves with saliva to the empty eggshell and wrapping the egg in fine silk fabric or a piece of thin woman's hose. The thin fabric is then tied with a thread at one end to prevent the leaves from moving as the egg is lowered into the dye. Hemp, clover, fern, or parsley leaves are those most commonly used. Formerly, the process of coloring the eggs with the onion dye required that the dye be prepared in the following manner. The onion skins were placed in cold water and left to soak for several days. This mixture was then boiled. Later the eggs were cooked in this solution for 6 to 7 minutes and then removed and allowed to dry. When the wrapping was finally removed, an impression of the leaf or leaves appeared as a negative yellow ornament against the brown background of the egg surface.

Wax techniques

When we speak of the wax technique used by the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia to ornament *pysanka,* we always mean the method in which the wax is applied in short strokes with a writing instrument called a *pysal'ce.* Although something as simple as a matchstick can be used, the instrument for applying wax usually consists of a pin head attached by its sharp end to a wooden holder. The advantage of a metal implement (pin head, nail, etc.) is that it can be heated and thus made to hold the melted wax at the required consistency for a longer period of time. This enables the artist to apply the wax in longer, cleaner, and more even strokes.

The wax stroke, which is peculiar to the *pysanka* art of the Lemkos in general, begins from a dot and then tapers off as the wax on the end of the writing instrument is used up. This comma-like stroke is the primary element of the technique used to decorate Lemko *pysankȳ,* including those made by the Rusyns of Eastern Slovakia. The wax strokes are arranged separately or joined by one of three methods

in which: the tops of the strokes connect; the ends of the strokes connect; or the top of one stroke is connected to the tail of the preceding one. Another primary wax element in this style of ornamentation is the dot. However, dots are not compulsory components and most often serve only a supplementary function as centers of round or curved motifs.

The number of strokes on Rusyn monochromatic *pysankȳ* ranges from 118 to 254, while that of dots ranges only from 2 to 81. These figures were arrived at by examining seven randomly chosen single-colored *pysankȳ,* bearing various densities of ornamentation (118 strokes + 2 dots, 134 strokes + 2 dots, 140 strokes + 2 dots, 208 strokes + 81 dots, 232 strokes + 6 dots, 236 strokes + 6 dots, 254 strokes + 2 dots). The total number of primary wax elements—that is, both strokes and dots—found on the monochromatic *pysanka* of this region ranges from 120 to 289 (120, 136, 142, 289, 238, 242, 256).

Multicolored Rusyn *pysankȳ* of Eastern Slovakia are aesthetically even more attractive. Seven polychromatic *pysankȳ* were selected at random and subjected to a similar examination and the following numbers of primary wax elements (strokes and dots) were found: 138 + 24, 164 + 88, 176 + 94, 220 + 16, 226 + 8, 250 + 18, 406 + 90. The lowest number of strokes was 138 and the highest number was 406; the lowest number of dots was 8 and the highest 90. The total numbers of primary wax elements on these *pysankȳ* were: 162, 252, 270, 236, 234, 268, 496. When we compare the numbers of primary wax elements on Prešov Region Rusyn single-colored *pysankȳ* with those on their multicolored counterparts, we see a significant rise in the number of primary wax elements in the case of the polychromatic *pysankȳ.* This results from the additional combinations made possible by the use of many colors. However, there is not always an increase. For example, the *pysanka* on which we counted a total of 496 strokes and dots is overwhelmingly monochromatic with negative ornament. Of the total number of primary wax elements, only 36 strokes and 4 dots (used as the centers of 4 motifs) are of a different color. This *pysanka* is an instance in which the primary wax elements used to execute the ornament are very tiny and fine. The other six *pysankȳ* in this group all use more colors than this one. What is of primary importance here is the folk artist's skill, her understanding of the aesthetics of the ornament, and her use of color.

Recently, another primary wax element has been introduced into the ornament of the Rusyn *pysankȳ* of Eastern Slovakia. It involves covering entire small areas of the egg surface with wax. This practice is not an example of a different technique, since the effect in question is achieved by simply applying many wax strokes very closely together. In most cases, these strokes are quite visible in the ornament. At times, if the head of the "writing instrument" is fine enough, the artist is able to use this method to fill in even geometric shapes with wax (circles, half-circles, rhombs, and so forth). However, in the traditional *pysanka* ornament of Eastern Slovakia, these elements are of secondary importance and remain within the boundaries of traditional local design.

(1) *Hard wax technique.* This variant of the traditional wax technique consists of executing an ornament by applying a piece of hard beeswax or a candle directly onto the white, undyed surface of the egg without the help of an implement. After the wax is applied, the egg is placed in a dye for a period of 15 to 20 minutes. When the wax is removed, the areas that were drawn over with the hard wax remain white and constitute a negative ornament. *Pysankȳ* made in this manner are dyed only one color. This technique is used in the village of Podhorod' (Michalovce district). Although this method allows for naturalistic drawing, the *pysankȳ* we examined exhibited only abstract-geometric ornament made up of dots, lines, circles, and zigzags.

(2) *Traditional wax technique.* This is a method of ornamenting *pysankȳ* by using a "writing instrument," or *pysal'ce* to apply wax strokes or dots onto the egg surface. It combines dyeing with the execution of a flat *pysanka* ornament (negative or colored) of the Lemko type.

In Eastern Slovakia, this technique is the most widespread method of ornamenting eggs. Regarded as the earliest and most traditional, it is deeply rooted in the folk art of *pysanka* making. It is a method that depends on the skillful combination of the graphic representation of the ornament with wax and the coloration of the whole egg. After the egg is dyed, the wax is removed from its surface, leaving behind the negative image of the ornament in a color that is usually lighter than the remainder of the colored eggshell.

The wax technique has certain characteristics that afford great diversity in the ornamentation of eggs. These characteristics depend on the implements used by the *pysanka* maker. Ornamentation can be applied with the head of a pin, a matchstick, straw, goose quill, thin tube, or even a steel nib pen — the most recent discovery! — and many other small objects. The steel nib possesses excellent heat retaining properties that keep the wax from cooling too quickly. *Pysankȳ* ornamented in this way can be colored as many as seven shades. Of course, the use of five, six, or seven colors demands a great deal of skill and long experience.

The application of ornament with wax requires speed and dexterity in the use of the "writing instrument," because there can be no mistakes. Once made, an error cannot be corrected, since dye will not adhere to any area previously covered with wax, even after it has been wiped clean. Working with great care, each *pysanka* artist decorates from 40 to 60 eggs each Easter, and no two are ever alike. As a rule, the ornament on each is executed with great virtuosity.

Until quite recently, most *pysankȳ* in Eastern Slovakia were dyed a single color. Since the appearance of crepe paper and aniline dyes, the number of colors on *pysankȳ* has grown considerably. Monochromatic *pysankȳ* are made by drawing the ornamental figures with melted wax on the natural white egg surface (only unblemished white eggs with no natural discoloration are used) or on an empty eggshell. Once the ornament is completed, the egg is placed into cold dye for a period of 10 to 20 minutes, depending on how quickly the color "takes". After the egg is removed from the dye, it is placed on a piece of clean paper and allowed to dry thoroughly. The dry egg is then warmed over a flame. This softens the wax to the point that it can be wiped off the egg surface with a piece of wool cloth. The wax may not be removed with a razor or a knife, because a sharp or hard implement could harm both the ornament and the color of the *pysanka.* The removal of the wax from the dyed surface reveals a negative white ornament created by preventing the wax-coated areas from absorbing the color of the dye. In some villages of the Laborec valley, the completed *pysanka* is also rubbed with bacon rind to make it glossy, after which the grease is wiped off with a woolen cloth.

There is a second way of making single-colored *pysankȳ.* First the white egg is dyed, and then ornaments are applied to the dried surface with melted wax. The egg is then placed in vinegar or in sauerkraut juice *(var),* which dilutes the paint and bleaches the egg until it becomes almost white again. After the wax is removed, the areas that it covered — that is, the ornamental design — are the only ones to remain colored.

The technique of making multicolored *pysankȳ* is somewhat more complex. Although the method varies to some extent from village to village, the differences are not very significant. In Čertižné, Borov, and Krásny Brod, the egg is first washed in rainwater (soft water) to ensure that the color "takes" evenly. Using the head of a pin as the *pysal'ce,* or "writing in-

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Irena Štimova, Anna Vasilenkova, and Marija Sitarova from the village of Ol'ka. Shows the decorative bands.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Irena Štimova, Anna Vasilenkova, and Marija Sitarova from the village of Ol'ka. Shows variations on the circle motif.

Instruments for *pysankŷ* making.

Material for decorating eggs using pastels.

The scratching technique on colored eggs. Štefan Čabrej and Mariana Pančakova, Ol'ka.

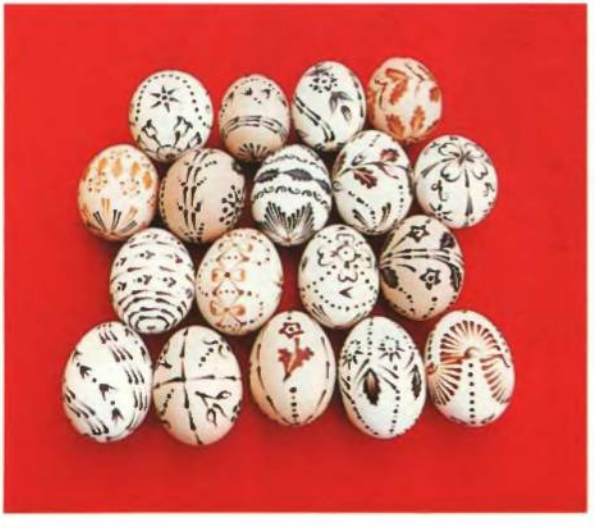
Eggs being dipped in natural coloring. Anna Vasilenkova from the village of Ol'ka.

