**Resources**:

Dixon-Kennedy, Mike, *Encyclopedia of Russian Myth & Legend*, ABC-CLIO Inc, 1998

Kononenko, Natalie, *Slavic Folklore Handbook*, Greenwood Folklore Handbooks, 2007

Kropej, Monika, *Mythological beings from Slovenian Myth & Folklore*

‘9 Slavic Rituals and Customs,’ [www.slowianskibestiarusz.pl](http://www.slowianskibestiarusz.pl)

[www.lamusdworski.wordpress.com](http://www.lamusdworski.wordpress.com)

Anna Franklin & Paul Mason, ‘Lammas: Celebrating Fruits of the Harvest.’

Mencej, Mirjam. *The Role of Legend in Constructing the Annual Cycle*

**Introduction**:

Lady death mowing down a victim with her scythe. A demon of the harvest fields in the shape of a mourning widow. Is it any wonder that folklore symbolically conflates death and the harvest in such potent images when the harvest was the very heart and pulse of the agricultural communities of the ‘folk’?

All the drama and terror of human longing would be in that miracle of seed, golden with promise. There would be the tiny terraced beauty of the wheat grains yet also the gut-level terror of the rain-soaked rot of a poor harvest; there would be the elegant rhythm of scythes being swung, mimicking the movement of the sun across the celestial sphere, but there would also be the blood stripping nausea of sunstroke. There would be the satisfaction of soft linen worker’s clothes and the cool of the morning but there would also be the stinging chafe of sweat and grit. There would be the diurnal pinnacle of freshly baked bread but there would also be pot-bellied starvation in the bad years.

The harvest field - and for that matter the grazing field - has a magical potency, drawn from the mystery of the earth. For, as Natalie Kononenko so eloquently put it, ‘Because the ancestors rest in the earth and become one with it, the Slavs also feel a powerful connection to the soil in which their ancestors rest.’ Soil, food and death. Indeed, these all-encompassing aspects of the human experience are also mythologically summarised in the Slavic deity Veles, who besides being the god of earth, water and forest, is also associated with the harvest, cattle and the underworld. His domain is down where the spirit meets the bone, where groundwater is lapped up by tree roots and seeds and bacteria. His domain is bovine meat and grain; bread and manure; death and life.

**Further Reading, Viewing & Playing**

1. Poludnica features in ‘The Witcher’ game and I believe the novels
2. There is a Czech film called ‘The Noonday Witch’ that features Poludnica