Painting the eggs with wax before color dipping. Maria Chocholakova and Marija Sitarova, Ol'ka.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique and using pastels, by Eva Tjahlova from Čertižné.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique and using pastels, by Eva Tjahlova from Čertižné.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated with ornament in relief using burnt wax applied to the natural white egg surface, by Zuzana Kapralova from Stakčín.



Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Maria Chomčova from Medzilaborce.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Tereza Dubivska from Vyšná Pisaná.

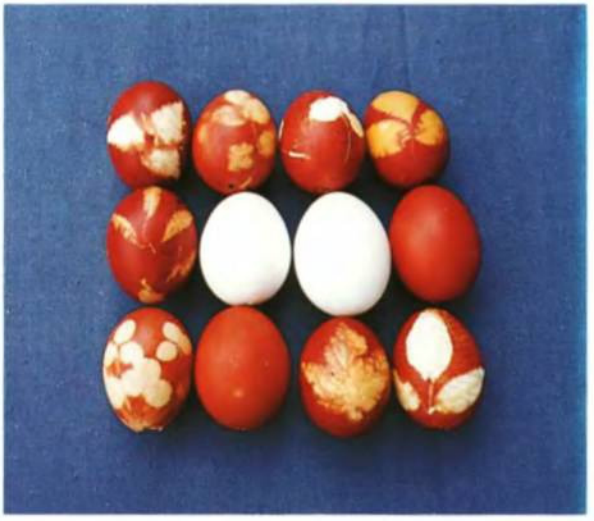
Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs from Zbudská Belá and Repejov.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Anna Petriskova (1889 – 1980) from Torysky.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Anna Petriskova (1889 – 1980) from Torysky.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Maria Krajnakova from Krásny Brod.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Maria Chocholakova and Helena Ferčikova from Ol'ka.



Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated by applying natural plant leaves colored in dyes produced from onion skins, by Anna Lakatova from Svidník and Tereza Varcholova from Becherov.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated in pastels, by Eva Hudakova and Julia Hudakova from Čertižné.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated in pastels, by Eva Kulikova from Čertižné.

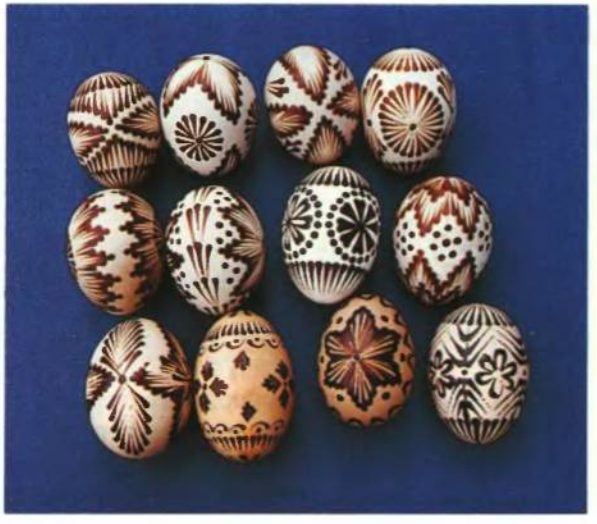
Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated in pastels, by Maria Potomova from Vyšný Mirošov.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Irena Čverčkova from Nižná Pisaná.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated in relief with straw, by Anna Gressova from Vyšná Pisaná.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Irena Čverčkova from Nižná Pisaná.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* decorated in pastels, by Maria Potomova from Vyšný Mirošov.



Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the scratching technique, by Anna Vasilenkova, Tatiana Vasilenkova, and Štefan Čabrej from Ol'ka.

Rusyn *pysankŷ* using the wax technique, by Tereza Dubivska from Vyšná Pisaná.

strument," the women draw the design on the clean surface with melted wax. The ornamented egg is then placed into the first and lightest color. After about 10 or 20 minutes, the egg is removed from the dye and dried, but the wax is not wiped off its surface. More elements are now drawn with wax on the dried surface and the egg is placed in the next color bath, this one of a darker shade that will completely cover the preceding color. This process is repeated three, four, or more times, until the final and darkest color is reached. The wax is removed only after the entire egg has been covered with ornament and dyed the darkest shade desired.

When multicolored *pysankŷ* are made, yellow is always the first color to be applied, because it is easily covered by every other color. As a rule, yellow is followed by orange, light red or light brown, green, blue, and violet. *Pysanka* artists change the order of the dyes depending on the number of colors they wish to use on the egg and which color is to be the final one. In the course of developing the art of coloring *pysankŷ,* a great diversity of harmonious combinations of various colors has emerged. Every woman has her own favorite color range. This allows her to attain her own color harmony, dominated by two, three, or more shades. In the past, women who decorated eggs had access only to homemade dyes. With their help, each artist worked out her own color combinations. The aniline dyes that are in use today have added significant possibilities to this form of folk art.

The process of making a multicolored *pysanka* does not always begin with the application of ornament onto the clean white egg surface. Sometimes the egg is dyed first and then decorated in the method described above. As a result, white is completely eliminated from the design.

Vinegar and sauerkraut juice are also used in making multicolored *pysankŷ* to remove certain colors or even all preceding colors. For instance an acid solution is used to bleach colors in Ladomirová and neighboring villages. Vinegar and sauerkraut juice are able to bleach two or even three preceding colors. Vinegar is used primarily when a color does not "take" uniformly. The color applied after the vinegar bath is usually of a more intense shade.

(3) *Wax ornament in relief.* This method resembles the traditional wax technique, but differs from it in that the wax is not removed from the design as a whole or from certain motifs. There are several variations of decorating with wax ornament in relief. It is used in almost all Rusyn villages, although certain individual villages or groups of villages execute wax ornament in relief in different ways. As a rule, each artist tries to add something new to this technique, so that several methods of applying this kind of ornament have been developed. For example M. Derčo from Stročín in the Bardejov district draws tiny elements on the white egg surface with black burnt wax and achieves a very expressive graphic design.

Another way to execute ornament in relief is to draw with colored wax. The peasant women make the colored wax themselves by adding pigment in powder form or a little aniline dye to melted beeswax. This melted wax, which has been well mixed with the dye, is then used to draw designs on the egg surface with the head of a pin, matchstick, straw, or pen. Only very white, unblemished eggs can be used for such *pysankŷ.* They are usually decorated with yellow, red, blue, green, and orange colors. When this type of ornament in relief is executed in several different colors, the *pysanka* attains great beauty and elegance. Not only the harmonious use of colors, but the resultant clarity and expressiveness of graphic design contribute to this effect.

The instruments used by folk artists to apply the wax play a significant role in determining the character of the *pysanka.* The size of the head of a pin clearly affects the design of the ornament. The same can be said of such "writing instruments" as straws, pens, or matchsticks. Each produces a dis-

tinct form in *pysanka* ornament with strokes that range from very fine and thin to longer ones, as well as those of varying thickness and form. All these are the result of the artist's personal taste and her artistic method.

The technique of executing ornament in relief using several colors of wax is most common in Ruský Kručov, Vyšná and Nižná Pisaná, Kružlová, and neighboring villages. The women who decorate eggs in this manner never use models and they do not first draw the design in pencil. They draw freehand, "from their heads," as it were, but always in conformance with all the principles of ornamentation: rhythm, symmetry, color harmony.

Another variant of this technique involves the use of several colors of wax applied to the dyed surface of an egg. This method is used in the village of Vyšná Jablonka in the Humenné district. In this process, the egg is cooked or the eggshell is washed and then placed in a dye. Once the dye has "taken," the egg is removed and thoroughly dried. Waxes of different colors are then used to execute the decoration. The resultant ornament in relief against the colored background of the egg has a unique beauty. When this technique is used, the ornament is usually of an abstract nature.

(4) *Wax ornament in relief against a multicolored background.* The author encountered this technique only in the village of Vydraň in the Humenné district. It involves dyeing a clean white egg in well defined horizontal stripes of different colors. The egg is first divided into several, most often five, horizontal bands. This is done by applying strips of cotton wool soaked in wet dye to the egg surface. After 20 to 30 minutes, the cotton is removed and the egg displays a spectrum of colored stripes. Although the egg is very beautiful already, the process is by no means complete. The egg is dried and then decorated with burnt wax. The wax elements assume great clarity against the background of several bands of brilliant colors. The wax is not removed from the *pysanka,* since it constitutes the relief ornament. This method of decorating eggs developed from the ancient traditional wax technique and employs traditional ornamental patterns.

The process is also sometimes reversed. In other words, the egg is first decorated with wax and then colored using dye-soaked cotton wool strips. When the egg is dry, the wax is removed with a wool cloth. On this type of *pysanka,* the ornament appears in white against bands of different colors. This method of ornamentation is less widespread than the former. The color contrasts achieved by this method are not as vivid as when the reverse technique of coloring is used. As a result, the designs drawn on the *pysanka* are also less clearly defined than in the other methods of decorating described here.

(5) *Pastel technique.* This method of ornamentation relies on the use of oil pastels. Although one of the most recent means of decorating eggs, it is also based on the traditional wax technique. As such, it continues to refine the traditional wax technique in its own unique way.

The oil pastel is melted over a flame in a small vessel. Care is taken not to burn it. When the pastel is melted to the desired consistency, designs are drawn on the egg surface with the same instruments as those used to apply wax. This method offers its own artistic possibilities. By enabling the artist to combine aniline dyes with oil pastels, the number of colors that can be used to achieve harmony becomes virtually unlimited.

The ability to use two techniques in ornamenting a *pysanka* (aniline dyes and oil pastels) has significantly broadened the boundaries of traditional *pysanka* art. The multicolored ornament in relief executed on eggs colored in this fashion produces a wonderful spectrum of colors. This technique is becoming firmly established in such villages as Vyšná

Jablonka, Čabiny (Je. Čuma), and Čertižné (M. Myrman) in the Humenné district.

Multicolored ornament in relief can also be executed on the white, undyed egg surface. This method is used in the villages of Ruský Kručov, Lomné, and Vyšná and Nižná Pisaná in the Bardejov district.

The use of oil pastels, however, has certain disadvantages deriving from the properties of this medium. Relief ornament executed with pastels is easily harmed when it comes into contact with another object. Moreover, pastels are best preserved in cool temperatures. Therefore, when working with pastels, the *pysanka* makers have to take these properties into account and apply the ornament with great care.

Everything in life has evolved from the simplest forms. Development is always the result of accumulated experience. This also applies to art as a whole, and, therefore, in equal measure, to the art of *pysanka* decoration. It is therefore important to determine the sequence in which the different *pysanka* techniques emerged or, if that is impossible, at least to identify the level of their difficulty in the history of human development. We are particularly interested in the methods of ornamentation that used wax.

At first glance it would appear that the simplest method of decorating eggs was to color them and to forgo ornament altogether. However, there is reason to doubt this conclusion. In the first place, coloring requires the ability to prepare vegetable dyes. It is probable that this did not constitute an insurmountable problem for ancient man. However, a much more important aspect of the *pysanka* is its ornament—the symbols and signs drawn on the egg surface that encoded its maker's secret plea to some supernatural force. It seems hardly likely that ancient man believed that by merely changing the natural color of the egg, he could achieve his goal of investing the egg with magical powers. This is the circumstance that forces us to doubt that the development of ancient Slavic ornamented eggs began with simple dyeing.

The next question is what did the ancient Slavs use to draw these signs and symbols on eggs? It is quite possible that they did not use wax, but dyes made from various plants. We are interested, however, in the earliest wax techniques. Decorated eggs found by Polish archaeologists prove that already in the tenth century ancient Slavs were using wax to execute ornaments on eggs.

Rusyns use four simple methods of ornamenting eggs with the help of wax:

(1) the design is drawn on the white egg surface with a piece of hard wax;

(2) any small instrument is used to apply wax spots onto the egg surface;

(3) the design is drawn on the egg surface by applying a continuous even line of melted wax with a special implement designed for this purpose;

(4) the design is executed on the egg surface by applying short wax strokes and dots with a special "writing instrument."

Indeed, the execution of wax ornament in relief on the undyed, white egg surface is simpler than producing a negative design that reveals the natural white of the eggshell against a color background. The former is, therefore, older than the latter. As we know, to attain a negative ornament, the egg must be dyed after the wax design has been applied and then the wax must be removed. Hence, the simplest wax technique is the one in which the ornament is applied in relief with melted wax on the natural white surface of the egg.

This being the case, we must eliminate from this category the method in which the design is drawn on a white egg surface with a piece of hard wax (method 1 above). Although at first glance, it appears to be the simplest technique, it involves dyeing the egg after the design has been drawn on it with the hard wax and then wiping off the wax.

The application of wax spots to the white surface of the egg (method 2), also appears to be a very simple process. This method produces little aesthetic effect (the ornament created by the spot is a white circle) after the egg is dyed and the wax is removed. Theoretically, it is also possible to conceive of wax spots in relief ornament on a white egg surface. But the question is whether this technique made it possible to execute a well-defined symbol or sign on the egg. Given the primitive wooden or bone implements available to ancient man, there is little doubt that this method was poorly suited to this need. Moreover, even in antiquity, the symbol also possessed an aesthetic aspect. Thus, this method of ornamentation also is not as simple as it first appears and cannot be regarded as the most primitive.

The process of drawing a continuous wax line (method 3) is not simple. It is executed with a hollow metal cone that has a tiny opening at the nib end to allow wax to flow through. When heated, this "writing instrument" holds the melted wax well and enables its user to draw the most intricate designs. This is the most difficult of all wax techniques.

The simplest technique of executing a wax ornament in relief on the undyed surface of an egg is the Lemko method (no. 4 above) of applying tiny strokes and dots to form various motifs. The only things needed to make a *pysanka* in this manner are melted wax and a thin sliver of wood.

In many respects, the Carpathian mountains preserved ancient Rus' traditions — language, way of life, folk art. They also preserved one of the most primitive wax techniques of decorating *pysanky,* known today as the Lemko style of ornamentation. This primitive technique enables its practitioners to attain the highest levels of ornamental folk art on the surface of an egg. Moreover, the technique continues to develop by incorporating chemical dyes and oil pastels.

By preserving the most ancient wax technique, this method of ornamenting eggs has one disadvantage. Because the wax strokes and dots have been re-arranged endlessly into ever new compositions, they have failed to preserve the ancient signs and symbols, which have been transformed into stylized decorative designs. In this sense, the continuous wax line used farther east in Ukrainian Podillja and Polissja has managed to conserve to our day a more complex and valuable *pysanka* ornament, which retains the original symbols to a much greater degree. Nevertheless, the Rusyn *pysanka* of Eastern Slovakia comprise one of the most beautiful types of ornamented eggs.

It is likely, however, that an even more primitive method of decorating eggs preceded the wax technique. This conclusion is based on the fact that the drawing of signs and symbols with wax is in itself a complicated process.

11. COLORING PYSANKŸ

A distinct method of ornamentation, and in particular of attaining color harmony, has been developed in the Rusyn villages of Eastern Slovakia. It is the combination of these two elements — ornament and color — that constitutes the characteristic style of a *pysanka* made in a particular village or group of neighboring villages.

Any investigation of the art of decorating eggs must include a study of the coloring of *pysankŷ* with homemade dyes in combination with their ornamentation. The variations in coloring evident in these products of peasant artistry are dictated primarily by differences in the composition of ornamental motifs. It is as difficult to imagine ornament without color as it is to envisage an uncolored *pysanka.* Nevertheless, the natural white shade of the eggshell is also used in the *pysanka* as a necessary and integral element in the harmonious union of color and ornament.

In the past, *pysanka* artists made their own dyes from plants and fruits, as well as inorganic substances. The quantity and quality of the colourants progressively increased, but the means by which eggs were colored remained unchanged in Rusyn villages as late as the first quarter of this century. The methods of drawing designs on the colored eggshell were equally firmly established. The principles underlying these techniques arose from the need to obtain the required intensities of the colors used. Color as applied on the *pysankŷ* of the Prešov Region has a broad range of tones — from light to very intensive. In order to achieve the desired shades, the Rusyn *pysanka* artists developed an intricate and so far unrecorded technology for dyeing eggs, which enabled them to attain all tones of all colors. This complex system of technical means for obtaining various intensities in a virtually infinite color scale in a form peculiar to the *pysanka* art is a noteworthy accomplishment and serves as striking evidence of the creative ingenuity of the ordinary rural population.

The ability to regulate color intensity is of exceptional importance in the art of decorating *pysankŷ.* The desired color saturation was achieved with the help of organic and inorganic staining agents. If known substances failed to produce the necessary artistic effect, new colourants derived primarily from organic sources were found. Results were not immediate, since the new coloring agents made it necessary to devise suitable techniques of application. The search for means of refining the coloring of *pysankŷ* is an ongoing process, which assures ever new aesthetic achievements in this sphere of *pysanka* art.

In the past, every woman who decorated *pysankŷ* made her own dyes. Although her only source of colourants was the flora and inorganic substances available in and around her village, the assortment of these was always wide and produced a color range that met all the standards of folk aesthetics. Today's *pysanka* makers resort with increasing frequency to inorganic agents. Vegetable dyes are now regarded as a secondary means of coloring eggs. However, in such villages as Šemetkovce and Kožany plant dyes continue to preponderate.

At one time, peasant women prepared the dyeing agents throughout the year. While working in the fields, they gathered various plants (young winter rye, periwinkle), which they boiled to make dyes. Other plants and flowers (onion skins and such) were dried and "put away until Easter." Although this subject is of great importance for the study of *pysanka* art, it unfortunately remains inadequately investigated.

Because the raw materials of vegetable dyes were most accessible to the peasant women, these were the substances that they used most frequently. In addition, plant dyes had properties that did not harm the edible content of the egg. The most characteristic colors of Eastern Slovakia's Rusyn *pysankȳ* are red, yellow, green, and blue. But we also find pink, orange, brown (onion-colored), and even black and blackish brown.

The majority of these *pysankȳ* display a warm palette. Traditional coloring with organic dyes produces a pleasing harmony and avoids harsh contrasts. Plant colourants are characterized by such positive qualities as depth of tone, permanence, and vividness. The degree of color saturation made possible by the dyes used by folk artists, the wealth of tones, and the unlimited potential for contrasts, all combine to afford a wide range of harmonious combinations. Folk artists have never confined themselves to earlier examples of color combinations, nor have they ever regarded the accomplishments of other artists as something ultimately perfected. As a result, they have always introduced personal elements into their work, thereby further developing the art of coloring *pysankȳ*. This has resulted in great and continually growing diversity in color harmonies and in ensuring that the *pysanka* style continues to evolve.

The number of substances that can be used to extract dyes is quite large and diverse. These include winter wheat, winter rye, oats, sorrel, dead nettle roots, periwinkle, madder, yellow gentian, raspberries, wild (dog) rose, caraway, linden flowers, young birch branches, blackberries, onion skins, alder bank, chips from old plum trees, walnut shells, wild apple tree bark, brazilwood, soot, charcoal, indigo, indelible pencils, colored rags, crepe paper, kaolin, aniline dyes, and so forth. The Rusyn *pysanka* artists of Eastern Slovakia are highly skilled in making *pysanka* dyes. It would be a pity if their experience were to remain unstudied by ethnographers and art historians. This knowledge is also linked with the flora of the Carpathians and thus constitutes an integral part of the history of the folk culture of Subcarpathian Rusyns, the group to which the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia belongs.

12. THE SYMBOLISM OF COLORS IN FOLK ART AND FOLKLORE

Another question that is connected with the decoration of *pysankȳ* is the symbolic significance of colors. This symbolism is embedded in nature on the one hand, and in the character of folk life on the other. Colors play an important role in human feelings, and their role in man's history, especially in cultural history, is indisputable. The symbolic significance of colors in human life is thus considerable and enduring.

Colors as symbols act as organizing factors in human history. The significance of color in the Middle Ages is a widely known historical fact. Color as a symbolic concept has always contained a specific meaning — in the past and present it continues to unite people by national origin, culture, religion, occupation, class, beliefs, and so forth. As such, color is not only an essential part of the practical side of daily life, it symbolizes as well ideas, social thought, social progress. People went to war under various colors and gave their lives for the causes these colors represented. That, perhaps, was the ultimate significance of color.

The development of color symbolism in folk art took a different course. It can probably be traced back to some primitive communal order in which man and his environment were united into a single natural whole.

Color has always been part of human life. Living from birth in the midst of nature's chromatic splendor, man cannot conceive of a colorless world. Each object in his environment has a hue of its own. Some objects can only be distinguished by color as, for instance, certain kinds of cloth. Different combinations of colors evoke different moods. There are combinations that irritate or that cause dissatisfaction and depression.

When making or building something, people are seldom able to select their material on the basis of color. Rather, their choice is dictated by other properties that make the material suitable for the purpose the finished product is meant to serve. A product of human labor (for example, a house) often exhibits a haphazard and unorganized agglomeration of colors. In this form, the product or object satisfies only the practical mind, never the eye or, as it were, the "soul." And so man is forced to reorganize the random assemblage of natural colors on the product of his labor to suit his own taste with the help of paint. Paint here is the material medium of color. We encounter this phenomenon throughout the material world, the realm of *pysankȳ* not excepted. In some Rusyn dialects, the word "paint" *(farba)* means both the coloring agent and color itself. This is the case in all the Rusyn dialects spoken in Eastern Slovakia, where even in folk songs the word *farba* is used for color.

Color is of equal importance in the material culture and in the oral literature of the people. The folk symbolism and use of a color in the past can best be traced in that sphere of folk creativity where color has its own concrete meaning and is not associated with any material coloring substance. The reason for this is that various articles found by archaeologists indicate that in antiquity the choice of color was always restricted by the availability of colourants.

Not dependent on the extraction and manufacture of dyes, the creators of folk songs and tales were able to attribute colors to various phenomena without hindrance. Consequently, these songs and tales reflect the love for and relative popularity of different colors much more accurately than material artifacts. This love of color in oral literature has survived to our own time, although, as a result of the growth of the chemical industry, it is now manifested to a greater degree in the world of material things than in the verbal sphere.

Some colors are perceived as symbolizing certain feelings or states of being: black signifies sorrow or grief, white — innocence. Color is deeply rooted in the popular mind in this function, although not every color has this kind of symbolic meaning. In certain cultures, color also functions in determining time. Thus, in Mongolia, when they say a person was born in the "year of the blue snake," they mean 1905. Attempts to express various feelings in terms of color is a popular device in poetry and often produces very successful associations, especially when the poet takes into account traditional folk beliefs. On *pysankŷ*, the color scale bears little connection to the real world, which is wholly subordinated to the abstract principle of achieving various color harmonies.

The evolution of man was accompanied by the evolution of aesthetics, in which color plays a principal role. Aesthetics are as much a part of man's life as work, which is the foundation of the existence of human society. The first model for aesthetics in society was the harmony found in nature, in particular the harmonious combination of colors that are characteristic of an environment unspoiled by human intrusion. The following song indicates how actively man reacts to colors in his surroundings:

Ой, дубраво, дубравонько,
ти доброго пана маєш,
што ся в однім року
трьома фарбами одіваєш.

Одна фарба зелененька —
всему світу миленька,
друга фарба жовтенька —
всему світу сумненька,
третя фарба біленька —
всему світу студененька.

Oh, oak grove,
You have a good master,
Who lets you put on
Three colors in a single year.
One color is green —
Loved by the whole world.
A second color is yellow —
Signifying sorrow to the whole world.
A third color is white —
Bringing cold to the whole world.

(1) *Red.* Red holds first place in terms of frequency of use in folk creativity, as well as in terms of general popularity among the people. That this color has been very popular since antiquity is indicated even by its name. The word *červlenyj* appears in the earliest written texts of the East Slavs. In Russian, the word for red is *krasnyj* (beautiful), which further corroborates the popular perception of this color as the most beautiful of all. Red is indeed the favorite color of the people and is used in numerous forms, shades, nuances, and combinations with other colors.

The widespread manufacture of red dye dates back to ancient times. Red was extracted from onion skins, raspberries, sweet brier, and the wood of old plum trees. Another source of this colourant was brazilwood, which was brought back to our land in the nineteenth century by those who traveled to Brazil in search of work. The red dye extracted by boiling slivers of this wood became a favorite coloring agent for *pysankŷ* because it produced a rich and vibrant hue.

There is frequent mention of red in folk poetry: red rose, red flower, red guelder-rose, red apple, red berry, red raspberries, red youth, red egg, red kerchief, red ribbon, red woolen cord, and so forth. Red is the color of blood, fire, ripe fruit. In the popular imagination, it is the symbol of happiness, courage, joy of life, the workers' movement and it always connotes positive qualities, even when it appears as the color of blood. The people give this color their highest accolade when they say, "anything red is beautiful."

In the girls' song that follows, red symbolizes good looks, a handsome figure and health:

Липина, липина зелена,
Той мій фраїр, як ружа червена.

Linden tree, green linden tree,
My love is like a red rose.

The same motif is found in the folk song "Oj, do sadu, divčata, do sadu" (To the Orchard, Girls):

Ей червений паробочок, як ружа,
Дай-же мі го, пане боже, за мужа.

That youth is like a red rose,
Give him to me, Lord God, for a husband.

Red cheeks also symbolize health and feminine beauty:

За горами, за лісами лучка зелена,
Полюбил я шварне дівча, чорні очі мат.
Чорні оно очі мат,
Смутно на ня позерат,
Личка, як ружа червена, —
Буде мой мила.

Beyond the mountains, beyond the forests
lies a green meadow,
I fell in love with a beautiful girl with black eyes,
A girl with black eyes,
That looks at me sadly.
Her cheeks are like red roses —
She'll be my beloved.

В гостовицькім полю
Самі свербегузы,
Гостовицькі дівки
Червені, як ружы.

In the Hostovice fields,
Only sweet brier grows.
The Hostovice girls
Are as red as roses.

Sometimes the word red is replaced by "rosy" (*rumjanyj)* in folk poetry:

Ей шкода, боже, личка рум'яного,
Же ся притуляє біда коло нього.

Pity, oh Lord, the rosy cheeks,
To which misfortune clings.

Because red has many shades, it also has numerous names in popular speech. The shade of pink appears in the following song:

Сидить она за столиком,
Як ружовий квіт,
Посмотріла горі-долов,
Змінил ся єй світ.

Сидить Ганця за столиком,
Як ружовий квіт.
Виплакала чорни очка,
Змінил ся єй світ.

She sits at a table,
Like a pink flower.
She looked up and down,
And her world was changed.

Hanka sits at her table,
Like a pink flower,
She's cried out her black eyes,
For her world is changed.

(2) *Green.* This color has a long tradition of use on *pysankŷ,* where it appears along with red. In the first poetic folk text cited in this chapter, we quoted a folk song in which green is described as a color that is "loved by the whole world."

Green dye was extracted from winter wheat, winter rye, periwinkle, various grasses, leaves, and such. Village dwellers live in the midst of a solid green environment of mountains, orchards, and fields for three seasons of the year. They are surrounded by green groves, green periwinkle, green reeds, green birches, green grass, green willows, green meadows, the green Beskyd range, green hemp, green leaves, green flax, green buckwheat, green nettles, green oak grove, green sycamores, green birds, green valleys, and so forth. As the color of vast and unfettered nature, green occurs in folk songs as the symbol of similar desirable characteristics in human beings. It is the color of longing, desire, youth, health, freedom, liberty.

In the popular imagination, the green color of a tree embodies youth, freedom, and health:

Ни я не паробок, ни я не мам жени,
Виросну до гори, як явор зелений.

I'm neither a bachelor, nor have I a wife,
I'll grow to the sky, like a green sycamore.

Again, green represents freshness and carefreeness as the foremost qualities of youth:

Татарка, татарка,
зелени листочки,
яки то милого
яки то милого
солодки ґамбочки.

Ей дує вітер, дує
В зеленім Бескиді,
Давно єм не была,
Ей, давно єм не была
З милим на бесіді.

Buckwheat, buckwheat
Green leaves,
My lover,
My lover,
Has such sweet lips.

The wind blows
In the green Beskyds.
It's been a long time,
Such a long time,
Since I spoke with my love.

Чом трава зелена,
Бо під ньов вода,
Чом Маруся горда,
Бо ші молода.

Why is the grass green?
Because there's water under it.
Why is Marusja proud?
Because she's still young.

Green is also widely regarded as a symbol of innocence:

Явор, явор, яворина,
Люди брешуть, я невинна,
Травка зелена стоїть над водов,
Не болить ня моє серце за тобов.

Sycamore, sycamore, sycamore tree,
People lie, but I'm innocent.
The green grass stands over the water,
My heart does not hurt because of you.

Various green leaves (herbs) were used for medicinal purposes. In the following folk song, a girl speaks of a green leaf that cannot alleviate the pain caused her by parting from her beloved:

Урізала-м палець та болить, та болить ня,
Зелений листочок не гоїт, не гоїт ня,
Прийдь, милий, бо болить ня.

I cut my finger and it hurts and hurts,
But the green leaf doesn't heal me.
Come back, beloved, because I'm in pain.

As the symbol of happiness green often occurs in folk songs in juxtaposition with sorrow:

Ей, травічко зелена, ей, поляно зелена,
Смутне я серце мам, ей, нігда-м не весела.

Oh, green grass, oh, green meadow,
My heart is sad and I'm never merry.

The color green performs the same function in the following song:

Зелену, зелену [вербу, тополю]
Долу похилену,
Ніґда ня, мамочко,
Не видиш веселу.

Green, green [willow, poplar]
Bent to the ground,
Nowhere, my dear mother,
Will you see me happy.

This same counterposition also appears in the verse:

Ой, у полю дві тополі, обі зелененькі,
Милий милу покидає, вороги раденькі.

Two poplars stand in the field and both are green,
The lover leaves his beloved and all enemies rejoice.

(3) *White*. No white colourant is ever used on *pysankŷ*. The white color that occurs on almost all decorated eggs is always the natural color of the eggshell, either in the form of a negative ornament or as the undyed background for designs executed in other colors. White is activated when combined with other colors, and it is in such combinations that it is a traditional component of the color scheme of *pysankŷ*.

In folk poetry, white occurs in such combinations as white world, white lad, white girl, white flower, white lily, white eagle, white day, white kerchief, white shirt, white morning, white son, white goose, white berry, white body, white child, white hair, white woolen cord, white ribbon, white horse, white butterfly, white light, and so on. White symbolizes purity, chastity, innocence, and is like blank paper on which society writes an individual's fate. Consequently, it is often associated with youth, a stage in which all still lies ahead. Perhaps that is why in some folk songs white seems to connote a kind of chill ("white brings cold to the whole world"). Such is the sense in which white is used in the following folk song:

Ой, ходила біла дівка у ліс на калину,
Тай ходила, тай блудила сім літ і годину.
А чого ти, біла дівко, тут у лісі бродиш,
Та чей же ти, біла дівко, того хлопця любиш?

А кеби я не любила, та би-м не
блудила,
Горі тими долинами тівко не ходила.

The flaxen girl went to the woods to pick
guelder-rose drupes.
She wandered and lost her way for seven
years and an hour.
Why are you wandering in the woods,
flaxen girl?
Don't you love that boy?
If I didn't love him, I would not have gotten
lost,
Over mountain, over vale, I wouldn't rove
as much.

White appears in the folk lullaby "Usnyj, synu, usnyj" (Sleep, My Son, Sleep):

Усний, сину, усний, великой виросний,
Великой, як і я, білой, як лелія.

Sleep, my son, sleep, and grow big,
As big as I and as white as lily.

A face is described as white in folk songs if it bears no freckles, pockmarks, birthmarks or moles:

А мій милий такий білий,
Як у керти квіток білий.

My sweetheart is as white,
As the white flower of the garden.

In the popular imagination, this color signifies not only purity and innocence, but also a kind of coldness. [In another context], raising a white flag to indicate surrender in battle is customary throughout most of the world. [On the other hand], a dream that contains a white horse, a white goose or a white figure is always popularly interpreted as portending some dire event, usually the death of someone close to the dreamer.

The combination of white and black presents a stark contrast. White occurs in various ceremonies. It plays a symbolic role in funerals. When people speak of death, they often refer to it as "white death," probably because they associate this color with that of a skeleton — the symbol of death.

(4) *Blue.* This color occurs frequently in *pysanka* ornament. It is one of the traditional colors (along with red, yellow, and green) of the Prešov Region Rusyn *pysanka*. The popular belief that this color affects the emotions resembles the common attitude to white. Blue is also perceived as having a chilling effect, as it were, on emotions. In folk songs, the sky is designated blue even though its actual color is azure (popular speech contains the expression "sky color" *[nebova farba],* but the phrase is of later date). While white conveys a state of helpless passivity, a kind of fatalism, blue connotes a process leading to a condition that is worse than the existing one. It is in this sense that blue is used in the following folk song:

Волоси качурят,
А лайбик синіє,
Уж моє серденько,
За нього боліє.

Ах серденько моє,
Не болій на двоє
Ай болій на єдно,
Та будеме в'єдно.

My hair is curling up,
My vest is turning blue.
Now my heart
Hurts for him.

Oh, my heart,
Don't hurt for two,
Hurt for one.
And we'll be together.

The negative connotations of blue are intensified by such social occurrences as famines and plagues in the course of which entire villages in the Prešov Region died out (a dead body "turns blue").

Blue assumes its most negative symbolic connotation when it represents the color of hellfire. This use of blue is illustrated in the following custom observed until quite recently by the Rusyn peasantry of Eastern Slovakia. When the village exorcist set out to destroy a "vampire," he took along ten young men with him to the cemetery to stand around the grave in which the ghoul was thought to dwell. While the exorcist recited the prescribed incantation, the men watched to see whether the glow rising from the grave was red or blue. A red light signified that the exorcist had power over the vampire, while a blue radiance indicated that the vampire was winning. At the sight of a blue glow, the men were expected to surround the grave and beat the vampire with heavy sticks. In this ritual, blue symbolized an evil flame connoting something dreadful.

(5) *Yellow.* This color occurs very frequently on decorated eggs. Yellow dye was extracted by boiling the bark of a wild apple tree, oats, yellow gentian, onion skins, dead nettle roots, linden tree flowers, or caraway. Each of these plants produced a yellow colourant of a different shade.

In folklore this color occurs in such expressions as "a yellow braid," "yellow hair," "a cradle of yellow sycamore," "yellow bangs," "yellow flowers," "as yellow as wax," "little yellow table," etc. In every instance, yellow connotes warmth and joy as in the following three examples from folk songs:

Там на горі, на горбочку
Посіяли жовту гречку.

On the hill, on the hillock,
They sowed the yellow buckwheat.

Мам фраїра Дюрка,
Шо му жолта чулка,
Личко, як калина, ея-гой,
Ротик, як малина.

I love a lad called Djurko
Who has a yellow crop of hair.
His face is like a guelder-rose,
His mouth is like a raspberry.

До гаю, дівчата, до гаю,
Покиль ся паробці награють:
Мать наша Анічка жовтий влас,
Вибирай же собі, котру знаш!

Let's off to the woods, girls,
While the young men play:
Our Anička has yellow hair
Pick yourself the one you know!

(6) *Black.* Black dye was made by boiling the bark of a young alder tree in salt. It was also extracted from oak bark. The simplest way of obtaining it was from soot or charcoal. Black occurs frequently on Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia.

In the popular imagination, black is the color of the depths of the earth, of the site of a burnt house, of impenetrable forests, mountains, and bogs inhabited by various evil spirits known as "black forces." (When the surface of the earth is meant, it is always spoken of as green). The phrase "black earth," when used in the sense of the interior of the earth, always signifies the grave and death. Quite possibly this is why in the pre-Christian era the Slavs cremated their dead, thinking of fire as something that purifies.

In folklore, black symbolizes a tragedy that has already occurred or it signifies the inevitability of im-

pending drama and despair. In this sense, folk poetry is replete with such expressions as black clouds, black raven, black crow, black hawk, black forest, black mountains. Whenever epithets contain black as an adjective, it always connotes a negative quality:

Чорна земь, чорна земь, то сь мі
жаль зробила,
Взялась мого нянька, а мене сь
лишила.
Небого сирото, не жалуй на мене,
Узяв панбіг душу, а я тіло мушу.

Black earth, black earth, you've given me
great sorrow,
You've taken my father and left me alone.
My poor orphan, do not grieve over me,
God took my soul, and I have to take my
body.

Black is the color of mourning, grief, parting, death, disaster. (Members of the white race represent the devil as black). The expression "black forest" in the following song connotes something menacing:

Там в боровім чорнім лісі,
Там дівчатко траву несе.
Хто казав траву жати?
Казали мі отець — мати.
Кедь ті казав отець — мати,
Мусиш ти ту загинути.
Кедь ту мусю загинути,
Дай мі три паз закричати.

In the black pine forest
A girl carries grass.
Who told you to mow the grass?
My mother and father told me.
If your mother and father told you,
You have to die here.
If I must die here,
Let me shout three times.

The black color of the raven combined with its cawing presages something terrible in a song from the village of Kolonica:

На небі сонечко загоряє
І чорний ворон загрявчав,
А з моїх очей сльози лялися,
Як я з дівчинов прощав.

Прощайте, очка чорнобровеньки,
Прощайте, личка рум'яні,
Прощайте, усточка малинові,
Цілую вас послідний раз.

The sun was setting in the sky,
And a black raven shrieked,
Tears poured from my eyes
As I bid farewell to my girl.

Farewell, eyes and black browns,
Farewell, rosy cheeks,
Farewell, raspberry lips,
I kiss you for the last time.

The words "black" and "dark" are often very close in meaning in folk poetry:

Мила моя, премилена, як ти ся маш,
Як ти в темнім лісі сама перебиваш?
Сама лігам, сама ставам в теплім лісу,
Як мі прийде темна нічка, та ся трясу.

My love, my beloved, how are you?
How do you live in the dark woods alone?
I sleep alone, I rise alone in the warm wood,
And when dark night comes, I tremble.

A black hawk in folk songs always signifies something negative, although in this song it is not as threatening as usual:

За гором, за гором, за лісочком,
Гралася моя мила з голубочком.
Гралася, гралася з чорним орлом,
Оженься мі, милий, з паном богом.

Beyond the hill, beyond the hill, beyond the wood,
My beloved played with a little dove.
She played and played with a black hawk.
My beloved, marry the Lord God.

A somewhat lesser degree of drama (the ultimate symbol of which is black) is expressed with the help of a variant of this color, namely, grey. The symbolic meaning of grey in oral literature is at times closely related to that of white. (As we know, grey is the result of mixing black and white in certain proportions in order to attain the desired degree of lightness or darkness).

Grey is part of such epithets as grey rock, grey eyes, grey eagle, grey dove, grey rabbit, grey horse, grey hair, grey turtledove, grey head, grey old woman, grey mother, grey grandfather, grey cloud, grey beard, grey forest. Since such folk expressions as "my grey mother" or "my head has greyed" and others are now part of literature, we will cite only a few examples in which grey is closer to black in its semantic and symbolic meaning. In addition, we will attempt to indicate the gradations of symbolic meaning of this color in folk poetry.

In a Rusyn folk song from the village of Becherov, "A za našom chÿžom" (Behind Our House), a "grey bird" brings ill tidings:

Прилетіл сивий птах, шіл він на липочку,
Ей, так прекрасно шпівал, зобудил Аничку,
Ставай Анцьо, горі, ти уж ся виспала,
Ей твій зелений вінок зимна вода жяла.

A grey bird flew here and perched on the linden.
He sang so beautifully that he woke Anička.
Get up Anička, you've had enough sleep.
The cold water has taken your green wreath.

In another from the village of Olšinkov, entitled "Ej, hoj, spivajte, divčata" (Hey, Girls, Let's Sing), a girl addresses the wind with following plea:

Ей, гой, подуй, вітре, подуй,
По той сивой скалі,
Ей, гой, роздуй, пороздувай
Мої тяжки жалі.

Blow wind, blow,
Over that grey cliff,
And blow away, disperse
My heavy sorrows.

In dreams, grey foreboded some misfortune. In the following folk song, a son dreams of a grey hawk:

Мамко, моя мамко,
Тяжкий мі ся сон снив,
Же з мойой голови
Сивий сокіл злетів.

Тать, сину мій, сину,
Недобра новина,
Фраїрка ті вмерла,
Або ті схворіла.

Mother, my mother,
I dreamt a gloomy dream,
That from my head
A grey hawk rose.

Hush, my son,
There'll be ill tidings.
Your girl has died,
Or she's fallen ill.

The color grey in the previous song signifies troubles that have be fallen a person and corresponds to such expressions as "grey hair." Grey occurs in this same sense in the following song:

Там при сивій скалі
Стало ся там нове,
Присипала зем вояка,
А веце не стане!

By the grey cliff
Something new has happened.
The earth covered the soldier
And he will not rise again.

The expression "to blacken" or "to grow black" can also mean "grey" in folk poetry:

Ей почорніли гори
От дождіку дрібного,
Ей, одпав єс мі одпав
От серденька мого.

The mountains have grown black
With the fine rain.

You've stopped loving me,
And removed me from your heart.

Grey is used only on multicolored *pysankŷ,* where it serves to separate two chromatic colors, such as red and green, or orange and blue-green. Grey occurs very rarely in other forms of folk art ornament.

As we have seen, the description of an event in terms of color is very widespread in folk songs and in folklore in general. Every color has its own symbolic meaning in the popular imagination, a meaning that has been established over the centuries. Color is not always used symbolically in folk songs, so that a color is usually closely related to the natural or apparent property of an object or an event.

Colors do not have dual meanings in *pysanka* art and they carry no negative connotations. On the contrary, color as used on Rusyn *pysankŷ* of Eastern Slovakia always connotes optimism, happiness, and joy. Undoubtedly, this aspect of the *pysanka is* associated with Easter, which is merely the Christianized version of the pagan festival celebrating the coming of spring. The optimism inherent in this form of art derives from the joy at the triumph of life over death, of spring over Morena-winter, and at the green renewal of lush, radiant nature, once again prepared to shower man with its abundant gifts.

13. GAMES PLAYED WITH PYSANKŸ

The games played at Easter that combine songs and round dances date back to antiquity. This ancient tradition was once part of the ritual of welcoming spring. A number of games involving *pysankŷ*, ritual songs, and dances were played until quite recently by the Rusyn inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia. Today we find only traces of them in the games that children, and even more rarely young people, play in villages.

These games are closely linked with traditional Easter rituals. The ancient round dance called "Hoja Djundja" is represented on the *pysankŷ* of Eva Markovyč from the village of Čertižné and Anna Haluška from the village of Zbudská Belá in the Medzilaborec district. Their *pysankŷ* depict the Easter dance and bear the inscription "Hoja Djundja." Just a short time ago, the following games were part of Easter rituals in the Prešov Region: "Hoja Djundja," "Lyšečka," "Mostŷ," "Syrci," "Velyčkŷ," "Kačkŷ honyty," "Zlata brana," "Na cynterŷ," and others.

Games played at Easter with *pysankŷ* in cemeteries, in the village common, or in the fields of Rusyn-inhabited regions of Eastern Slovakia are rapidly disappearing from the life of the people. Today we see only the pitiful remnants of a former wealth of ritual. Yet even these are of major significance to scholarship.

Children aged from four to six years still play a *pysanka* game called "Karba ljulju" in the meadows. Four children sit on the grass in a square. Each child rolls a *pysanka* crosswise to the player sitting diagonally across from him or her. The player whose

Blessing Easter baskets in the village of Čertižné.

pysanka breaks when it is hit by his or her partner's egg leaves the game. This child's place is taken by another boy or girl.

Another game involves throwing *pysankŷ* in the air and is usually played by boys under sixteen. Several boys go into the meadow where there are no rocks and they take turns tossing *pysankŷ* into the air. The boy whose *pysanka* does not break upon impact with the ground is declared the winner. Players choose eggs that are as round as possible, because these do not break as easily as the more elongated kind. Only boiled dyed eggs — the so-called *farbankŷ* — are used in this tossing game. The use of *pysankŷ*, for this purpose is very rare.

Easter basket covered with traditional embroidered ritual cloth *(ručnyk)* from Čertižné.

A game called "Hra na kohuta" (Playing Rooster) is played in Malý Lipník and neighboring villages. It is played by three boys at a time: two players stand about 20 to 35 feet apart and a third — the "rooster" or "kohut" — takes his place in between. As the two boys at the ends throw the *pysanka* to each other, the middle boy tries to intercept it. If he succeeds, his place is taken by the boy whose *pysanka* he has managed to catch, and the latter takes the position between the two throwers.

In Uličské Krivé and other nearby villages, they play a game called "kljupavoj jajce," played only at Eastertime by 9 to 10-year-old children. The game is played in a meadow or orchard and requires at least 8 participants. The players place a white, undyed, and unornamented egg on the grass and form a circle around it. One of the players runs around the perimeter with an egg, which he throws at somebody's back or shoulder. The egg usually breaks and the player who has been hit is next to run around the circle. The one who threw the egg takes his place in the group and is known as "kljupavoj jajce." The game continues until each participant has taken a turn running around the circle. At the end of the game, all the players try to grab the whole egg remaining in the center of the circle. The child that succeeds in snatching it is expected to hit someone with it. The other players try to avoid being hit by this egg, since the victim loses the game.

In the village of Pichné, children from 8 to 12 years old play a game called "smerdjače jajce" (stinking egg). They too form a circle facing inwards, but do not place an egg in the center. One child walks or runs around the outside of the circle, surreptitiously places the egg behind the back of one of the players, and moves on. A player who fails to notice that the egg has been placed behind his back becomes the "stinking egg" and goes to the center of the circle to stand there until his place is taken by another player. The child who discovers in time that the egg has been placed behind his back runs around the circle

with the egg. The game ends when each participant has had a turn at being a "stinking egg."

Older people remember several other Easter games that were once played with *pysankŷ*. These include one called "changing dances with a *pysanka" (vyminnjuvannja tancju z pysankoju)* and "knocking *pysankŷ" (čokannja pysankamy),* played by boys over 14 years old and young men. The object of the second game was to see who could roll a *pysanka* the greatest distance over grass without breaking it. Sometimes bets were made on the results. Each village had its own variation on these games. It is unlikely that any of these games have anything in common with ancient games. The sole vestige of former rituals is probably the custom of playing games at Easter with a *pysanka* or an ordinary egg.

The "new faith" waged a major struggle against ancient pre-Christian games in the belief that they were inspired by the "devil." But even in their altered form, games did not easily disappear from village life. On the other hand, the social and economic advances of the twentieth century as well as the rapid and all-round growth of the cultural level of the population quite naturally led to the decline of phenomena that traced their roots to the remote past. Life is merciless towards anything that is based on an unrealistic view of actual existence. Thus, the finest memento to reach us from ancient times is the *pysanka,* whose artistic value is as great today as ever.

★★★

After 1945, the Lemko type of *pysanka,* which in Czechoslovakia is characteristic only among the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia, became widespread throughout the entire country. This occurred as a result of improved opportunities for the Rusyn working woman under socialism. Whereas in earlier times, even men found it difficult to obtain work and the large population living in Rusyn mountain villages was forced to eke out a living on the barren fields of the Beskyd mountain range, after 1945, a significant portion of this population migrated to the industrial centers of Bohemia and western and central Slovakia. Though living in new surroundings, Rusyn women continued to decorate *pysankŷ* at Easter in their traditional Lemko style, therefore spreading this art within Slovak and Czech areas.

Under socialism, the folk art of *pysanka* ornamentation has for the first time received due recognition. A competition in the folk arts of Slovakia using various categories of materials was held in 1958. First place in the competition was won by Eva Tjahla from Čertižné, while the third prize was shared by Hanna Malynčak and Hanna Kulyk, also from Čer-

Easter basket with *pysankŷ* from Čertižné.

Easter morning faithful awaiting the blessing of their baskets in Čertižné.

tižné. The following year, the Center for Rural Folk Creativity organized a nationwide contest for the finest *pysanka* in Czechoslovakia. Here, again, Eva Tjahla won first prize. The third prize went to Julija Adamkovyč, a native of Čertižné, who now resides in the Slovak town of Trebišov, where she moved after marriage. In both cases, the *pysankŷ* were of the traditional Lemko type. Other Rusyn participants in the competition were Eva Suško (Borov) and Marija Pačuta (Čertižné). In 1960, various prizes were won in similar competitions by Čertižné residents Maria Pačuta, Eva Tjahla, Marija Myrman, and Marija Malynčak. Subsequently, Eva Tjahla was awarded the title of master of folk art in the field of *pysanka* decoration. Nonetheless, participation by Rusyn *pysanka* artists in competitions of this kind has not been as wide as their skill and artistry warrants.[21]

Czechoslovakia exports *pysankŷ* as works of folk art to the United States, Argentina, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Japan, New Zealand, and other countries. And these exports include a significant number of Rusyn *pysankŷ* from Eastern Slovakia, that is, *pysankŷ* executed in the traditional Lemko folk art style.

NOTES

[1] Nippur is today known as Nuffar. Jozef Skutil, "Z předhistorie velikonočních kraslic," *Lidové noviny* (Prague), March 27, 1937, p. 3.

[2] Dr. Kohla in the journal *Český lid,* VII (Prague, 1898), p. 157.

[3] Janina Bukowska, "Pisanki polski z X-XIII wieku," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa,* XII, 1 (Warsaw, 1958), pp. 45—49.

[4] Jaroslav Orel, "Techniky zdobení kraslic," *Umění a řemesla,* II, 3 (Prague, 1960), p. 118.

[5] Johannes N. Sepp, *Das Heidenthum und dessen Bedeutung für das Christenthum,* 3 vols. (Regensburg, 1853); G. Wunderlich, *Das christliche Kirchenjahr,* 3rd rev. ed. (Langenfalza, 1884); Wilhelm Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche im Lichte der heidnischen Vorzeit,* 2nd rev. ed. (Marburg, 1888).

[6] Čeněk Zibrt, "Nekteré výklady o puvodů kraslic" (Prague, 1890); Nikolaj Sumcov, "Pisanki," *Kievskaja starina,* XXXIII, 5 and 6 (Kiev, 1891), pp. 181—209 and 363—383; Vadym Ščerbakivs'kyj, *Osnovni elementy ornamentaciji ukrajins'kych pysanok ta jichnje pochodžennja* (Prague, 1925).

[7] Ljubor Niderle [Niederle], *Byt i kul'tura drevnich slavjan* (Prague, 1924), pp. 84—85.

[8] Serhij Kolos, "Istoryčni ta mystec'ko-konstruktyvni zasady pobudovy pysankovoho ornamentu," in Erast Binjaševs'kyj, ed., *Ukrajins'ki pysanky* (Kiev, 1968), p. 89.

[9] Binjaševs'kyj, *Ukrajins'ki pysanky,* p. 8. This album contains color reproductions of 144 *pysanky* drawn from all Ukrainian-inhabited territories, including the Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia and the Lemko Region of Poland.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 58, 60, 82.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[13] *Das alte Peru* (Leipzig, 1964), pt. 2.

[14] Walter Wadepuhl, *Die alten Maya und ihre Kultur* (Leipzig, 1964), illustrations 102—103.

[15] M.O. Kosven, *Očerki istorii pervobytnoi kul'tury* (Moscow, 1953).

[16] A similar conclusion is reached by the author of a study on Hungarian Easter eggs: Sándor Beluleszko, "A magyar hímes tojások," *Néprajzi Múzeum Értesítője,* VI (Budapest, 1905), pp. 112—120.

[17] Recorded by the author from Kataryna Tjahla, 83 years old, a peasant woman from the village of Čertižné, on August 8, 1956.

[18] Slatineanu Barbu, "Les oeufs de Pâques en Roumanie," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LXI (Basel, 1957), pp. 181—185.

[19] Dietrich Drost, *Ornament und Plastik fremder Völker: Afrika, Ozeanien, Sibirien* (Zurich, 1964). Illustration 15 shows a pillow covering from Porto Novo in Dahomey made of soft leather. It bears embroidery executed with colored threads depicting knotted geometric designs, a double spiral, and the zoomorphic motifs of the turtle and snake. The motifs are arranged in checkerboard fashion. Drost attributes symbolic significance to these motifs.

[20] Pavlo Markovyč, *Ukrajins'ki narodni chrestykovi vyšyvky Schidnoji Slovaččyny* (Bratislava and Prešov, 1964), pp. 74, 226, 227 (village of Ruské).

[21] A list of Rusyn *pysanka* artists could easily go on for pages and still remain incomplete. Those artists whose works impressed us as truly exquisite are: Hanna Onufrjak-Pavlyk (Borov), Jelizaveta Kochan and Terezija Dzjopko (Vojtovce), Marija Chomča (Medzilaborce), Hanna Štefanysko (Nižná Pisaná), Marija Jančyk (Kružľová), Hanna Zozuljak (Nižný Čabiny), Julija Feckanyč and Hanna Malynjak (Staškovce), Hanna Bajal (Krásny Brod), Anisija Novok and Marija Berežna (Dubová), Zuzana Kalanaš and Hanna Lažo (Ladomirová), Hanna Suvak, Marija Čena, and Marija Djuk (Makovce), Hanna Bilanyč, Hanna Hryb, Hanna Dzendzel (Zbojné), Marija Karas (Havaj), Marija Breznoščak, Marija Vašuta, and Hanna Gula (Krajná Bystrá), Hanna Pavlyk (Palota), Hanna Gula and Marija Šoltys (Gribov), Zuzana Horda (Šapinec).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Antoniewicz, Wlodzimierz. "Pisanki w Polsce," *Ziemia,* IV (Cracow, 1913).

Arnott, Margaret. "Die Ostereier in Griechenland," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,"* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 189—194.

Barbu, Slatineanu. "Les oeufs de Pâques en Roumanie," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 181—185.

Bečák, Jan R. "Lidové umění na Hané," *Kráslice,* p. 344.

Bednárik, Rudolf. "Dávam ti šuhajko, malované vajíčko," *Život,* IV, 15 (Warsaw, 1954), pp. 8—9, 182—183.

Beluleszko, Sándor. "Magyar hímes tojások," *Néprajzi Múzeum Értesítője,* VI (Budapest, 1905), pp. 112—120.

Bolsunovskij, K. I. *Pisanki kak predmet jazyčeskogo kul'ta.* Kiev, 1909.

Breiting, M. and *Drager,* L. *Das Alte Peru.* Leipzig, 1964.

Bukowska, Janina. "Pisanki polskie z X—XIII wieku," *Polska Sztuka Ludowa,* XII (Warsaw, 1958).

Butnyk-Sivers'kyi, B. *Ukrajins'ke narodne mystectvo.* Kiev, 1967.

--------. "Vične mystectvo narodnych tvorciv," *Literaturna Ukrajina* (Kiev), November 30, 1965, pp. 1—2.

Cehelskaja, Aleksandra. "Kosmac'ki pysanký," *Narodna tvorčist' ta etnohrafija,* XI, 2 (Kiev, 1967), pp. 52—57.

Champdor, Albert. *Kunst Mesopotamiens.* Leipzig, 1964.

Dąbrowski, Stanisław. *Pisanki lubelskie.* Lublin, 1936.

Dowgird, T. and *Wolski,* Z. "Pisanki," *Wisla,* IV (Warsaw, 1890), pp. 216—223.

Drost, Dietrich. *Ornament und Plastik fremder Völker.* Leipzig, 1964.

Dymnycz, N. "Obrzędy u wierzenia ludowe w okresie swięt Wielkiej Nocy," *Rocznik Wolynski,* II (Rivne, 1931).

Fábian, Gyula. "A husvét és a hímes-tojás losoncz vidékén," *Néprajzi Múzeum Értesítője,* IX (Budapest, 1908), pp. 29—35.

Fischer, H. "Pisanki na Huculszczyznie," *Ziemia,* VII (Cracow, 1922).

Gajka, J. *Kogut w wierzeniach ludowach.* L'viv, 1934.

Grepačevskij, A.O. "O krašankach i pisankach," *Kievskaja starina,* LXXXIV, 4 (Kiev, 1904), pt. 2, pp. 17—18.

Havelková, Vlasta. *Moravské ornamenty.* Olomouc, 1888.

--------. "O symbolech v naší ornamentice," *Český lid,* VII (Prague, 1898), pp. 146—152.

--------. Estetický rozbor moravských kraslic.

Hein, Matilde. "Bemalte Ostereier in Hessen," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 70—74.

Hoffman, Jakób. "Pisanki wolyńskie," *Rocznik Wolyński,* I (Rivne, 1930).

Hurhula, I. "Zvyčaji i povir'ja zv'jazani z pysankamy," *Nova chata,* IV (L'viv, 1928), pp. 4—5.

--------. "Pysanky schidnoji Halyčyny i Bukovyny v zbirci nacional'noho muzeju u L'vovi," *Materialy do etnolohiji,* XXI—XXII (L'viv, 1929), pp. 131—154.

--------. *Narodne mystectvo zachidnych oblastej Ukrajiny.* Kiev, 1966.

Jagodić, Maria. "Über Ostereier und Ostergebäck in Slowenien (Jugoslawien)," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 156—159.

Jastrebov, V. "Neskol'ko slov o pisankach," *Kievskaja starina,* XLIX, 4 (Kiev, 1895), pt. 2, pp. 5—8.

Klveňa, I. "Kraslice moravské," *Český lid,* II (Prague, 1893), pp. 480—488.

Kolvaňa, J. "Velkonoční vajíčka ze Slovenska Moravského," *Časopis vlasteneckého musejniho spolku v Olomouci,* III (Olomouc, 1886).

Korduba, Myron. "Pysanky na halyc'kij Volyni," *Materialy do ukrajins'ko-rus'koji etnol'ogiji,* I (L'viv, 1899), pp. 169—210.

Král, Jiří. Velkonoční svěcení paschy u Huculů v Podkarpatské Rusi, *Český lid,* XXV (Prague, 1925), pp. 276—277.

"Kraslice v pohřebišti," *Český lid,* VII (1898), p. 157.

Krček, Fr. *Pisanki w Galicyi,* 2 Vols. L'viv, 1893—94.

--------. "Pisanki w Galicyi: zestawienie materyału zebranego w roku 1897 staraniem Tow. Ludoznawczego," *Lud,* IV (L'viv, 1898), pp. 186—231.

Kubátová, Květa. "Pozdrav jari," *Slovensko,* VII, 15 (Martin, 1954), p. 4.

Kul'žinskij, S.K. *Opisanie kollekcii narodnych pisanok.* Moscow, 1899.

Kunz, Ludvig. "Mährische Ostereier," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 160—165.

Lastivka, K. "Ornamentyka pysanok na bukovins'komu pidnipr-ju," *Nova chata,* VIII (L'viv, 1932).

M.A. "Vel'konočné zvyky slovenského l'udu," *Slovensko,* XII, 4 (Martin, 1974), pp. 101—103.

Makovský, S.K. *Lidové umění Podkarpatské Rusi.* Prague, 1925.

Mlynek, L. "Pisanki wielkonocne w zachodnie Galicyi," *Lud,* VII (L'viv, 1901), pp. 176—180.

N.M.P. "Výstava kraslic v Jindřichově Hradci," *Uměni a řemesla,* I, 3 (Prague, 1956), p. 123.

Nazarijiv, Oleksander. "Pysanky," *Illjustrovana Ukrajina,* I, 8 (L'viv, 1913), pp. 4—5.

Niederle, Lubor. *Slovanské starožitnosti,* Vol. I. Prague, 1902.

Opluštil, Arnošt. "Sietinou olepované vel'konočné vajička," *Časopis muzeálnej slovenskej spoločnosti,* XX, 3 (Martin, 1928), p. 77.

Orel, Jaroslav. "Techniky zdobení kraslic," *Uměni a řemesla,* I, 3 (Prague, 1956) p. 118.

P.K. "Jak robljatsja pysanky," *Sjaivo,* I, 4 (Kiev, 1913).

Pittnerová, V. "Hotovení kraslic," *Český lid,* IV (Prague, 1895), pp. 515—517.

Poulik, I. *Staroslavanská Morava.* Prague, 1948.

Pranda, Adam. *Kraslice v slovenskej l'udovej umeleckej výrobe.* Bratislava, 1958.

--------. "Die slowakischen Ostereier," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1956), pp. 165—172.

--------. "Vajíčko mal'ované, z lásky darované," *Život,* VII, 16 (Warsaw, 1957), p. 3.

--------. "Výskum možností rozšírenia sortimentu l'udových umeleckých výrobkov o nové druhy doteraz nevyrábaných artiklov v odvetví l'udovej grafiky," *Kraslice,* (Bratislava, 1956).

--------. "Vznik kraslíc a obdobie ich mal'ovanie," *Krásy Slovenska,* XXXIV, 4 (Bratislava, 1957), pp. 146—150.

Przeździecka, Maria. "Pisanki w Radomskiem," Polska Sztuka Ludowa, X, 4—5 (Warsaw, 1956), pp. 219—227.

"Pysanky Poltavščyny," in *Zbirnyk prysvjačenyj 35 ričču Poltavs'koho Deržavnoho Muzeju im. V. Korolenka,* Vol. I. Poltava, 1928, p. 113.

Sándor, István. "Ostereier in Ungarn," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957).

Sátek, L. "Kraslice v západních Čechách," *Plzeňsko,* XI (Plzeň, 1929), p. 35.

Schmidt-Kowar, Ernst. *Sorbische Ostereier.* Bautzen, 1965.

Seweryn, Tadeusz. "Les oeufs de Pâques polonais et hutsules," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957).

Ščerbakivs'kyj, V. *Osnovni elementy ornamentaciji ukrajins'kych pysanok ta jikhne pochodžennja.* Prague, 1926.

Šerockij, K. "Čerty antičnoj i drevnechristianskoj živopisi na ukrainskich pisankach," *Pravoslavnaja Podolija,* No. 15—18 (1919).

Skoryk, M. "Bojkivs'ki pysanky," *Litopys Bojkivščyny,* 4 (Sambir, 1934).

Skutil, Jozef. "Z předhistorie velikonočních kraslic," *Lidové noviny* (Prague), March 27, 1937, p. 3.

Sochář, Pavel. "Vel'konočné mal'ované vajička," *Slovenské pohl'ady,* VII, 6 (Martin, 1887), pp. 142—143.

--------. "Vel'konočné kraslice," *Národný denník* (Bratislava), No. 84, April 1925, p. 1.

Sokalski, B. *Powiat sokalski pod względem geograficznem, etnograficznem, historycznem, i ekonomicznem.* L'viv, 1899.

Solomčenko, O.H. "Ornament pysanok Prykarpattja," *Narodna tvorčist' ta etnohrafija,* VIII, 3 (Kiev, 1964), pp. 60—64.

Šorm, A. "Nápisy na kraslicích," *Česky lid,* XXIV (Prague, 1924), p. 254.

Stranecká, Fr. "Národní ornamenty moravský," *Květy,* VIII (Prague, 1886), pp. 210—219 and 289—302.

--------. "O symbolice moravských kraslic," *Časopis vlastenského musejního spolku v Olomouci,* V (Olomouc, 1888), pp. 22—31.

Sucha, Ljuba. "Pysanky," in Ja. P. Zapasko, ed. *Narysy z istoriji ukrajins'koho dekoratyvnoho prykladnoho mystectva.* L'viv, 1979, pp. 81—84.

Šuchevyč, Volodymyr. "Pysanky," in his *Huculščyna,* pt. 4. Materialy do ukrajins'ko-rus'koji etnol'ogiji, Vol. VII. L'viv, 1904, pp. 216—227.

Sumcov, N.F. "Pisanki," *Kievskaja starina,* XXXIII, 5 and 6 (Kiev, 1891), pp. 181—209 and 363—383.

Taranušenko, S. "Ukrajins'ki pysanky jak pamjatky narodnoho maljarstva," *Naukovi zapysky Charkivs'koji naukovoji doslidčoji katedry istoriji evropejskoji kultury,* III (Kharkiv, 1929).

Tarkovec'kyj, V. *Jak huculy pyšut' svoj pysanky.*

Vávlacík, Antonín. *Podunajská dedina v Československu.* Bratislava, 1925.

--------. "Příspěvky k studiu výročních obyčejů," *Národnopisný věstník československý,* XXXI (Prague, 1949), pp. 14—25.

--------. "Vel'konočný týždeň na Slovensku," *Slovenský svět,* V, II (Bratislava, 1925), pp. 166—168.

--------. "Na okraj uvah o lidovém projevu," *Tvar,* I (Prague, 1948).

Vakarelski, Christo. "Oeufs de Pâques chez les Bulgares," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde,* LIII (Basel, 1957), pp. 185—189.

Valujko, Mykola. "Pysanky," *Sjaivo,* I, 4 (Kiev, 1913), pp. 108—111.

Vetuchov, A.B. "O pisankach," *Trudy Charkovskago predvaritel'nago komiteta po ustroistvu XII Archeologičeskogo s'jezda,* I (Kharkiv, 1902), pp. 431—433.
Wadepuhl, Walter. *Die alten Maya und ihre Kultur.* Leipzig, 1964.
Wankova, Madlena. *Moravské ornamenty.* Olomouc, 1903.
--------. "Kraslicový ornament," *Náš směr,* II, 5 (Brno, 1910—11), pp. 269—274.
Zarembskij, A. *Narodnoe iskusstvo podol'skich ukraincov.* Leningrad, 1928.
Zibrt, Čeněk. Některé výklady v původu kraslic. Prague, 1890.
--------. *Ohlas obřadnich pisni Velikonočnich. (Haggadah Chad Gadja Echad mi Jodea) v lidovem podáni.* Prague, 1928.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(with village of origin in parentheses)

page:

1. Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia prepared using the wax technique 25
2. Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the scratching technique (Ol'ka) 26
3. Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the scratching technique (Ol'ka) 26
4. Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the wax technique (Ol'ka) 26
5. Rusyn *pysankȳ* with wax ornament in relief on the natural white egg surface dyed a single color (Ol'ka) 26
6. Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* using pastels (Čertižné) 27
7. Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the wax technique (Medzilaborce) 28
8. Designs for Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the wax technique (Medzilaborce) 29
9. Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 30
10. Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 31
11. Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 32
12. Polar projections of Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 33
13. Design elements on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 34
14. Design elements on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 35
15. Design elements on Hutsul-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 36
16. Types of ornamental bands on traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 60
17. Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia with three made using the scratching technique 61
18. Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 62
19. Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 63
20. Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 64
21. Traditional Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 65
22. Traditional designs on Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* 66
23. Traditional designs on Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* shown in the form of a flat design 67
24. Traditional designs on Lemko-type Rusyn *pysankȳ* shown in the form of a flat design 68
25. Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 69
26. Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 70
27. Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 71
28. Typical designs for Rusyn *pysankȳ* from Eastern Slovakia 72
29. *Pysanka* motifs used by the Rusyn population of Eastern Slovakia – chart 91–102
30. Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the wax technique showing decorative bands (Ol'ka) 109
31. Rusyn *pysankȳ* using the wax technique showing variations on the circle motif (Ol'ka) 110
32. Instruments for *pysankȳ* making 110

page:

33. Material for decorating eggs using pastels . . . 110
34. The scratching technique on colored eggs (Ol'ka) . . . 111
35. Eggs being dipped in natural coloring (Ol'ka) . . . 111
36. Painting the eggs with wax before color dipping (Ol'ka) . . . 112
37. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique and pastels (Čertižné) . . . 113
38. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique and pastels (Čertižné) . . . 113
39. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated with ornament in relief using burnt wax applied to natural white egg surface (Stakčín) . . . 113
40. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Medzilaborce) . . . 113
41. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Vyšná Pisaná) . . . 114
42. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs (Zbudská Belá and Repejov) . . . 115
43. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Torysky) . . . 115
44. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Torysky) . . . 115
45. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Krásny Brod) . . . 115
46. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Ol'ka) . . . 116
47. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated by applying natural plant leaves (Svidník and Becherov) . . . 117
48. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated in pastels (Čertižné) . . . 117
49. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated in pastels (Čertižné) . . . 117
50. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated in pastels (Vyšný Mirošov) . . . 117
51. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique Nižná Pisaná) . . . 118
52. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated in relief with straw (Vyšná Pisaná) . . . 119
53. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Nižná Pisaná) . . . 119
54. Rusyn *pysankỹ* decorated in pastels (Vyšný Mirošov) . . . 119
55. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the scratching technique (Ol'ka) . . . 119
56. Rusyn *pysankỹ* using the wax technique (Vyšná Pisaná) . . . 120
57. Blessing Easter baskets (Čertižné) . . . 137
58. Easter basket covered with traditional embroidered ritual cloth (Čertižné) . . . 138
59. Easter basket with *pysankỹ* (Čertižné) . . . 139
60. Easter morning faithful awaiting the blessing of their baskets (Čertižné) . . . 140